

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
Georgetown University  
Washington, D.C.

*Marriage in the Catholic Church:  
A Survey of U.S. Catholics*

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Mark M. Gray, Ph.D.  
Paul M. Perl, Ph.D.  
Tricia C. Bruce, Ph.D.

To read this Survey in its entirety, go online to our St. Andrew Church website at [www.standrewcatholicchurch.org](http://www.standrewcatholicchurch.org), and then click on "Our Pastor's Webpage," and then scroll down to "Marriage Matters," then down to and click on "Marriage in the Catholic Church: A Survey of U.S. Catholics 2007 by CARA."

Vatican II Generation Catholics are the most likely to have ever been divorced and to believe divorce is acceptable “in all cases.” Pre-Vatican II Generation Catholics are least likely to believe divorce is acceptable in the case of financial troubles or falling out of love. Millennial Generation Catholics are the most likely to agree at least “somewhat” that couples do not take marriage seriously enough when divorce is easily available. However, these youngest Catholics are most likely to believe that living with a partner before marriage decreases the risk of divorce.

Mass attendance sub-group differences are prevalent throughout the results. Weekly attendees are more likely than those attending Mass less often to be currently married and to have been married in the Church and have a Catholic spouse. As one might expect, the more frequently respondents attend Mass the more likely they are to express confidence that they are “very familiar” with Church teaching on marriage.

More frequent Mass attendees are more likely than less frequent attendees to say their views of marriage are “very much” informed by their Catholic faith.

<b>Differences by Mass Attendance</b>				
Percentage of those respondents attending Mass as such responding				
	<b>Weekly or more</b>	<b>Once or a few times a month</b>	<b>Once or twice a year</b>	<b>Rarely or never</b>
Currently married	65%	55%	50%	46%
Married in the Church or married and had a marriage outside the Church convalidated	64	52	34	26
Currently married and spouse is Catholic	58	45	37	24
“Very familiar” with Catholic teaching on marriage	59	41	24	22
<i>Percentages saying their view of marriage has been “very” informed by the following:</i>				
Your Catholic faith	62	39	21	9

The more frequently respondents attend Mass the more likely they are to say their views of marriage are “very consistent” with the notion that marriage is a lifelong commitment, contributes to the common good of society, is a vocation, is a calling from God, and is shared with the extended family of the couple.

**Cont., Differences by Mass Attendance**

Percentage of those respondents attending Mass as such responding

	<b>Weekly or more</b>	<b>Once or a few times a month</b>	<b>Once or twice a year</b>	<b>Rarely or never</b>
<i>Percentages saying the following are “very consistent with my views”:</i>				
Marriage is a lifelong commitment	85%	73%	65%	51%
Marriage contributes to the common good of society	72	53	41	23
Marriage is a vocation	59	35	15	11
Marriage is a calling from God	58	43	21	11
Marriage is shared with the extended family members of the couple	58	41	31	21
<i>Percentages saying the following “very” closely reflects their understanding of the sacrament of marriage:</i>				
The sacrament of marriage extends beyond the wedding day.	90	77	55	40
Married love helps the couple care for others beyond their family.	64	55	31	23
Married love brings the husband and wife closer together and therefore closer to God.	63	51	23	20
Children bring the husband and wife closer together and therefore closer to God.	61	50	21	18
Married love reveals God.	62	42	20	14
Married love is imperfect yet holy.	53	42	20	15

More frequent Mass attendees are also more likely to say the following statements “very” closely reflect their understanding of the sacrament of marriage:

- The sacrament of marriage extends beyond the wedding day.
- Married love helps the couple care for others beyond their family.
- Married love brings the husband and wife closer together and therefore closer to God.
- Children bring the husband and wife closer together and therefore closer to God.
- Married love reveals God.
- Married love is imperfect yet holy.

Respondents who attend Mass at least once a month are more likely than less frequent attendees to agree at least “somewhat” that watching children grow up is life’s greatest joy. Weekly attendees are most likely to agree at least “somewhat” that it is important for spouses to share the same religious faith. Those attending Mass once or twice a year or less often are more likely than those attending more frequently to agree at least “somewhat” that marriage is whatever two people want it to be. The least frequent attendees are most likely to agree “somewhat” or “strongly” that marriage is not necessary if a couple decides to have children and that divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can’t seem to work out their marriage problems.

<b>Cont., Differences by Mass Attendance</b>				
Percentage of those respondents attending Mass as such responding				
	<b>Weekly or more</b>	<b>Once or a few times a month</b>	<b>Once or twice a year</b>	<b>Rarely or never</b>
<i>Percentage agreeing “somewhat” or “strongly”:</i>				
Watching children grow up is life’s greatest joy.	86%	88%	73%	70%
It is important for spouses to share the same religious faith.	56	38	33	19
Marriage is whatever two people want it to be.	46	52	60	61
Marriage is not necessary if a couple decides to have children.	7	16	17	22
Divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can’t seem to work out their marriage problems.	21	24	29	37
Believe divorce is acceptable “in all cases”	4	7	19	31
<i>Percentages saying divorce is acceptable in the following circumstances:</i>				
Infidelity	75	81	84	93
Falling out of love	39	48	66	76
Disagreement about having children	32	40	43	53
Disagreement about sexual issues	28	34	38	56
Disagreement about religion	22	28	31	41
Financial troubles	16	23	18	33

Three in ten Catholics who rarely or never attend Mass believe divorce is acceptable in all cases, compared to fewer than one in 20 of those attending Mass every week. Generally, the less frequently Catholics attend Mass the more likely they are to be more accepting of divorce for a variety of specific reasons including 126 infidelity, falling out of love, disagreement about having children, disagreement about sexual issues, disagreement about religion, and financial troubles.