Mixed Marriages

+ What is a 'Mixed Marriage'? + If a Catholic Marries Another 'Christian', is This Considered a Mixed Marriage? + What is the Church's Traditional Teaching on Mixed Marriage? + Does the Church Ever Allow Mixed Marriages?...

Note that the term "mixed marriage" may be used herein as a synonym for "disparity of cult" [although there is technically a difference between the two terms ("disparity of cult" may strictly refer to marriages between Catholics) and unbaptized non-Catholics).

What is a 'Mixed Marriage'?

'Mixed Marriage' refers to a marriage wherein one party is Catholic and the other party is not.

Does a 'Mixed Marriage' Have Anything to do with Race?

No. This is a common misconception. As indicated above, a 'Mixed Marriage' refers to a marriage wherein one party is Catholic and the other party is not. It has nothing to do with either party's race. If a white person and a black person marry and both are Catholic, there is no mixed marriage.

If a Catholic Marries Another 'Christian', is This Considered a Mixed Marriage?

Those who call themselves Christian, but are not members of the true Church of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church, have always been considered by the Church to be heretics or schismatics. Not only do most of them reject the authority of the Church, but they usually reject at least some of the sacraments, they often reject certain dogmas of the Church (e.g. the Real Presence, papal infallibility, Marian doctrines, necessity of faith and works, etc.), and they often see nothing wrong with engaging in sinful actions condemned by the Church (e.g. birth control, abortion, divorce, etc.). The marriage of a Catholic to a heretic or schismatic, even if the non-Catholic party considers himself/herself 'Christian', is a mixed marriage. (Note: For important information related to this topic (including the Church's infallibly defined dogma of 'No Salvation Outside the Church'), see flier: "The Importance of Being Catholic: Combating Religious Indifferentism"]

What is the Church's Traditional Teaching on Mixed Marriage?

From earliest times, the Church has strongly warned against and forbidden mixed marriages. The Church has always considered such marriages dangerous to Catholics and their offspring, and has even used such references as "detestable marriages which Holy Mother Church has continually condemned and interdicted" (Pope Benedict XIV) to refer to mixed marriages. The following examples may help illustrate the traditional teaching of the Church regarding mixed marriages:

"Christians shall not marry heretics. They shall neither take them nor their children in marriage, nor shall they give their sons or daughters in marriage to them, until they promise to become Christians (that is. Catholics]. "Council of Laodicea. 365 A.D. I

"Can. 1060 Most severely does the Church prohibit everywhere that marriage be entered into by two baptized persons, one of whom is Catholic, and the other belonging to a heretical or schismatic sect; indeed, if there is a danger of perversion to the Catholic spouse and children, that marriage is forbidden even by divine law." (1917 Code of Canon Law)

"Further remind them that even for the gravest of reasons it is not permitted to enter into marriage with Christians who are not Catholics; those who do so without the authority and indulgence of the Church sin before God and the Church." (Pope Leo XIII, "Quod Multum", 1886)

"Since We must diligently safeguard the integrity of sound doctrine and practice, We cannot help but be displeased with whatever might imperil them. And yet what the Church has always thought about marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics is more than abundantly clear. Indeed she has always considered such marriages to be illicit and destructive both because of the disgraceful sharing in sacramental matters involved and because of the ever present danger of the Catholic spouse and improper upbringing of offspring. And this is the tenor of most ancient canons severely prohibiting such marriages and more recent sanctions of supreme portiffs." (Pope Gregory XVI. "Quas Vestro", 1841 A.D.)

Why Has the Church Always Objected to Mixed Marriage?

There are many reasons the Church has always objected to mixed marriages. In addition to the biblical admonitions...

St. Paul, Ti. 3:10-11: "After a first and second warning, break off contact with a heretic, realizing that such a person is perverted and sinful and stands self-condemned."

St. Paul, 2 Cor. 6:14-18: "Do not be yoked with those who are different, with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? What accord has Christ with Beliar? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God said." I will live with them and move among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore, come forth from them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will receive you and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

And also...

- St. John, 2 Jn.1:10-11: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him in your house or even greet him, for whoever greets him shares in his evil works."
- St. Paul, Eph. 5:6-7: "Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the disobedient. So do not be associated with them."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mt. 18:17: "If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector."

- St. Paul, Rom. 16:17-18: "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles, in opposition to the teaching that you learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent."
- St. Paul, Gal. 1:8-10: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach (to you) a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, and now I say again, if anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one that you received, let that one be accursed! Am I now currying favor with human beings or God?"

The Church also has concern that...

- "When two do not agree about religion, it is nearly always futile to hope for agreement in other things." (Pope Leo XIII)
- "[D]isparity of worship is contrary to marriage in respect of its chief good, which is the good of the offspring." (St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church and "greatest theologian in the history of the Church")
- "Catholic truth and Church doctrine which forbids mixed marriages as disgraceful because of the communion in holy things and because of the serious danger of the perversion of the Catholic spouse and the perverted education of the future children." (Pope Gregory XVI, "Commissum Divinitus", 1835 A.D.)
- "Such marriages, in fact, as is clear to you from wide experience, are rarely happy and usually occasion grave loss to the Catholic Church. A very efficacious means for driving out such grave evils is that individual Catholics receive a thorough training in the Divine truths and that the people be shown clearly the road which leads to salvation." (Pope Pius XII, "Sertum Laetitiae", 1939 A.D.)
- "Other reasons also proving that persons should turn with dread from such marriages are chiefly these: that they give occasion to forbidden association and communion in religious matters; endanger the faith of the Catholic partner; are a hindrance to the proper education of the children; and often lead to a mixing up of truth and falsehood, and to the belief that all religions are equally good." (Pope Leo XIII, "Arcanum", 1880 A.D.)
- "Whence it comes about not infrequently, as experience shows, that deplorable defections from religion occur among the offspring, or at least a headlong descent into that religious indifference which is closely allied to impilety. There is this also to considered that in these mixed marriages it becomes much more difficult to imitate by a lively conformity of spirit the mystery of which We have spoken, namely that close union between Christ and His Church. Assuredly, also, will there be wanting that close union of spirit which as it is the sign and mark of the Church of Christ, so also should be the sign of Christian wedlock, its glory and adornment. For, where there exists diversity of mind, truth and feeling, the bond of union of mind and heart is wont to be broken, or at least weakened. From this comes the danger lest the love of man and wife grow cold and the peace and happiness of family life, resting as it does on the union of hearts, be destroyed." (Pope Pius XI, "Casti Connubii", 1930 A.D.)
- "This religious character of marriage, its sublime signification of grace and the union between Christ and the Church, evidently requires that those about to marry should show a holy reverence towards it, and zealously endeavor to make their marriage approach as nearly as possible to the archetype of Christ and the Church. They, therefore, who rashly and heedlessly contract mixed marriages, from which the maternal love and providence of the Church dissuades her children for very sound reasons, fail conspicuously in this respect, sometimes with danger to their eternal salvation. This attitude of the Church to mixed marriages appears in many of her documents, all of which are summed up in the Code of Canon Law: "Everywhere and with the greatest strictness the Church forbids marriages between baptized persons, one of whom is a Catholic and the other a member of a schismatical or heretical sect; and if there is, add to this, the danger of the falling away of the Catholic party and the perversion of the children, such a marriage is forbidden also by the divine law." (Pope Pius XI, "Casti Connubii", 1930 A.D.)
- "Strive to eradicate these slithering errors with all your strength. Inspire the populace... to keep the Catholic faith and unity as the only way of salvation with an ever more ardent zeal, and, thus, to avoid every danger of forsaking it. Once the... faithful [understand] this necessity of maintaining Catholic unity, admonitions and warnings to them against joining in marriage with hereitics will certainly not be in vain. If on occasion some grave cause should suggest such a mixed marriage, they will then apply for a dispensation from the Church and observe the conditions We mentioned above. You and their parents and others who have care of them are responsible for teaching them what the judgment of the canons is in this matter. They must be warned lest they should dare to break these canons and, thus, jeopardize their souls. Hence if the circumstances suggest it, it may be necessary to remind them of that well-known precept of the natural and divine law, which commands us to avoid not only sins but the near occasion of sin as well. Remind them also of the other precept of the same law

which enjoins parents to rear their children in the discipline and admonitions of the Lord (Eph. 6.4). Therefore, they must instruct them in the true worship of God, which is unique to the Catholic religion. Hence, exhort your faithful to weigh seriously how great an offense they commit against the supreme Deity and how cruelly they act toward themselves and their future children when, by rashly contracting a mixed marriage, they may expose themselves and their children to the danger of perversion. So that the gravity of such danger may appear more clearly, recall for them those salutary admonitions of the Apostles, of the Fathers, and of the canons, which warn that familiar association with heretics is to be shunned." (Pope Gregory XVI, "Summo lugiter Studio", 1832 A.D.)

Other negative considerations of mixed marriages may include:

- ▶ A constant influence leading the Catholic party away from the Church (even if not intentional by the non-Catholic). Since a valid marriage is "till death do you part", this influence may last until your (or their) dying breath.
- ▶ Most likely, the non-Catholic party may reject the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist the very center of our faith, our strength, and the Bread that gives us life. The consequences of this are legion. For example:
 - They may eventually chide you for your belief and cause you to question it.
 - They may discourage you or prevent you from Eucharistic Adoration.
 - They may discourage you or prevent you from attending Mass.
 - They may blaspheme the Eucharist.
 - Day to day life may become intolerable for a good Catholic. How can a Catholic patiently
 endure living with (and creating children with) a person who has a horror of or distaste
 for the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist (not to mention the Church that
 Christ founded)?
 - The non-Catholic spouse may hinder the Catholic spouse from obeying the laws of the Church concerning the Eucharist (e.g. not receiving Holy Communion without fasting or receiving Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin - e.g. by using contraceptives, etc.)
 - If the non-believing spouse doesn't consider the believing Catholic an idolater, he/she is being inconsistent. The believing Catholic worships the Holy Eucharist, whereas the unbeliever may see it as 'bread'. If a non-believing spouse considers their spouse an 'idolater', how can they live with them?' How can they agree to raise their children to believe this way? Are they so lukewarm as to not care about (supposed) idolatry?
- ▶ The Catholic party may be prevented or discouraged or otherwise not aided in living out their faith (e.g. Lenten practices, Advent practices, etc.)
- ▶ Holidays and other important events (e.g. baptisms, confirmations, etc.) will probably always be an issue when one party is not Catholic.
- Since the other party is not Catholic and may fail to accept that marriage is "till death do you part", they may eventually seek a civil divorce. If you were validly married, you could NEVER marry again during that person's lifetime, even though he/she had engaged in another civil "marriane".
- ▶ The other party may encourage you to worship with them. By participating in defective worship ('worship' outside Christ's one and only true Church an act always held to be sinful), you offend God and may ultimately lose your faith. In any event, you will probably end up religiously indifferent.
- ▶ The Catholic party may be unable to receive the sacraments either because of the marriage itself (e.g. if proper dispensation is not received) or because of the practices of the marriage (e.g. use of contraceptives).
- ▶ Your efforts to convert the non-Catholic party (or theirs to convert you), may lead to disquiet within the family.
- ▶ The non-Catholic may fail to get you the last sacraments at your death (or when you are gravely ill). And, after your death, no Masses or prayers may be said for you. The non-Catholic may not even honor your burial or funeral arrangements consistent with Catholic tradition.
- ▶ The Catholic party may be encouraged to sin (e.g. miss Mass, use contraception, ignore penitential rules, etc.) since the other party may not see these actions as sins.
- ▶ There may be arguments, bad feelings, and pressure related to disagreement over religion or religious practices.
- ▶ The non-Catholic family may put pressure on your family. Even if the non-Catholic spouse consented to certain conditions before marriage, it is unlikely that the non-Catholic relatives did the same.
- ▶ Catholic religious practices that are excellent for a couple to do together (e.g. praying the rosary, attending Mass, recting novenas, reading stories of the saints, attending Church functions, etc.) may become solitary events. Or, even sadder, they may not occur at all.

 ▶ The non-Catholic party may not have respect for the Catholic's religious needs (time for confession, not working on Sunday, penitential works on Friday, etc.)
- ▶ Since "[we] cannot help conforming ourselves to what [or whom] we love" (St. Francis de Sales), the Catholic may find that they lose their faith or at least fail to practice it. As Scripture warns, "A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough." (Gal. 5.9)
- ▶ A non-Catholic spouse may prevent a Catholic from living as a good Catholic [e.g. by discouraging/rejecting a large family, rejecting the proper role of men and women, not securing the proper religious education of children (including rejection of necessary homeschooling), etc.]
- ▶ The non-Catholic may have had a very different upbringing and may have a very different value system. When problems occur, their solutions may be wildly different from those of a good Catholic. Also, their idea of what is important in life may be very different from what is important to a faithful Catholic. As time goes on, these issues may become more manifest and more
- ▶ Failure to carefully follow Church laws (e.g. on contraceptives, penitential practices, Mass attendance, etc.) may result in a danger to your soul.
- ▶ As a Catholic, you no doubt have different friends and role models than a non-Catholic. Non-Catholics may reject (or belittle or at least not give proper honor to) Mary and the saints. They may disparage your praying to Mary or the saints and may try to dissuade you from it. They may also attempt to stop your children from doing so.

- ▶ They most likely do not consider the pope, bishop or priest to have any authority over them, whereas you know you are bound to proper obedience to authority.
- ▶ Your home may be barren or nearly barren of Catholic religious objects (crucifixes, statues, images, etc.). Your children may also suffer from these barren living quarters.
- ▶ You may end up tolerating the presence of items in your home that are offensive to God (e.g. corrupted 'Bibles', heretical non-Catholic literature, etc.).
- ▶ Your reading and entertainment preferences are likely to be (or become) very different from a non-Catholic spouse. They may reject specifically Catholic reading and entertainment or they may want you to engage in reading or entertainment that is anti-Catholic or at least un-Catholic. They may be unlikely to read Catholic books to your children or provide them with proper Catholic entertainment.
- ▶ You may find it impossible to receive the sacrament of Penance. Not only might you be discouraged by the non-Catholic spouse from attending, but you may not be able to receive absolution if you are engaging in sin and won't stop e.g. contraception (thereby endangering your eternal soul). Remember that if you appear to condone another's sin by silence, you also become guilty of sin.
- ▶ Disputes over the upbringing of children are likely to be many and may bring great discord into the marriage.
- It is unlikely that a non-Catholic could ever provide a proper and complete Catholic education to children.
- ▶ It seems all but impossible that a non-Catholic could live up to parental responsibilities as stated by the Church. For example, Pope Pius XI says, "Chinstian parents must also understand that they are destined not only to propagate and preserve the human race on earth, indeed not only to educate any kind of worshippers of the true God, but children who are to become members of the Church of Chinst [that is, the Catholic Church], to raise up fellow-citizens of the saints, and members of God's household, that the worshippers of God and our Savior may daily increase." How can parents who disagree with what it takes to do this properly complete this
- ▶ If parents don't maintain the same religion, the children may become confused and may never be able to see the importance of being Catholic for salvation.
- ▶ The non-Catholic spouse will undoubtedly fail to foster vocations and will certainly teach the children various non-Catholic ways.
- ▶ You cannot expect a non-Catholic spouse to behave as a Catholic spouse would behave. This can have far reaching consequences. Many of these differences may not manifest themselves until time goes by.
- ▶ We must constantly fight for our faith, but one in a mixed marriage may receive no help. Instead of having someone by your side, you may be tied to someone who may pull you in another direction.
- ▶ The non-Catholic spouse may call various articles of your faith into question at any time.
- ▶ There may never be unity in the family.
- ▶ You can never have the same closeness, the same bond, as you could with another Catholic you can never truly be of "one heart and soul".
- ▶ You may be under constant pressure to relax your standards (e.g. concerning modesty, vigilance against sin. etc.).
- ▶ Since the primary end of marriage (the procreation & education of children) may be rejected by a non-Catholic, how can the marriage ever be successful? What will you do if your spouse insists on the gravely sinful practice of contracepting? What will you do if they try to pressure you into participating? ["The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children; its secondary end is mutual help and to serve as a remedy for concupiscence. The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which acquire a peculiar firmness in Christian marriage by reason of its sacramental character." (Code of Canon Law, 20th century A.D., Canon 1013)]
- Although marriage is supposed to be a remedy for concupiscence, non-Catholic spouses may instead foster an environment that worsens concupiscence. This may be especially true of members in so called 'Christian' denominations where they believe they are already 'saved', regardless of what they do. While you may be vigilant about sin, they may be "carefree". Your own marriage may become a proximate danger of sin for you.
- ▶ A good Catholic who "works out their salvation with fear and trembling" (cf. Phil. 2:12), may come to resent (or eventually buy into) a non-Catholic's easy-going "I am already saved" philosophy. Obviously this philosophy is fraught with danger to the soul and to adhere to it can only bring harm.
- ▶ When you really love someone, you want to see them saved. If your spouse is not Catholic, our faith fells us that their soul is at risk, just by that very fact. To reconcile your love for them with your faith, it is likely that you will start falling into religious indifferentism, rejecting the necessity of the Church for salvation. As a result, you risk loosing your own faith. This may occur even though you know that Christ only established one Church with the keys of salvation.

Clearly, a mixed marriage is dangerous to one's faith and to one's peace and happiness. It is almost surely a plan for dissension and discord. It may present a clear and serious danger to one's eternal soul. Since a different religion naturally comes with an entirely different outlook on life, the couple in a mixed marriage will certainly be unable to enjoy the most intimate union possible.

Sometimes a Catholic will try to convince himself or herself that the differences aren't that important or that he/she will be able to handle them. They may throw aside the biblical and constant warnings of the Church. They might try to convince themselves that the other party's religion is similar or "close enough" to the Catholic faith. They may try to cite "happy mixed marriages" of others. They may emphasize their strong love for the other person. They may look at the warnings herein and discount them or simply think that they are applicable to others, but not to them.

If so, then wake up! Learn from those before you! Why do you think the popes and Scripture warn you so strongly if there's no or only a slight danger? Do you not realize that long and sad experience confirms these warnings? Those who have suffered through the sorry consequences of such marriages may be the first to tell you that they were where you now are and that, back then, they were also certain that the differences "weren't that important" or that they could "work through" them.

At first things might seem rosy, but inevitably, as time passes, the differences will become more manifest, and the effects will almost certainly present themselves in many unpleasant ways. A Catholic cannot go into a mixed marriage ["detestable marriages which Holy Mother Church has continually condemned and interdicted" (Pope Benedict XIVI) with their eyes closed as if it was a slight matter. Such marriages are fraught with danger. One's non-Catholic spouse may be sympathetic to your religious needs in the beginning, but chances are as time goes on, there may be resentment and disagreement over religion. The Catholic may receive no support in his religion, and his faith may wane. You may mature in faith and realize that, as the popes warn, mixed marriages are dangerous to the soul and harmful to your children. You may come to realize how important it is to have a Catholic spouse who will support your faith. You may come to see the necessity of a proper and unadulterated Catholic upbringing for your children. You may come to realize that the difference between you and the non-Catholic in important matters is like night and day, and that they cannot but hinder your spiritual progress. If you realize this after you are validly married, it is too late to make a change. Not even the Church, much less a court of law, can get you out of a valid and consummated marriage, despite what society may seem to tell you. "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." (Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mt. 19:6)

Marriage is unquestionably one of the most important things you may do in your life. It is a sacrament given by God; It is a grave matter with serious consequences that requires the most serious reflection. It is a decision that cannot be undone. It is a time to use your head along with your heart and not to be ruled by your passions. You must akk yourself what is truly important. You must place God first. As much as you may feel you love someone, you must place your love of God first: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." (Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mt. 10:37). You must ask yourself if your relationship with another person is more important than your relationship with God. And beware of your answer! Your eternal soul may depend on it! What you "feel" now may change. You were created by God and as time goes on you will be constantly reminded that you were created by God and as time goes on you will be constantly reminded that you were rot made for this life, but for the next. A valid marriage lasts for your entire life (barring death of the other person). The person you marry may remain a non-Catholic (and, believe it or not, may even turn into an anti-Catholic). They may hinder your faith and the salvation of both yourself and your children. They may even become a proximate occasion of sin for you. Even if you should be so fortunate that this does not occur, they are wholly unlikely to willingly support your faith while they remain outside the Church. Even if they do not reject your Catholicity, they probably cannot assist it. They may be unable to help you on the path salvation as they themselves reject the very means of salvation. In fact, they may do quite the opposite. It may not be intentional, but they cannot give you what they do not have. Despite all this, you remain married for your entire life! Your 'epiphany' will be too late if you are already validly married. It will be too late to marry a supportive Catholic spouse who will, rather than usher in all the negative consequ

One must realize that "close to being Catholic" or "similar to being Catholic" is not good enough! The differences between a Catholic and a non-Catholic are many, serious, and significant. Maybe you think they will convert? You will probably find that you are sadly mistaken, since people so often cling to what is familiar to them. Even if they do go along, they might resent it or they might not be Catholica s'in their heart". No, one must not make such mistakes. One should not marry into a situation where faith isn't given the greatest importance right from the beginning. We were made for God ["God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next." (Baltimore Catechism)] and we can't act as if our relationship with God is secondary or of less importance than our relationship with any another person, no matter how much we may love them.

Your wise mother, the Church, who has dealt with thousands and thousands of cases such as yours has always disapproved of mixed marriages, proving the rightness of her teachings over and over again. What makes you think you know better than her?

[Note: For important information related to this topic (including the Church's infallibly defined dogma of 'No Salvation Outside the Church'), see flier: "The Importance of Being Catholic: Combating Religious Indifferentism".]

Does the Church Ever Allow Mixed Marriages?

Under certain circumstances, and under certain conditions, the Church has reluctantly granted dispensations for mixed marriages. However, as Pope Pius XI states, "If the Church occasionally on account of circumstances does not refuse to grant a dispensation from these strict laws (provided that the divine law remains intact and the dangers above mentioned are provided against by suitable safeguards), it is unlikely that the Catholic party will not suffer some detriment from such a marriage." (Pope Pius XI, "Casti Connubii", 1930 A.D.)

When mixed marriages have been tolerated in the past, certain conditions such as the following have always been attached:

"Can. 1061 § 1 The Church does not dispense from the impediment of mixed religion, unless: 1° Just and grave cause so urge; ° 2 The non-Catholic spouse gives a precaution to remove the danger of perversion from the Catholic spouse, and from both spouses [there is a promise] that all children will be baptized only Catholic and so educated; "3 There is moral certitude the cautions will be implemented. § 2 These cautions are regularly required in writing." (1917 Code of Canon Law)

"Can. 1062 The Catholic spouse is bound by the obligation of prudently taking care for the conversion of the non-Catholic spouse." (1917 Code of Canon Law)

"Passing now to that point about the requested assistance of parish priests in mixed marriages, we say that if the above named admonition to recall the Catholic party from the unlawful marriage has been fulfilled, and nevertheless he persists in his will be contract it, and

it is foreseen that the marriage will inevitably follow, then the Catholic priest can lend his material presence, nevertheless in such wise that he is bound to observe the following precautions: First, that he does not assist at such a marriage in a sacred place, nor clothed in any vestment betokening a sacred function, nor will he recite over the contracting parties any prayers of the Church, and in no way shall he bless them. Secondly, that he will exact and receiver from the contracting heretic a declaration in writing, in which with an oath in the presence of two witnesses, who also qualt to sign their names, he obligates himself to permit his partner the free use of the Catholic religion, and to educate in it all the children who shall be born without any distinction of sex...Thirdly, that the contracting Catholic make a declaration signed by himself and two witnesses, in which he promises with an oath not only never to apostatize from his Catholic religion, but to educate in it all his future offspring, and to procure effectively the conversion of the other contracting non-Catholic." (Pope Pius VI, 1782 A.D.)

The Church also warns:

"Also see that such toleration towards mixed marriages does not extinguish the memory of the canons execrating such marriages as well as of the constant care of the Church to prevent her children from entering into such marriages to the loss of their souls" (Pope Gregory XVI, "Quas Vestro", 1841 A.D.)

"If, indeed, in certain places, because of difficulties of place and conditions, such marriages are tolerated, the reason is surely a sort of moderation. It is in no way to be considered approbation or approval, but merely a toleration, brought about not willingly but by necessity to avoid greater evils. ... Moreover, if this Apostolic See, mitigating to some extent the full letter of the canons, has, on occasion, allowed such mixed marriages, it has done so only in serious cases and reluctantly. Moreover, it has done so only when precautions are taken to prevent the perversion of the Catholic spouse by the non-Catholic party. Also the Catholic party realized an obligation to work for the conversion of the other party; the Catholic party also realized that all offspring from such marriages be educated only in the sanctity of the Catholic religion. Such precautions are surely founded on divine law, against which, without any doubt, one seriously sins who rashly exposes himself or herself and future offspring to the danger of perversion." (Pope Gregory XVI, "Quas Vestro", 1841 A.D.)

"The Apostolic See has always ensured that the canons forbidding the marriages of Catholics with heretics have been observed religiously. Occasionally such marriages have been tolerated in order to avoid more serious scandals. But, even then, the Roman Pontiffs saw to it that the faithful were taught how deformed these marriages are and what spiritual dangers they present. A Catholic man or woman would be guilty of a great crime if he presumed to violate the canonical sanctions in this matter. And if the Roman Pontiffs themselves very reluctantly relaxed this same canonical prohibition in some serious cases, they always added to their dispensation a formal condition: that the Catholic party uset not be perverted, but rather must make every effort to withdraw the non-Catholic party from error and that the offspring of both sexes must be educated entirely in the Catholic religion." (Pope Gregory XVI, "Summo lugiter Studio", 1832 A.D.)

"Mixed marriages, which are contracted by Catholics with heretics or schismatics, are and remain firmly prohibited, unless, when a just and weighty canonical reason is added, and lawful cautions have been given on both sides, honestly and formally, a dispensation has been duly obtained from the impediment of the mixed religion by the Catholic party... IT]hey sin gravely who contract them in the presence of a non-Catholic minister, or in the presence of only a civil magistrate, or in any clandestine manner. Moreover, if any Catholics in celebrating these marriages seek and accept the service of a non-Catholic minister, they commit another sin and are subject to canonical censures." (Pope St. Plus X, "Provida sapientique", 1906 A.D.)

"But it may happen that these warnings and admonitions go unheeded and that some Catholic man or woman is unwilling to give up his perverse intention of entering upon a mixed marriage. If a dispensation is not requested or not obtained from the Church or it the necessary conditions or a certain one of them is not fulfilled, then it will be the duty of the priest to abstain not only from honoring the marriage itself with his presence, but also from announcing the marriage and from granting dimissory letters. You must admonish the priests and demand that they abstain from every such act. For one who has the care of souls and who acts differently, especially in the [applicable circumstances], would seem in some way to approve these illicit marriages by his actions. His works would encourage the liberty of those souls, a liberty which is permicious to their salvation and even to the cause of faith." (Pope Gregory XVI, "Summo lugiter Studio", 1832 A.D.)

"Thus, from your letter We learn that in your dioceses an abuse has become common: namely, that marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics, without any previous dispensation from the Church and without necessary precautions, are dignified with priestly blessing and saramental rites. It must be clear to you how deeply We are affected by this, especially since We perceive that once this license with regard to mixed marriages was introduced, it became widely disseminated. This in turn resulted in a rapidly spreading deadly indifference toward religion in your great kingdom, once so preeminent in the glory of the Catholic faith. Let us not be mistaken: We would scarcely have overlooked this practice if it had been known to Us earlier. This was the reason for Our silence. In the past the Apostolic See granted no dispensation whatsoever for entering such mixed marriages without the necessary preliminary conditions and without the customary regulations." (Pope Gregory XVI, "Quas Vestro", 1841 A.D.)

"... grieving very much that there are among Catholics those who, becoming shamefully deranged by a mad love, do not wholeheartedly abhor and think that they should refrain from these detestable marriages which Holy Mother Church has continually condemned and interdicted, and praising greatly the zeal of those bishops, who, by proposing severe penalties, endeavor to restrain Catholics from uniting themselves to heretics in this sacrilegious bond, His Holiness encourages, exhorts, and advises seriously and gravely all bishops, vicars apostolic, parish priests, missionaries, and every other faithful minister of God and of the Church who reside in those regions, to deter, in so far as they can, Catholics of both sexes from entering into marriages of this kind to the destruction of their own souls, and to make it their business to avert in every good way and efficaciously to hinder these same marriages." (Pope Benedict XIV, "Matrimonia, quae in lois", 1741 A.D.)

Remember that one's failure to heed the laws of the Church may result in danger to the soul.

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