

THE NEW BALTIMORE CATECHISM ANSWERS ALL YOUR
QUESTIONS ABOUT GAY MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND
CONDOMS April 11, 2016

Commissioned by the Third Council of Baltimore and first published in 1885, the Baltimore Catechism was the leading textbook of Roman Catholic doctrine used in Catholic schools of the United States until the 1960s. It offered clear-cut answers to major questions, such as “Who made me?” (Answer: God). But in light of Pope Francis’s latest exhortation, “Laetitia Amoris,” the editors of the Baltimore Catechism have just published a supplement that includes a number of new questions and answers. Here is a sample.

Question: Does the Roman Catholic Church approve gay marriage?

Answer: The Catholic Church is like a loving mother opening its arms wide to embrace everyone. It does not exclude anyone. It honors and cherishes loving relationships between people of every ethnicity and background, people of every color, creed, nationality, and orientation. It is not judgmental. It is a refuge for anyone who needs understanding, sympathy, and support.

Question: But does it approve gay marriage?

Answer: The church is like a loving mother, cherishing everyone, gay or sad, upbeat or downbeat, opening its maternal arms to—

Question: But does it approve gay marriage?

Answer: Marriage is a beautiful, ancient sacrament established by God in the Book of Genesis when he joined together Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, and bid them be one flesh till death did them part.

Question: But does the Church approve gay marriage?

Answer: Marriage is an institution founded to implement God’s primordial command to humankind: increase and multiply. Marriage is the sacred foundation of the family, which--

Question: But what about *gay* marriage? Does the Church approve it?

Answer: Naturally the Church hopes that any couple whose wedding it solemnizes will be happy about the ceremony.

Question: O come on. You know what I mean. Fess up: does the church approve marriage between two people of the same sex?

Answer: The Church loves all people regardless of their gender.

Question: I KNOW. YOU'VE MADE THAT BLINDINGLY CLEAR. BUT DOES IT APPROVE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE?

Answer: No.

Question: Whew! Finally. OK, what about divorce? Will the Catholic church now grant Holy Communion to any divorced Catholic who has re-married while his or her first spouse is still living?

Answer: Holy Mother Church opens her arms wide to all people, especially Catholics, without regard to ----

Question: Enough with the open arms already. By now those shoulder muscles must be getting damn sore. What about communion for divorced Catholics?

Answer: Heedless of shoulder pain, though it sometimes gets intense, Holy Mother Church opens her arms wide to receive Catholics who have re-married after having a previous marriage *annulled*.

Question: So now you *do* grant communion to re-married Catholics?

Answer: Actually no. If a marriage is annulled, even after lasting many years and producing half a dozen children, it is regarded as never having taken place at all. So in the loving eyes of Holy Mother Church, the recipient of an annulment who gets "re-married" has actually been married just once, and is therefore eligible to receive communion.

Question: How do you get an annulment?

Answer: Prove there was some major impediment to the marriage in the first place, such as the fact that one spouse maliciously concealed from the other his or her absolute loathing of kale.

Question: And what if you can't prove something like that?

Answer: Heedless of shoulder pain and backache as well, Holy Mother Church –

Question: STOP RIGHT THERE! FESS UP! IS THERE COMMUNION FOR DIVORCED CATHOLICS WHO RE-MARRIED WITHOUT AN ANNULMENT, OR NOT?

Answer: OK. Not. I mean strictly speaking, the answer is no. But I happen to know of one parish just outside Scranton where—

Question: Shhhhh. You don't want to be overheard, do you?

Answer: Just don't tell them I told you? OK?

Question: OK. Now what about contraceptives? The latest survey tells us that during their child-bearing years, 86% of Catholic couples use them.

Answer: I have news for you. Holy Mother Church does *not* open her loving arms wide to statistical data of that kind.

Question: So you reject these statistics?

Answer: Let's not talk about rejection and soulless statistics. Let's talk about the miraculous moment when a freshly conceived life is endowed with an immortal soul.

Question: But supposing a Catholic couple wants to forestall that miraculous moment?

Answer: They should abstain from any activity that might lead up to it.

Question: So if a Catholic wife wishes to forestall that miraculous moment, what should she do when her husband opens wide his loving arms to –

Answer: Please don't abuse my favorite phrase.

Question: OK, just tell me one way or another: does the Catholic church approve the use of contraceptives or not?

Answer: Not. But if you'll just step around the back of the building, I can tell you about--