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A Respectful Hello,

I know that the conference on Marriage and the Family is scheduled for October of this year. For many years, as a Catholic priest, I have discussed this topic with friends. I submit my suggestion for inclusion in the October conference:

I have prepared and performed many weddings during more than 50 years of ministry. Always, the understanding has been a commitment to "until death do us part". The traditional understanding of that commitment has been "until the biological death of one of the parties". During these many years I have seen "the death of marriage" itself while both parties remain biologically alive. As the human body makes every effort to survive in life, so also the parties in marriage make every effort for the survival of their marriage. Even with best efforts, "some marriages die" in spite of the painful efforts on the part of the parties to keep the marriage alive. The death of marriage versus the traditional understanding of biological death of one of the parties, is worthy of consideration for those who have struggled painfully to keep their marriages alive but the sad and mournful result was "the death of their marriage" and subsequent divorce.

The annulment process looks to the prior non-existence of a marriage. That is different from a valid marriage which was alive and, after a period of time, dies.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts.

Rev. James Power