

Support for Divorced and Separated

Witness to Marriage

Witness to Marriage encourages divorced and separated Catholics to remain faithful to God and His Church.

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Videos <[HOME](#)>

[Message from Bishop Tran](#)

On November 16, 2024 Bishop John Tran celebrated Holy Mass for the intentions of divorced and separated Catholics at St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church in Kennesaw GA.

[Introduction to Witness to Marriage](#)

Dr. Felix Menendez, STL, JCD, Court Administrator/Judge of the Archdiocese of Atlanta Metropolitan Tribunal, interviews Robert Babecka about Witness to Marriage.

[Video Series – How to Get an Annulment](#)

In this video series Dr. Felix Menendez, STL, JCD, Court Administrator/Judge of the Archdiocese of Atlanta Metropolitan Tribunal, explains how to get an annulment in the Catholic Church.

[Testimony - Persevering in Faithfulness](#)

Denise Jordan tells how remaining faithful to her marriage vows resulted in the return of her husband to the Catholic faith.

Background and Purpose <[HOME](#)>

Witness to Marriage is an association for divorced and separated Catholics who have not received declarations of nullity and strive to be faithful to God and His Church.

Our purposes are...

1. To encourage, support, and guide individuals who are civilly divorced or separated, but may be validly married to live faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. To bear witness to the world of the sanctity and permanency of marriage and the value of the virtue of chastity.
3. To support clergy in their accompaniment of divorced and separated Catholics and their work to promote a clear, supportive, and faithful message on marriage, divorce, and declarations of nullity.

Witness to Marriage is a lay apostolate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta Office. We are faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church and we operate with the assistance and guidance of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Office of Evangelization and Discipleship.

Marriage and family are being severely attacked in our society. Families are breaking apart and children are not being raised to believe that a Christian marriage is lasting. People who have entered into sacramental marriages that have been damaged by divorce or separation have not lost the opportunity to live out their marriage vows and to be witnesses to the world of the sanctity and permanence of marriage.

They can be sources of inspiration to each other, to those struggling in difficult marriages, and to those who have not entered into marriage.

Who should consider joining us?

Individuals who are divorced or separated who are waiting for an annulment or recognize that their marriage is or may be sacramental should consider joining us.

Joining Witness to Marriage simply means requesting to be put on our mailing list for meetings and other events. There are no dues and no sharing of contact information.

Contact Information (find out about upcoming activities) <[HOME](#)>

Robert Babecka
Witness to Marriage

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Robin Johnson
Witness to Marriage

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Resources <[HOME](#)>

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Frequently, separation or divorce can result in financial hardship for one or both spouses.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Georgia is there to help. Respecting the dignity of each person, St. Vincent de Paul Georgia brings hope and help to those in need so they may achieve stability and move toward self-sufficiency.

St. Vincent de Paul Georgia focuses on getting to know people in need and offers solutions in the areas of hunger, housing, clothing & furniture, transportation, healthcare, and more.

If you need assistance, please call (678) 892-6163 or visit www.svdpgorgia.org.



COUNSELING & GUIDANCE

Heartache, fear, anger, embarrassment, and confusion are common issues for spouses and children involved in separation and divorce.

The following organizations provide assistance.

The St. Raymond Nonnatus Foundation for Freedom, Family, and Faith

This Catholic non-profit organization offers spiritual outreach to Catholics affected by separation and divorce as well as families in crisis.

Free spiritual consultation is available with a Mercedarian friar.

Email director.srn@gmail.com to make an appointment. Podcasts for divorced and separated Catholics are available.

Subscribe at “Philly Nonnatus” on YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/@PhillyNonnatus>

More information? Go to www.Nonnatus.org or text/call 215-870-9913.



Holy Family Counseling Center provides counseling from a Catholic perspective for couples, individuals, and families. The center provides a safe place to heal and grow while honoring the dignity of the human person, marriage, and family.

For more information on counseling services and locations, please call 678-993-8494 or visit www.holyfamilycounselingcenter.com.



Retrouvaille is a Catholic ministry for couples in troubled marriages and for separated and divorced couples considering reconciliation.

For further information, please contact atlanta@retrouvaille.org or visit the local web site at www.helpourmarriage.org.



Abounding Joy Life Coaching

Achieve Healing and Renewal with Expert Support & Guidance. Get help to identify your next steps and relevant resources.

FREE Needs Assessment & Personal Consultation Call

CONTACT: Carolyn@AboundingJoyMinistry.com,
608-547-9484 AboundingJoyMinistry.com.



Remaining Faithful Following Divorce <[HOME](#)>

Catholics who have received a civil divorce are still married to their spouses in the eyes of the Catholic Church, and they are bound by the promises they made when they married. This obligation must be observed unless and until the Church declares the marriage invalid.

This discipline is based on Jesus' own clear teaching in the Bible. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 19, and in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, Jesus is very clear about the indissolubility of marriage and the impermissibility of divorce and remarriage. The Catholic Church's teaching about divorce and remarriage respects and upholds the dignity of marriage as taught by the Lord. This is especially important at a time when the truth about marriage is so little respected in the world.

A declaration of nullity is a determination by the Catholic Church that there was something missing that prevented the marriage ceremony from being a binding covenant, that is, a true Christian marriage.

Catholics who remain faithful to their promises may be able to receive the sacraments.

Every divorced Catholic who does not have a declaration of nullity is asked to prayerfully consider how generously he will answer God's call.

The following organizations offer support for Catholics who are separated or divorced, but have not received declarations of nullity:

Separated Faithful

Catholics who were reluctantly divorced or separated can continue to fulfill their marriage mission – to sanctify themselves and their spouses. Monthly, the group discusses the ongoing seven stages from the book, *The Gift of Self, A Spiritual Companion for Separated and Divorced Faithful to the Sacrament of Marriage*.

Conference phone call, second-Mondays, monthly at 9 p.m.
Contact SeparatedFaithful@outlook.com, with your name, parish, and city.

<https://marysadvocates.org/separated-faithful-monthly-telephone-sessions/>



Catholics for Marriage Restoration

Catholics for Marriage Restoration assists those who are unjustly abandoned or reluctantly separated from their spouse while they remain faithful to their marriage and hope for reconciliation.

<https://catholicsformarriagerestoration.com/>



ON-LINE SUPPORT

Divorced Catholic

Our mission is to help get you started—and keep you going—on the path to recovery, rebuilding, and renewal from divorce by providing you with information, resources, and encouragement.

Welcome to divorcedcatholic.com.



Catholic Divorce Support Group: Help & Healing Through Separation & Divorce on Facebook

This group was created specifically for Catholics discerning, going through, or trying to heal from separation or divorce. We're looking for guidance and support to move from survive into THRIVE, emotionally, spiritually, interpersonally, financially, physically and as a parent.



You're looking for less pain and more healing. You want to know that you are NOT alone. Maybe you have children who are being impacted by your separation/divorce.

If this is you, you're in the right place!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/catholicdivorcehelp>

PARISH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

Divorce/Separated Support at **St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church in Kennesaw** – Bi-weekly support meetings. Robin Johnson 770.330.4105

Separated/Divorced Group at **St. Joseph Catholic Church in Marietta** – This group meets Monday evenings and provides emotional and spiritual support for those who are going through the hurtful time of losing partners or who may have already experienced separation or divorce. For more information please contact Durland, georgiamccaslins@yahoo.com or Laurie, lak2885@outlook.com.

Divorced and Separated Support Group at the **Catholic Church of St. Ann in Marietta** - This program supports those in the parish and surrounding community who have gone through a divorce or separation. The group meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:30pm. The location may vary depending on availability. Visit [our calendar](#) for details. Please RSVP to Linda Walsh. Contact: Linda Walsh, RN, lwalshrn@st-ann.org, 770-552-6400 x6019, web page - <https://www.st-ann.org/divorced>

Divorced Catholic Program at **St. Brigid Catholic Church in John's Creek**, Hilda and Ron Reardon, gronreardon@gmail.com, web page - <https://saintbrigid.org/ministries/helping-healing/divorced-catholic-program/>

Divorced Catholic Ministry at **St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church in Sandy Springs**, contact – ldavis@judeatl.com

Surviving Divorce Program at **St. Peter Chanel Catholic Church in Roswell**, contact Deacon Mike Bickerstaff 678-832-1228, web site - <https://www.stpeterchanel.org/survivingdivorce>

Divorced Catholics at **St. Brendan the Navigator in Cumming**, contact 770-205-7969, web site - <https://www.stbrendansatl.com/divorced-catholics>

Activities [<HOME>](#)

Witness to Marriage hosts bi-weekly support sessions at St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church in Kennesaw. Text or email Robin Johnson, 770-330-4105, raj_rdms@yahoo.com, for details.

Witness to Marriage hosts monthly events. Events have included

- mornings of reflections with outside speakers
- trips to the Atlanta Botanical Garden, the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville AL, and the Shroud of Turin Exhibit in Cumming GA;
- restaurant outings; cookouts; holiday parties;
- as well as meetings discussing issues of interest—
 - Forgiveness and Anger
 - Praying for Our Spouses and Spiritual Warfare in the Family
 - Reconciling with My Spouse
 - Pursuing an Annulment
 - What do I Tell Others
 - Chastity and Holiness
 - Finding Joy with Your Cross
 - Sharing the Faith with Others.

Text or Email Robert Babecka, 678-939-3568, Bob@ymiCatholic.com, for details.

Understanding Annulments [<HOME>](#)

[Video Series – How to Get an Annulment](#)

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What if My Annulment is Denied? [<HOME>](#)

The declaration of nullity was not granted, what does that mean?

A declaration of nullity is a determination by a Catholic tribunal that there was something that prevented the marriage ceremony from being a binding covenant, that is, a true marriage.

The Church presumes that every marriage between two individuals is valid, and thus permanent, unless it can be proven with moral certainty that it was invalid.

A negative sentence means the evidence was insufficient to prove the marriage was invalid.

Is it possible the Church's decision was wrong?

The decisions of Church tribunals are not infallible, and thus are subject to error. The judges may have made a poor decision, or they may not have had enough evidence to conclude the marriage was invalid.

Can I appeal the decision?

You have the right to appeal a negative sentence if you believe the judgment was not correct. With the help of a canonical advocate, you will have to explain to the appellate court the reasons for your appeal.

Another option is to submit a new petition to the same tribunal but on different grounds that you may not have considered in the first trial, if you believe they caused the nullity of the marriage.

Am I allowed to receive the sacraments?

Divorce of itself is not an obstacle to receiving the sacraments. Sometimes a husband or wife forces a divorce on an innocent spouse. The innocent spouse may continue to receive the sacraments.

Furthermore, sometimes divorce is the only option for protecting your-self and your children. If sought for these reasons, you are not at fault and may continue to receive the sacraments.

However, if you initiate a divorce without a grave reason, this is objectively sinful and you must go to the sacrament of reconciliation before receiving the Eucharist.

What if I want to date again?

Remember, a civil divorce does not end a valid marriage. This question could be restated, "Is it OK for a married person to date someone besides his spouse?"

Ask yourself what would be permissible with members of the opposite sex if you and your spouse were happily married.

What if I am already in a second marriage?

If you are living as man and wife with a new partner you should not receive the sacraments. If your first marriage was valid and your spouse is still alive, your second marriage cannot be valid.

Should I leave the Catholic Church?

Separating oneself from the Church founded by Jesus Christ is never a good option. In order to return to the sacraments, persons who are divorced and civilly remarried without the benefit of an annulment should first consider if they can separate from their civil spouse. If there are good reasons why that is not possible, they should strive to live together in complete continence, that is, as "brother and sister." They then could return the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist, if doing so would not create scandal in the parish community. They should consult with their pastor before pursuing this path. Finally, if they cannot separate or live in complete continence, they should remain fully active in the Church, making a spiritual communion at Mass, praying

for the grace to one day return to the sacraments. These are not easy options and can feel like heavy crosses, but we know that “with God all things are possible.” (Mt. 19:26)