

The Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, our direct interpreter of the wishes of the Holy See, has written many times to the Bishops of this country to urge them to stop the ever-increasing plague of mixed marriages.

So did the first Council of Montreal lay special stress upon these teachings, cautioning the faithful against such unions (4).

When for very serious reasons, the Church tolerates such a marriage, she does so with the deepest regret. Its celebration cannot take place within the church, all blessings, acts of worship or religious ceremonies are banished from it. It is reduced to a cold formula — the strict essentials — by which the parties express mutual consent. The Church wishes to participate in this ceremony in the least possible degree, and the priest assists only as a sad and silent witness.

But why then does the Church display such severity? It is because she fully understands the deplorable consequences of mixed marriages; it is because she regards them as detrimental to the domestic happiness and to the eternal salvation of both parents and children.

For marriage by its very nature establishes between husband and wife the most intimate relations. According to the words of Holy Writ, it unites them in such a way that they "are but one". Now what intimacy can there exist between two beings who have neither the same ideas nor the same feelings on the fundamental questions of religion—who never pray together, who go to different churches, who have contradictory practices even in sickness and in death? In such a household, by common agreement, absolute silence is kept on everything which is connected with the teachings or discipline of the Church; and then religious indifference, with its pernicious influence, will soon pervade the home, or there will

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(4) Tit. vi, Decret. XVII.