

BLOGS COFFEE HOUSE

Pope Francis says most marriages today are 'invalid'. This is a disaster for the Catholic Church

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Pope Francis, spiritual leader of a billion people, has just informed them that 'the great majority' of sacramental marriages are invalid because couples don't go into them with the right intentions. He was speaking at a press conference in Rome. Here's the context, from the Catholic News Agency (my emphases):

'I heard a bishop say some months ago that he met a boy that had finished his university studies, and said "I want to become a priest, but only for 10 years". It's the culture of the provisional. And this happens everywhere, also in priestly life, in religious life,' he said.

*'It's provisional, and **because of this the great majority of our sacramental marriages***

are null. Because they say “yes, for the rest of my life!” but they don't know what they are saying. Because they have a different culture. They say it, they have good will, but they don't know.’

Uh? You can [read the full report here](#) but you won't be much the wiser. The Pope, thinking aloud in the manner of some maverick parish priest after a couple of glasses of wine at dinner, has just told millions of his flock that *they are not really married*.

Did he mean to say that? What does he really think? What authority do his words carry?



And why should Catholics even have to ask these questions? Francis's off-the-cuff ramblings on matters of extreme pastoral sensitivity are wreaking havoc in the Catholic Church, [as I've written here](#).

Ross Douthat of the New York Times has just tweeted this response:



Ross Douthat @DouthatNYT · 28m

"The great majority of our sacramental marriages are null." An extraordinary, irresponsible and ridiculous claim:

Michelle Bauman @Michelle_Bauman

Breaking: Pope Francis says most marriages today are invalid, due to an inadequate understanding of permanence bit.ly/1Ot474q



22



33



I suspect that even the Pope's most liberal admirers will have difficulty extricating him from this mess.

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