Introduction: The Family, Sanctuary of Love

In a world that celebrates speed, convenience, and instant gratification, concepts like the indissolubility of marriage and lifelong family commitment seem outdated, even oppressive. Yet, the Catholic Church, faithful to Christ's teachings, continues to uphold the sanctity of marriage as a sacred and irrevocable bond.

So-called *"express divorce"*—a legal mechanism that allows marriages to be dissolved in record time—has become a symbol of a culture that prioritizes individual desires over the common good. But does it truly make us freer? Or is it, rather, a manifestation of selfishness disguised as autonomy?

In this article, we will explore:

1. **The Catholic vision of marriage** and why it is indissoluble.
2. **Express divorce in historical and social context**: How did we get here?
3. **Spiritual and social consequences** of family breakdown.
4. **A practical guide to strengthening marriage** from a theological and pastoral perspective.
5. **Alternatives to divorce**: Reconciliation, mercy, and hope.

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1. Marriage in Catholic Theology: A Sacred Bond

Jesus was clear:

> *"What God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matthew 19:6).*

Marriage is not merely a civil contract but a **sacrament**, a visible sign of Christ's unbreakable love for His Church (Ephesians 5:25-32). Thus, the Church teaches that:

- **Marriage is forever** (indissoluble).
- **It is a path to holiness**, where spouses help each other reach Heaven.
- **Children are the fruit and gift** of this love, not an optional accessory.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1603) defines it as *"a covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring."*

Why Does Divorce Go Against God's Plan?

- **It breaks a sacred promise** ("till death do us part").
- **It weakens the social fabric**, since the family is the basic cell of society.
- **It harms children**, who have the right to grow up in a united home.

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2. Express Divorce: Freedom or Modern Selfishness?

In recent decades, many countries have adopted *"express divorce"* laws, allowing marriages to be dissolved in a matter of days, without reflection periods or mediation attempts.

A Brief History of Divorce in the West

- **Before the 20th century**, divorce was rare and frowned upon.
- **1960s-70s**: The *"sexual revolution"* promoted divorce as "liberation."
- **21st century**: *Express divorce* turns marriage into something *"disposable."*

What Lies Behind This Trend?

1. **A throwaway culture**: Whatever does not provide immediate satisfaction is discarded (cf. Pope Francis).
2. **Radical individualism**: The *"self"* takes precedence over *"us."*
3. **Loss of the sense of sacrifice**: True love requires effort, but today love is confused with *"feeling good."*

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3. Consequences of Divorce: Beyond Immediate Pain

A) Effects on Children

- Higher risk of emotional, academic, and behavioral problems.
- Spiritual wound: Many lose faith after witnessing their parents' failure.

B) Effects on Society

- **Increased loneliness**: Broken families = more isolated adults and children.
- **Fatherhood crisis**: Absent fathers create insecurity in young people.
- **Weakening of faith**: If marriage fails, what else in the Church can fail?

C) Spiritual Effects

- **Divorce (without annulment) prohibits receiving Communion** (CCC 1650).
- **It is an occasion of sin**, especially if new unions are formed.

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4. Practical Guide: How to Save a Marriage in Crisis?

From a theological and pastoral perspective, the Church offers tools for healing, not condemnation:

1. Pray Together

- *"The family that prays together stays together"* (Fr. Peyton).
- Include prayers for your spouse, even if resentment exists.

2. Seek Spiritual and Psychological Help

- **Spiritual directors** and priests can provide guidance.
- **Catholic couples therapy**: Focused on forgiveness and grace.

3. Live the Beatitudes in Marriage

- *"Blessed are the merciful..."* (Matthew 5:7). Forgive seventy times seven.
- *"Blessed are the peacemakers..."* (Matthew 5:9). Avoid unnecessary arguments.

4. Remember That Love is a Choice, Not Just a Feeling

Love *"does not seek its own interest"* (1 Corinthians 13:5). In difficult times, choose to love, even when you don't *"feel like it."*

5. Turn to the Sacraments

- **Confession**: To heal moral wounds.
- **Eucharist**: Source of supernatural strength.
- **Anointing of the Sick**: If the relationship is *"ailing."*

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5. Alternatives to Divorce: Reconciliation and Mercy

If divorce has already occurred, the Church does not abandon anyone:

- **Marriage annulment**: If there was a defect in consent (not a "Catholic divorce" but a declaration of nullity).
- **Living in chastity**: If no annulment is granted, avoiding new unions.
- **Offering the pain to God**: As reparation for the sins of the world.

Conclusion: Rebuilding the Civilization of Love

Express divorce is not progress but a trap of the modern world that confuses freedom with selfishness. True freedom lies in loving as Christ loves: *"Unconditionally, without an expiration date."*

If your marriage is in crisis, **do not give up**. God can work miracles where there is faith. As St. John Paul II said:

> *"The family is the path of the Church."*

And on this path, though there may be crosses, there is also Resurrection.

What about you? Are you willing to fight for your family?

Practical Steps for Today:

 Pray an *Our Father* for your spouse.
 If there is conflict, seek dialogue, not escape.
 Read *“Love and Responsibility”* by St. John Paul II.

The family is worth it. **Let’s not let it die!**