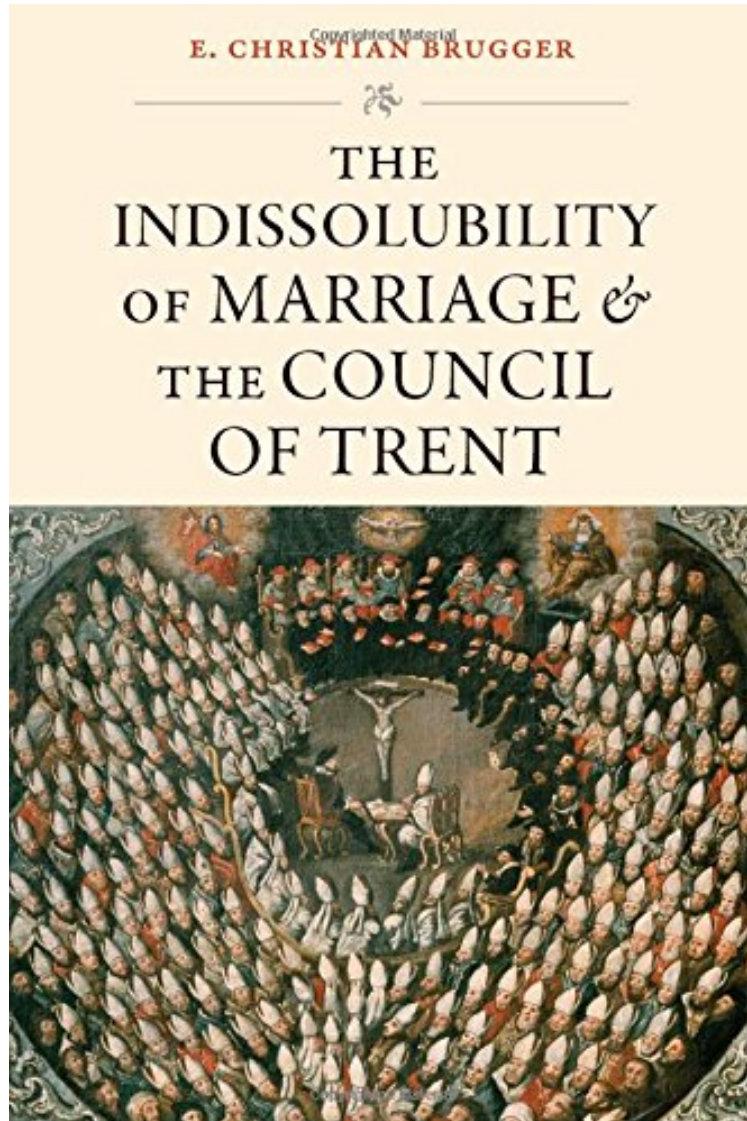


(Free download) The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent

# The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent

*E. Christian Brugger*

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**E. Christian Brugger : The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent:

This important volume examines the Catholic Church's doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage as taught by the 16th century Ecumenical Council of Trent (1545-1563). In the Council's reply to Reformation challenges on the

sacraments, it took up the question of whether anything in particular, adultery could dissolve a sacramental marriage. The question was discussed at length in 1547, and again, after a lengthy delay, in 1563. The considerations culminated in doctrinal definitions on marriage invested with the full authority of the Catholic Church. For historical reasons that the author considers in detail (reason related to the relationship between Rome and the Greek Orthodox churches), the most important of these definitions Canon 7 was ambiguously worded. This has led to a centuries-long debate on the intentions of the council for the meaning of that canon, and, indeed for the council's wider teaching on marital indissolubility. E. Christian Brugger aims to shed light on this debate. *The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Council of Trent* begins by laying out the fundamental questions addressed by Trent, the ambiguities of Canon 7, and the nature of the interpretive debate that's been underway since the early seventeenth century. It examines the views on divorce and remarriage of Luther and Calvin as the council fathers would have known them, as well as the beliefs and practices of the Greek churches. It then undertakes an analysis of the conciliar discussions as recorded in Trent's formal register (the *Acta*) and other primary documents. Brugger further provides an interpretation of the Council's final teaching on indissolubility. This interpretation draws attention to subtleties overlooked by most commentators on Trent. These have either over-interpreted the scope of the Council's teaching, arguing that its canons explicitly placed the divorce practices of Greek Christians under an anathema, or they have argued that the Council, intending no more than to strike the heresies of the Protestants, exempted Greek divorce from its authoritative promulgations. Drawing on both interpretations but siding with neither, Brugger proposes that Trent did indeed dogmatically teach the absolute indissolubility of sacramental marriage, while conceding a policy of toleration but not approval for Greek divorce for the sake of ecclesial communion between the churches.