

Difficulties

RECONCILIATION God willed that a man and woman should be joined together in a permanent union. Living this reality can be difficult but sustained by faith and prayer it is certainly achievable. Jesus would not have reiterated his Father's intention for marriage if it was beyond the realisation of men and women. Nothing is impossible with the help of God. If you are experiencing problems as a couple please feel able to approach members of the parish community to seek assistance. There are many individuals and groups who can offer support and advice. Please consult the resources section to access the websites of some organizations that may be in a position to help.

SEPARATED AND DIVORCED In the event that joint living between spouses becomes practically impossible, for serious reasons, it can be legitimate to live apart. However, in such a scenario the marriage bond is not broken and therefore the persons are not free in the eyes of God to contract a new union. The Christian community should encourage reconciliation in such a scenario. Similarly, a spouse may find that he or she is unjustly abandoned and becomes the victim of an undesired civil divorce. Again, this does not rupture the marriage bond that has been validly sealed in Christ. People in these difficult situations remain in full communion with the Church and can participate wholly in its life provided they do not enter a new union while their legitimate spouse is alive.

A person who has been civilly divorced and remarries is in a different situation however. Ever faithful to Christ's instruction, the Church teaches that the remarriage of persons divorced from a living, lawful spouse contravenes the plan and law of God. Such a person is not separated from the Church and is encouraged to live a life of faith, prayer and provide for the Christian education of their children. However, sacramental absolution or reception of Holy Communion are impossible while their new arrangement remains unregularized in the eyes of the Church.