

Married People in Prison

While in prison, all Catholic married men and women must live the good moral life of a person who is not married. Regardless of whether they were married outside the church by a Justice of the Peace, or lived in a common-law relationship, they can still receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church while in prison. The reason for this is that they cannot cohabit with a person of the opposite sex, and live the married life pleasing to God while in prison.

Catholic people in prison need to know what their status is with the church if they were married before coming to prison, by a justice of the peace, lived in a common law relationship, married in a Catholic Church, but divorced, etc.

While still in prison, inmates can ask priest chaplains questions about their marital status in the Catholic Church. They can also have their spouse in the free world approach their parish priest, and find out what will be necessary for them to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Catholic Church, after their release from prison.

An inmate could also write to The Marriage Tribunal in the Chancery of his Catholic Diocese. Inmates should not rely on the understanding of Catholic laypeople, with regard to what preparation is necessary for a valid marriage in the Catholic Church.

While in prison, every Catholic inmate who wishes to enjoy a good family life should prepare as much as possible for good Catholic married life after release from prison. To be in full communion with the Catholic Church, **every Catholic** person in the free world **must be married sacramentally in a Catholic Church**.

Whether single or married, all men and women were created by God, for **sexual activity** always **open to procreation**, and the best of family relationships made possible by **committed love for God and for others**. Scripture clearly shows us why God made us male or female.

That is why any sexual activity opposed to God's purpose of creating us as sexual creatures is immoral. Homosexual activity, masturbation, sterilization, bestiality, artificial contraception, all frustrate God's purpose for us as sexual creatures and for that reason are sinful. A moment of sinful pleasure from sexual activity is certainly not worth alienating us from God.

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'"
(Genesis 1:27-28)

Jesus Christ clearly teaches that **the marriage union of man and woman is to be permanent** and no power on earth can break that bond.

*"Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' They said, 'Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.' But Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So **they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.**' Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'" (Mark 10:2-12)*

God created us to enjoy a happy and peaceful life in this world. **We are social creatures. Family is the basic society.** When family life deteriorates, cities, states, countries and the whole world suffers. Broken and troubled families produce troubled cities, states, countries and a troubled world.

Good happy families begin with the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Catholic Church. God who is love is the bond, the glue which makes the permanent union of man and woman possible. Children are to be born, nurtured and cared for by their parents with the same generous love the parents enjoy in their ongoing love relationship with Jesus Christ in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church.

Family life has been deteriorating in this country. As a result, we are suffering from an increase in broken homes, divorce, adultery, promiscuity, fornication, juvenile delinquency, abortions, rape, child abuse, murder and every other kind of social disorder imaginable.

The human family is the basic society on earth. If parents don't love their children; and children are not conceived and born out of a dedicated love relationship between a man and a woman, any family will be dysfunctional. We cannot expect people who do not love and respect their wives and husbands, children and parents, to love and respect their neighbors as they should.

Our cities, and our country, and the world is falling apart because of the selfish approach to life of people who are unable to love, even to love members of their own immediate families. Why is this happening? It is because of an increase in godlessness.

All people, including homosexuals, were created by God for the happy, contented, peaceful lives made possible for us by God in Jesus Christ.

This world was created by God to be a paradise for us. It could be, and should be, and will be for those of us who live as God's children. This means that we can recover the love relationship with God, lost by Adam and Eve when they sinned.

God comes to us in Jesus Christ(who St. Paul calls the new Adam) inviting us to repent, and to enjoy a better life than Adam ever had, by realizing the family relationship of true sons and daughters, that Jesus himself has with God Our Father; and always has had, even when he lived on this earth, as we do now.

As we pray to God Our Father and experience, as Jesus Christ always did on earth, being as much a part of God's family as possible for us, by making a fervent, loving effort to bring about as much as possible in our lives, what we are praying for as loving, obedient children; we learn what it means to be bonded by family love to our immediate family; and more and more to our human neighbors, in our cities, our country and the whole world.

Many people are born with handicaps; noticeable when they are mental or physical. We all are born with greater handicaps, with a human nature damaged(not inclined to live always in the friendship love of God) by sin(the original sin of Adam). Our damaged nature reveals itself in pride, selfishness, **lustfulness**, greed, envy, gluttony and laziness.

All of these self-destructive tendencies can be overcome inasmuch as we **embrace the way of true love**, the way of truth, the way of the perfect God, Jesus Christ. This will happen for any of us, the more we embrace the family life of God with, in, and through the way of life given to us in Jesus Christ. Some of us are called by God to live out our lives in this world with dedicated, committed Christian love in human families as wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.

Others among us are called to live as single people. **The good single life is also necessarily family life**. Many inmates ask if religious life is possible for them in the Catholic Church. Religious life is possible for anyone, whether they would be accepted or not in any monastery, any convent, or by any bishop for ordination.

What is most necessary for religious life is to live, like Jesus Christ, as members of the family of God. This means to **live the Trinitarian life**; never losing sight of who we are, and what we are called to be in our intimate relationship with God Our Father, God Our Brother Jesus Christ, moved by God the Holy Spirit; overwhelmed, and consumed by the love and truth of God.

Jesus Christ and St. Paul, chose to live the single life in order never to be distracted from the Trinitarian life, encourage us to follow them; to imitate them.

So, the good life offered by Jesus Christ can be embraced by homosexuals as well as by heterosexuals.

His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who

have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs **for the sake of the kingdom of heaven**. Let anyone accept this who can. " (Matthew 19:10-12)

"I want you to be free from anxieties. **The unmarried man** is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the Virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but **to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.**" (1 Corinthians 7:32-35)

