

Understanding the Catholic Church's Stance on The Legalization of Divorce in The Philippines: A Sequential Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the Catholic Church's stance on the legalization of divorce in the Philippines and its influence on the perceptions of Filipino Catholics. Employing a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, the research began with qualitative interviews to uncover core beliefs and concerns, followed by a quantitative survey to validate these findings among a broader sample. Results showed that religious beliefs, gospel values, Catholic Church teachings, and moral values strongly contribute to opposition against divorce, with respondents consistently affirming the sanctity, permanence, and sacramental nature of marriage. Prophet Sirach says: The husband of a good wife is a fortunate man; he will live twice as long because of her. A fine wife is a joy to the husband, and he can live out his years in peace. A good wife is among the precious blessings given to those who fear the Lord. Whether such men are rich or poor, they will be happy and always look cheerful. (Sirach 26:1-4). Although some respondents recognized the emotional and psychological toll of unhappy or abusive relationships, they still favored reconciliation and Church-led counseling over legal separation. Societal norms in the Philippines also continue to reflect conservative views, resisting alignment with global divorce trends. The study revealed a strong preference for pastoral care and emotional support rather than legal remedies. While there is acknowledgment of evolving realities in modern relationships, most participants still uphold Catholic doctrine as the guiding principle. These findings highlight the enduring influence of the Catholic Church in shaping attitudes toward marriage and family life and call for a more compassionate and context-sensitive pastoral response to marital challenges.

KEYWORDS: Catholic Church, Divorce Legalization, Filipino Values, Religious Beliefs, Pastoral Care, Family Structure

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church in the Philippines has long stood as a moral compass in shaping national values, particularly on issues related to family and marriage. As the only predominantly Catholic country where divorce remains illegal, the Church's unwavering opposition to its legalization is rooted in its sacred teachings on the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage. Guided by the Gospel and the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Church views marriage as a divine covenant that mirrors Christ's faithful love for His Church—permanent, exclusive, and life-giving.

In light of growing calls for legal reform and changing societal perspectives, the need to understand the depth and rationale of the Church's stance becomes ever more critical. This study, "**Understanding the Catholic Church's Stance on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines: A Sequential Exploratory Study**," seeks to explore how Church teachings influence Filipino Catholics' perceptions of marriage and divorce, and how these align or contrast with emerging public opinion and legislative discourse. Framed by the Catholic vision of faith, compassion, and moral responsibility, the research aims to promote respectful dialogue while upholding the values of truth, family unity, and pastoral care. Ultimately, the study hopes to contribute to a deeper societal understanding of the intersection between law, faith, and Filipino culture in the ongoing debate over divorce legalization.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Despite growing debates on the legalization of divorce in the Philippines, the Catholic Church continues to firmly oppose it, upholding marriage as a sacred, indissoluble covenant. In a nation where Catholicism plays a central cultural and moral role, this position strongly influences public opinion, policy discourse, and personal choices regarding marriage and separation. Yet, emerging narratives from individuals experiencing marital distress reveal a complex intersection between doctrine, lived experience, and evolving social values.

Given these findings, this study aims to address the following research problems:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 Age

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1.2 Sex

1.3 Marital status

2. What are the perceptions of individuals regarding the legalization of divorce in the Philippines in terms of:

2.1 Religious beliefs

2.2 Personal experiences

2.3 Societal norms

3. How does the Catholic Church's stance on divorce influence individuals and families in terms of:

3.1 Emotional and psychological well-being

3.2 Family structure and dynamics

3.3 Religious and moral values

4. Are there significant differences in individuals' perspectives on the Church's stance when grouped by demographic profile(e.g., age, sex, marital status)?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, beginning with a qualitative exploration followed by quantitative validation. The first phase involved gathering in-depth qualitative insights through interviews or focus group discussions with selected Catholic respondents to understand the underlying beliefs, values, and concerns related to the Church's stance on divorce. The emergent themes were then used to develop a structured quantitative survey instrument for the second phase to measure the extent of these perceptions among a broader population. This approach allowed the study to capture both the depth of individual experiences and the breadth of community-level perspectives on the issue. The study was conducted in areas with predominantly Catholic populations in the Philippines. Participants were purposively selected based on their religious affiliation, marital status, and willingness to share views. For the qualitative phase, 10–15 participants were selected for interviews. For the quantitative phase, 100 respondents completed a structured questionnaire. Qualitative Phase: Semi-structured interview guide focusing on themes such as personal experience with marriage, understanding of Catholic teachings, and views on divorce. Quantitative Phase: A researcher-made survey questionnaire based on the insights gathered from the qualitative phase. It included Likert-scale items assessing religious beliefs, personal experiences, societal norms, emotional well-being, family dynamics, and moral values.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This research was conducted in full compliance with the ethical guidelines set forth by **St. Michael's College of Iligan Inc. (SMCII)**. Prior to data collection, the study underwent review and approval by the **Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC)** to ensure that it adhered to the institution's standards for responsible and ethical research. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were fully briefed on the objectives, procedures, and potential risks of the study. Participants were assured of **confidentiality and anonymity**. Personal identifiers were not collected, and all responses were securely stored and encoded to prevent unauthorized access, particularly the participants' right to express views aligned with or different from the Catholic Church's stance, in a non-coercive and judgment-free environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2.1 Respondents' Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines in terms of Religious Beliefs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Divorce contradicts the sacred teachings of the Catholic Church.	4.40	0.493	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The Catholic Church's view on marriage as a lifelong commitment affects my perception of divorce.	4.90	0.303	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The sanctity of marriage should be preserved by discouraging divorce.	4.80	0.606	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Religious institutions should have a say in the legalization of divorce.	4.51	0.503	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The Catholic Church should not change its teachings on marriage, even if divorce becomes legal.	4.51	0.503	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
My religious faith guides my decisions regarding marriage and separation.	4.40	0.493	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The government should consider religious perspectives when discussing divorce legalization.	4.68	0.652	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

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The Catholic Church should promote reconciliation rather than allowing divorce.	4.80	0.606	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Divorce weakens the religious significance of marriage as a sacred union.	4.90	0.303	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Table 2.1 shows that the respondents overwhelmingly **Strongly Agree** with all statements relating to religious beliefs and their influence on perceptions of divorce. The highest mean scores are seen in the items “*The Catholic Church’s view on marriage as a lifelong commitment affects my perception of divorce*” and “*Divorce weakens the religious significance of marriage as a sacred union*”—both scoring **4.90** with a very low standard deviation (SD = 0.303), indicating strong consensus among respondents. Similarly, high scores for “*The sanctity of marriage should be preserved by discouraging divorce*” (M = 4.80) and “*The Catholic Church should promote reconciliation rather than allowing divorce*” (M = 4.80) reflect the deeply held belief in the sacredness and permanence of marriage within the Catholic tradition. These results confirm that the respondents’ religious identity significantly shapes their views on divorce, showing strong alignment with the Catholic Church’s doctrinal stance. The consistent high agreement across all nine indicators suggests that religious teachings are not only acknowledged but are also internalized and acted upon by the majority of participants. Recent studies affirm the findings. According to **Cabading and Galang (2022)**, Filipino Catholics generally uphold the sacramental understanding of marriage, which views divorce as inconsistent with Church teachings and detrimental to spiritual life. **Soriano (2021)** further asserts that religious doctrine remains a decisive factor in the moral reasoning of Filipino adults regarding family and social policy, with many viewing civil divorce as a threat to Catholic moral order. Additionally, **Del Castillo et al. (2020)** found that religious socialization—through catechism, family, and liturgy—continues to shape conservative views on marital permanence and contributes to the stigma surrounding divorce.

Table 2.2 Respondents’ Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines in terms of Personal Experiences

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
My personal experiences influence my stance on divorce more than religious teachings.	2.23	0.424	<i>Disagree</i>
I have personally witnessed the struggles of individuals in unhappy or abusive marriages.	2.43	0.717	<i>Disagree</i>
I know people whose lives have improved after separating from their spouses.	2.70	0.462	<i>Neutral</i>
If I were in an unhappy marriage, I would consider divorce as an option.	4.15	0.360	<i>Agree</i>
Personal happiness and well-being should be prioritized over staying in a failed marriage.	4.64	0.483	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Divorce is necessary for those in physically or emotionally abusive relationships.	4.77	0.424	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Table 2.2 presents mixed responses from the participants regarding their personal experiences and their influence on perceptions of divorce. The first three indicators, such as “*My personal experiences influence my stance on divorce more than religious teachings*” (M = 2.23) and “*I have personally witnessed the struggles of individuals in unhappy or abusive marriages*” (M = 2.43), received low mean scores with a qualitative description of **Disagree**, indicating that personal experiences have relatively **less influence** on shaping the respondents’ stance compared to religious beliefs. However, the statement “*I know people whose lives have improved after separating from their spouses*” had a neutral mean (M = 2.70), suggesting **some level of openness** or observation of the potential benefits of separation. In contrast, items directly related to **well-being and hypothetical personal circumstances** scored significantly higher. Respondents strongly agreed that “*Divorce is necessary for those in physically or emotionally abusive relationships*” (M = 4.77), and that “*Personal happiness and well-being should be prioritized over staying in a failed marriage*” (M = 4.64). Moreover, the statement “*If I were in an unhappy marriage, I would consider divorce as an option*” received a mean of 4.15 (**Agree**), revealing that while religious teachings are respected, there is **pragmatic awareness** of the need for alternatives when marriages become harmful.

Table 2.3 Respondents’ Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines in terms of Societal Norms

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Divorce should be legalized in the Philippines to align with global trends.	1.97	0.579	<i>Disagree</i>

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The stigma associated with divorce affects people's willingness to leave unhappy marriages.	2.33	0.769	<i>Disagree</i>
The absence of divorce laws in the Philippines is outdated compared to other countries.	3.30	0.462	<i>Neutral</i>
Divorce should be normalized to provide individuals with legal solutions to marital problems.	1.55	0.500	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
The idea that marriage should last forever is an unrealistic societal expectation.	1.64	0.483	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Social pressure discourages couples from seeking divorce even when necessary.	2.30	0.762	<i>Disagree</i>

Table 2.3 reveals that respondents generally **disagree** with the idea that divorce should be legalized to conform to global norms or to address marital challenges. The lowest mean scores were found in statements like “*Divorce should be normalized to provide individuals with legal solutions to marital problems*” (M = 1.55) and “*The idea that marriage should last forever is an unrealistic societal expectation*” (M = 1.64), both classified as **Strongly Disagree**, indicating strong resistance to normalizing divorce or altering traditional views of marriage longevity.

Other items, such as “*Divorce should be legalized in the Philippines to align with global trends*” (M = 1.97) and “*The stigma associated with divorce affects people's willingness to leave unhappy marriages*” (M = 2.33), also received low scores, reflecting **disagreement** with adapting marital norms to international standards or recognizing stigma as a major factor in divorce reluctance. Interestingly, only one item—“*The absence of divorce laws in the Philippines is outdated compared to other countries*”—received a **neutral** response (M = 3.30), suggesting that while some acknowledge the gap between local and global laws, it is not a strongly held concern.

Table 2.4 Respondents' Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines in terms of Emotional and Psychological Well-Being

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Staying in an unhappy marriage can lead to emotional distress.	3.98	0.670	<i>Agree</i>
The Catholic Church's opposition to divorce may prevent individuals from seeking help in abusive relationships.	1.66	0.477	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Fear of social judgment affects people's decisions about leaving a marriage.	2.66	0.477	<i>Neutral</i>
People who support divorce believe it can improve mental health outcomes.	1.58	0.497	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
The Catholic Church should offer more emotional support programs for struggling couples.	4.34	0.477	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Marital problems should be addressed through counseling rather than divorce.	4.77	0.424	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Table 2.4 shows a nuanced understanding among respondents regarding the emotional and psychological dimensions of divorce. Respondents **agreed** that “*Staying in an unhappy marriage can lead to emotional distress*” (M = 3.98), highlighting an awareness of the mental health implications of marital dissatisfaction. However, they **strongly disagreed** with the idea that “*The Catholic Church's opposition to divorce may prevent individuals from seeking help in abusive relationships*” (M = 1.66) and “*People who support divorce believe it can improve mental health outcomes*” (M = 1.58). These responses reflect a **firm belief that religious opposition does not hinder support-seeking behaviors**, nor do respondents strongly associate divorce with better mental health. Interestingly, respondents **strongly agreed** that “*The Catholic Church should offer more emotional support programs for struggling couples*” (M = 4.34), and “*Marital problems should be addressed through counseling rather than divorce*” (M = 4.77). This reveals a preference for **pastoral or therapeutic intervention over legal separation**, reinforcing the Catholic emphasis on reconciliation and community support over dissolution.

Table 2.5 Respondents' Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines in terms of Family Structure and Dynamics

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Children from divorced families may struggle with emotional and social stability.	4.55	0.500	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

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Legalizing divorce may encourage more people to leave their marriages rather than work through difficulties.	4.61	0.491	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Divorce can sometimes be a better option than maintaining a dysfunctional family environment.	2.37	0.486	<i>Disagree</i>
The well-being of children should be a primary consideration in decisions about divorce.	4.63	0.486	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Families should prioritize reconciliation before considering divorce.	4.81	0.396	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The legalization of divorce may change how future generations view marriage commitment.	4.91	0.289	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Table 2.5 reveals that the respondents hold a strong conservative stance on the role of divorce in the family context. The majority **strongly agreed** with key statements such as “*Children from divorced families may struggle with emotional and social stability*” (M = 4.55), “*Families should prioritize reconciliation before considering divorce*” (M = 4.81), and “*The legalization of divorce may change how future generations view marriage commitment*” (M = 4.91). These results reflect a clear concern that **divorce could erode long-standing values of family unity, emotional security, and marital permanence**. Respondents also **strongly agreed** that “*Legalizing divorce may encourage more people to leave their marriages rather than work through difficulties*” (M = 4.61), suggesting a fear that the availability of divorce could promote **marital complacency or avoidance of conflict resolution**. Interestingly, the statement “*Divorce can sometimes be a better option than maintaining a dysfunctional family environment*” received a low score (M = 2.37, **Disagree**), further emphasizing the dominant belief in **preserving the family unit**, even amid dysfunction, as long as reconciliation is seen as possible.

Table 2.6 Respondents’ Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines in terms of Religious and Moral Values

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
The Catholic Church’s teachings on marriage remain relevant in today’s society.	4.56	0.499	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The Catholic Church’s strong stance against divorce helps uphold moral values.	4.76	0.431	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The role of religion in personal relationships should be respected in legal matters.	4.29	0.457	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The Church should find a balance between upholding its moral values and recognizing the realities of failed marriages.	4.47	0.502	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
The Catholic Church should provide alternative solutions to couples struggling with marriage instead of outright opposing divorce.	4.67	0.474	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Table 2.6 reveals that the respondents **strongly uphold the relevance and authority of the Catholic Church’s teachings** on marriage in today’s society. The item “*The Catholic Church’s strong stance against divorce helps uphold moral values*” received one of the highest mean scores (M = 4.76), followed closely by “*The Catholic Church’s teachings on marriage remain relevant in today’s society*” (M = 4.56). These indicate a firm belief that Catholic doctrine continues to serve as a moral compass for many Filipinos. Interestingly, while respondents strongly support traditional Church teachings, they also **recognize the need for pastoral responsiveness and compassionate outreach**. High agreement was recorded for the statement “*The Church should find a balance between upholding its moral values and recognizing the realities of failed marriages*” (M = 4.47), and even more so for “*The Catholic Church should provide alternative solutions to couples struggling with marriage instead of outright opposing divorce*” (M = 4.67). This suggests that respondents value the Church’s moral framework but also desire a more **adaptive and empathetic pastoral approach** to marital problems.

Table 2.7 Summary of the Respondents’ Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
Religious Beliefs	3.89	5.00	4.65	.343	<i>Strong Opposition</i>
Personal Experiences	2.33	3.00	2.51	.266	<i>Tends to Support</i>
Societal Norms	3.33	4.17	3.82	.290	<i>Opposition to Divorce</i>
Emotional and Psychological Well-Being	3.00	3.83	3.40	.293	<i>Opposition to Divorce</i>
Family Structure and Dynamics	3.00	3.67	3.35	.230	<i>No Clear Stance</i>
Religious and Moral Values	4.00	5.00	4.55	.332	<i>Strong Opposition</i>
Overall Attitude Toward Divorce Legalization	3.43	3.95	3.71	.106	<i>Opposition</i>

Note: All items were scored or reverse-coded such that higher means indicate stronger opposition to divorce legalization.

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The summary of respondents' perceptions regarding the legalization of divorce in the Philippines, as presented in Table 2.7, reveals an overarching stance of opposition. The highest levels of resistance were observed in the domains of Religious Beliefs ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.343$) and Religious and Moral Values ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.332$), both of which indicate strong opposition rooted in the Catholic Church's doctrinal teachings on the sanctity and permanence of marriage. Similarly, Societal Norms ($M = 3.82$) and Emotional and Psychological Well-Being ($M = 3.40$) yielded mean scores that reflect general opposition to divorce legalization, suggesting that respondents are cautious about aligning Philippine marital laws with global secular trends and recognize the psychological implications of divorce through a morally conservative lens. The domain of Family Structure and Dynamics produced a mean of 3.35, interpreted as no clear stance, which may reflect respondents' ambivalence about the long-term impact of divorce on children and familial integrity. Interestingly, only the Personal Experiences domain ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 0.266$) reflected a tendency to support divorce legalization, indicating that lived experiences—particularly exposure to marital conflict or abuse—may soften opposition otherwise informed by religious conviction. The overall composite score ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.106$) confirms a prevailing oppositional attitude toward the legalization of divorce among the respondents, consistent with the influence of Catholic doctrine in Filipino society.

Table 3 Comparison of the Respondents' Perception on the Legalization of Divorce in the Philippines When Grouped According to Profile

Profile		Attitude Toward Divorce Legalization		F-Test/ t-test value	p-value
		Mean	QI		
Age	21 - 25 years old	3.69	OD	0.31	.737
	26 - 39 years old	3.72	OD		
	40 - 45 years old	3.73	OD		
Sex	Female	3.72	OD	0.72	.474
	Male	3.69	OD		
Marital Status	Married	3.72	OD	1.20	.235
	Not Married	3.70	OD		

Note: OD - Opposition to Divorce

As shown in Table 3, respondents' attitudes toward the legalization of divorce in the Philippines were analyzed according to age, sex, and marital status. Across all demographic groups, the mean scores consistently fall within the range interpreted as opposition to divorce legalization (OD). Specifically, respondents aged 21–25 ($M = 3.69$), 26–39 ($M = 3.72$), and 40–45 ($M = 3.73$) all demonstrated similar levels of opposition, with no statistically significant difference among age groups ($F = 0.31$, $p = .737$). Similarly, both female ($M = 3.72$) and male respondents ($M = 3.69$) expressed comparable oppositional views ($t = 0.72$, $p = .474$), as did married ($M = 3.72$) and not married ($M = 3.70$) participants ($t = 1.20$, $p = .235$). These results indicate that demographic variables such as age, sex, and marital status do not significantly influence individuals' perceptions, and that opposition to divorce legalization is broadly shared across respondent profiles. This uniformity suggests a deeply rooted socio-religious consensus, likely influenced by prevailing Catholic moral teachings, that transcends generational and personal marital experiences.

SUMMARY

The study examined the perceptions of Filipino respondents regarding the legalization of divorce in the Philippines, focusing on six domains: religious beliefs, personal experiences, societal norms, emotional and psychological well-being, family structure and dynamics, and religious and moral values. Findings revealed strong opposition to divorce legalization, especially within the context of religious teachings. Respondents overwhelmingly affirmed the relevance of Catholic doctrine and expressed strong belief in marriage as a sacred and lifelong commitment. While personal experiences with marital difficulties were acknowledged, they did not significantly override religious convictions. In terms of societal norms, respondents rejected the idea that Philippine society should align with global divorce trends, and they maintained that marital permanence remains a valued cultural expectation. Although emotional distress in unhappy marriages was recognized, divorce was not perceived as a primary solution; instead, there was strong support for counseling and Church-led emotional support. Concerns were also expressed regarding the impact of divorce on children and the potential weakening of marriage commitment among future generations.

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FINDINGS

1. Religious beliefs strongly shape public opposition to divorce legalization.

Respondents consistently demonstrated strong agreement with statements affirming the Catholic Church's teachings on the sanctity and permanence of marriage. Religious convictions remain the most influential factor guiding attitudes toward divorce, with respondents believing that Church teachings remain relevant and morally grounding in modern society.

2. There is limited influence of personal experience on attitudes toward divorce.

Despite some respondents recognizing the challenges of unhappy or abusive marriages, most did not let personal experiences override their religious beliefs. Support for divorce was more evident only in hypothetical or extreme situations, such as abuse, indicating a conditional openness rather than broad acceptance.

3. Societal norms in the Philippines remain conservative and resistant to global trends.

Respondents disagreed with aligning Philippine divorce laws with international practices and rejected normalizing divorce as a societal expectation. This reflects a deeply rooted cultural adherence to traditional family values and resistance to liberal shifts in marital norms.

4. There is a call for pastoral support rather than legal separation.

While divorce is not broadly supported, respondents strongly agree that the Catholic Church should expand its emotional and counseling support for couples in crisis. They favor reconciliation and psychological guidance over legal dissolution, suggesting a desire for compassionate, faith-aligned interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Catholic Church's influence remains deeply embedded in the moral, cultural, and personal convictions of Filipino respondents regarding the legalization of divorce. Across all measured domains—religious beliefs, personal experiences, societal norms, emotional and psychological well-being, family structure, and moral values—there is a clear pattern of **strong opposition to divorce**, rooted primarily in the belief that marriage is a sacred, lifelong covenant. While respondents acknowledged the emotional distress experienced in dysfunctional marriages and the need for greater support, their preference leaned heavily toward **pastoral care, reconciliation, and counseling** rather than legal separation. Even when confronted with the realities of abusive relationships or personal struggles, religious teachings and the desire to preserve family unity continued to shape their perspectives. Furthermore, the findings suggest that Filipino society maintains a **conservative stance** on divorce, resisting global trends and emphasizing the importance of upholding traditional family structures. Nonetheless, the call for the Catholic Church to offer **alternative solutions and compassionate interventions** indicates a growing awareness of the complex realities of modern relationships. Ultimately, the study reinforces the enduring role of Catholic values in Filipino society while highlighting the need for a more empathetic and responsive pastoral approach to marital issues.

VOX POPULI VOX DEI (Jose Mario Bautista Maximiano)

1. "The voice of the people is the voice of God," or vox populi vox Dei, though ancient, might sound ground-breaking.
2. But it could only make a "windsock" out of the Church that blows with the prevailing breeze, unfortunately confusing the moral truth with the majority opinion. [I am paraphrasing Senator Jasper Irving's monologue in the drama film *Lions for Lambs* (2007), in which Tom Cruise plays the role of Senator Jasper Irving].
3. Even if more and more Filipinos "strongly agree" with legalizing divorce, the profound shift in Filipinos' attitudes cannot change the immoral nature of divorce. Anything immoral cannot become good just because it is approved and accepted by the majority.
4. In the Christian point of view, "love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement 'until further notice'" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1646).
5. When President Bongbong Marcos, was married to Atty. Liza Araneta in Italy in 1993, they knew they entered into a commitment that is lifetime: "Hindi tulad nang pagsubo ng kain na iluluwa kapag napaso." They knew that such a commitment is not dictated by a human law but by a divine law.
6. When Joe Biden married Neilia Hunter in a Roman Catholic wedding in 1966, they vowed, "until death do us part." Because of his commitment, Joe Biden married his second wife, teacher Jill Tracy, only after his first wife Neilia died in an automobile accident in 1972.

DIVORCE REMAINS THE SAME: IT IS IMMORAL.

1. Why? Because God says so.
2. The Bible, with the Catholic tradition and magisterium, defends the indissolubility of marriage—even when some congressmen and senators have argued that Israel, the country of Jesus Christ by birth, has a divorce law, that the Philippines is the earth's last bastion of absolute marriage, and that the Vatican is the only other state with no divorce law.

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3. Matrimony is neither a signed legal document nor a suggestion.
4. IT IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION. The Moral command of God is higher than the legal command instituted by man. OBEY GOD AND NOT MAN!
5. "Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mark 10:9).

RECOMMENDATION

This study holds importance for several key sectors, particularly the Diocese, the Catholic Church, and the academic research community.

For the Diocese, the findings offer concrete insights into how parishioners perceive the Church's stance on divorce. This can guide diocesan leaders and pastoral workers in designing more responsive faith-based programs, including family ministries, marriage counseling, and support systems that address the emotional and psychological needs of couples while remaining grounded in Catholic teachings. The study encourages dioceses to foster pastoral approaches that balance moral teachings with real-life marital challenges.

For the Catholic Church, this research reinforces the continuing influence of its doctrines in shaping Filipino social values but also highlights the emerging call for compassionate engagement with couples in distress. The results can be used to inform national-level pastoral strategies, improve catechetical content, and expand Church-led interventions that prioritize reconciliation, mental health, and moral formation. It serves as a basis for reimagining pastoral care in the modern context without compromising theological principles.

For future researchers, the study provides a foundation for further exploration of the intersections between religion, law, and personal well-being. It opens avenues for comparative studies, policy analysis, and qualitative inquiries on how faith communities can engage with evolving social issues such as divorce, family breakdown, and emotional resilience.

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