

GOSPEL PEARLS

Fidelity and celibacy

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And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it." (Matthew 19, 3-12)

Jesus restores the Old Law to its original purity. The indissolubility of Christian marriage guarantees the spouses the special assistance of divine Grace, without which it is very difficult to remain faithful to one another. Moreover, the indissolubility guarantees the equal dignity of man and woman. This is the very same Grace which enables men and women to remain faithful also enables consecrated persons to remain faithful to their promises of celibacy. Let us remember to entrust ourselves to God, so that he may keep us firm daily to the promises made solemnly before him.