

WE MUST NOT DIVORCE OURSELVES FROM GOD

To hear and understand Jesus' teachings, one must listen with a humble heart, like a child wanting to learn, in order to hear the heavenly Truth. This is why Jesus says today, *let the little children come to me* (Mark 10:2-16). To become like little children, implies our willingness to be obedient to the teachings of God Our Father, as a child listens and obeys their parents. A hardened heart, full of pride, acts rebelliously, always fighting against the divine Truth. It ends up being *unteachable*. Jesus created the Sacrament of Marriage and not mankind. Just as God formed Eve from the body of Adam, where his bone becomes her bone, his flesh becomes her flesh, they become one body (Gen 2: 18-24). To get to heaven, we must remain one with body with Christ. Because the sacrament of marriage is such a complete sacred union between two people, Jesus is clearly saying that divorce is not a good thing, because it tears apart this holy union and creates a division, a pain and a separation within families, including God. He is the One who united the couple and to break that sacred union is to over-rule God. However, God is merciful and understands that not all marriages work. The Church provides a process called an *annulment* that can dissolve a dysfunctional or violent marriage that was entered into with a sense of immaturity. Very few separated couples use this process. Rather than allow God to untie the knot of marriage, they do it themselves. This would be like a surgery procedure going wrong and the patient making the decision not to return to the hospital but 'fix' it themselves. If one abandons a marriage then it is important not to abandon God.

MAKE SACRIFICES IN ORDER TO SANCTIFY AND SAVE SOULS

If one feels guilty or stuck in an extra martial relationship, where they cannot change the past, then do not despair. Jesus will always meet you exactly where you are in your life. People who find themselves in a second or third 'marriage' should find comfort in the story of the Samaritan woman, who Jesus met at the well (Jn 4:16-30). She represents members of the Church. At the well, Jesus told the woman, "Go, call your husband and come back." She replied: "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. She replied: "What you have just said is quite true." Notice how Jesus specifically came to this location to meet her and to put her on the right path to salvation and in turn she confessed her sinful situation. After she came to believe in Jesus, she would have changed her life. If it was not possible for her to reconcile and return to her first husband, then she would have understood that she must begin to live a chaste and sanctified life with her present 'husband/partner'. Otherwise she would continue to live in the mortal sin of adultery, which is a sexual relation between a married person and a person who is not truly their spouse. Chastity is a powerful sacrifice to make and helps us to play our part in bringing salvation to the world. This is why the Priest and Religious are asked to live a chaste and celibate life. Jesus sacrificed Himself through suffering (Heb 2:9-11) by giving of Himself to us, in order to bring salvation to the world. A marriage is like a martyrdom because it entails giving one's life to another. God bless, Fr Brendan.