



# Marriage and the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions (Theology)

*Michael G. Lawler*

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It is an open secret that marriage is in crisis in the United States and that the marriages of Catholics are not significantly different from other marriages. In *Marriage and the Catholic Church* Michael Lawler confronts the difficult questions in the Catholic theology of marriage.

Lawler, among the leading Catholic voices on the theology of marriage, does not shy away from the difficult questions, but confronts them honestly, historically accurately, and pastorally. He highlights a Catholic approach to premarital relationships, to marriage, to divorce, and to remarriage. He examines the relationship of marriage and sacrament, faith and sacrament, friendship in marriage, divorce and remarriage, cohabitation, family, interchurch marriages, and the changing models of marriage in the Catholic tradition. The whole offers a fresh look at the Catholic theology of marriage for a new millennium.

Chapter 1 looks at marriage as a sacrament. Chapter 2 then asks what models of marriage function in the contemporary Catholic Church. Chapter 3 considers what it takes to transform the social reality of marriage into the Catholic sacrament and answers that it takes personal faith. Lawler looks into the bonds or relationships in marriage in Chapter 4. He offers an extended consideration of divorce and remarriage in the Catholic Church in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 he offers theological and pastoral reflections on interchurch marriage. He analyzes the Christian reality and value of friendship and reflects on its contribution to the stability of marriage in Chapter 7. Lawler inquires, in Chapter 8, whether cohabitation could, again as in the past, be counted as a step in the process of becoming married in the Catholic tradition. Finally in Chapter 9 he seeks to construct a theology of Christian family and reflects on what that theology, and the families rooted in it, can contribute to American families in their present crisis.

Chapters are Marriage and the Sacrament of Marriage," "Catholic Models of Marriage," "Faith and Sacrament in Christian Marriage," "On the Bonds of Marriage," "Divorce and Remarriage in the Catholic Church," "Interchurch Marriages: Theological and Pastoral Reflections," "Friendship and Marriage," "Cohabitation and Marriage in the Catholic Church: A Proposal," and "Toward a Theology of Christian Family."

*Michael G. Lawler, PhD, is the Amelia B. and Emil G. Graff Chair in Catholic Theological Studies and Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He directs the Center for Marriage and Family, whose studies of marriage preparation, interchurch marriages, and the first five years of marriage have gained international acclaim.*

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