

DIVORCE HEALING

Support groups for divorced Catholics

Share the emotions of divorce, experience personal healing and hope, gain wisdom and comfort from others who share your experiences, address questions of forgiveness, family dynamics and annulment

New Beginnings

Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC)
OLGC School Junior High Commons
1151 William St.
Plymouth, MI 48170

Contact: LeAnn Decker
newbeginningsolgc@gmail.com

Meeting Details: Contact leader for updated schedule

- October 12, 2017, November 9, 2017, December 14, 2017, January 11, 2018, February 8, 2018
March 8, 2018, April 12, 2017, May 10, 2018
- 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM each meeting

Other Divorced Catholic Support Groups

St. Anastasia Catholic Church
4571 John R. Rd
Troy, MI 48085

Contact: Kim Houseman
(248) 689-8380, ext. 112
khouseman@stanastasia.org

Meeting Details: Contact leader for updated schedule

- Twice monthly; 6:45 PM to 8:45 PM each meeting
- Begins Tuesday, October 10, 2017

St. Regis Catholic Church, Chapel
3695 Lincoln Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301-4055

Contact: Terry Lindner
(586) 917-3216
divorcedcatholic@gmail.com

Meeting Details: 3rd Wed. monthly, from 7PM to 9PM; no meetings Dec, June, July, Aug

*For individual therapy, please see the “**Emotional Needs and Counseling**” resource list.*

If desired, please call the parish office to arrange a meeting with a member of the clergy or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to discuss this issue in more detail.

CHURCH TEACHING: DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

I am divorced. Can I still be Catholic? Can I still receive the Eucharist?

Answer: **Yes, Definitely.** A false belief has been circulating in Catholic families for generations that divorced Catholics are no longer able to be Catholic and may not receive the Eucharist. *This is not true!* While Jesus and his Church acknowledge that divorce was never intended by God for marriage (Mt 19:8), both acknowledge that there are exceptions to this rule, especially with respect to “unlawful marriage” or “unchastity” within the marriage (Mt 5:32, 19:9). To be clear, *divorce alone is not grounds to avoid (a) the Catholic Church or (b) the Eucharist.* People can be divorced and live good and holy lives. It gets a bit tricky in the case of attempting remarriage after divorce.

To remarry—if desired—the Church requires an annulment of the prior marriage(s). The annulment process is how the Church reviews marriage validity, or *lawfulness*. Annulment is not a renunciation of a person, family and children, but a review of the status of the marital relationship. After an extensive review of the paperwork completed by the individual(s) requesting annulment, the Church review board decides on the validity of the couple’s marriage. If grounds can be found not to ensure a marriage’s validity—or lawfulness—annulment of the marriage is granted. If not, it is not granted.

If someone refuses to engage in this lawfulness-confirming process and “goes it alone”, “remarrying” another person without annulment of the previous marriage, he/she rejects Jesus’ teaching on marriage and its exception(s) for dissolution (Mt 5:32, 19:9). *Divorce and remarriage without annulment* is living in a relationship outside of marriage while still officially married to your (previous) spouse, also known as adultery (Mt 5:32, 19:9). In this case, communion may not be received because of grave matter (sin) with full knowledge of its sinfulness and intent to continue in it. It’s the same for every mortal sin, including fornication, worshipping false gods, cheating, etc.

In summary, *divorce alone* is not grounds to avoid communion, but *divorce and remarriage without going through the annulment process* established by the Church following Jesus’ “lawfulness and chastity” test for marriage and divorce is reason to avoid communion, for your own spiritual good. This second scenario entails deliberately cutting off God’s grace to your soul. By rejecting his teaching you reject his grace; you cut yourself off from the Living Water—his Holy Spirit—that he desires to give you in abundance. St. Paul writes,

Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly¹, we should not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world. *1 Cor 11:28-32*

These “rules” are not meant to chastise or shame people who are hurting, but to challenge people to “a still more excellent way” (1 Cor 12:31) for their own good (Jer 29:11) and so as not to hurt themselves further through spiritual isolation from God. *If you have questions, please contact a member of our clergy or a qualified member of our pastoral team. We would be very happy to speak with you.*

¹ That is, acknowledging our guilt and need for repentance and discontinuing our sinful behaviors or relationships until reconciled with God and his Church, we must receive sacramental confession and not presume innocence in these moral matters.

If desired, please call the parish office to arrange a meeting with a member of the clergy or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to discuss this issue in more detail.