AFRICAN PSYCHO-RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING OF 'RATUM ET
CONSUMMATUM' VERSUS CATHOLIC CHURCH'S TEACHING: A
PASTORAL ISSUE TODAY

A STUDY WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL
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DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study work is my original work and has never been submitted for any academic credit to any other institution.

Signed ........................................

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Date...21/11/2001

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the College Supervisor.

Signed........................................

Rev. Prof. Raphael Wanjohi.

(Supervisor)

Date...31 January 2001
DEDICATION

The work is initially dedicated to all married and unmarried brothers and sisters who are in one way or another affected by the issue of *African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus the catholic church's teaching on marriage*. Furthermore, to all pastors in the pastoral field whose work is to care for the marriage vocations and family life.
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ABSTRACT

On Friday 21st Jan. 2000, the Holy Father received the prelate Auditors, Officials and Advocates of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota for the solemn opening of the judicial year. Addressing the Jurists in the Sala Clementina of the Apostolic Palace, the Pope spoke of the possible juridical effect of the current divorce mentality on the marital consent and reiterated the church’s constant teaching that ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power not even the Roman pontiff. The Holy Father insisted on the church’s fundamental duty to reaffirm strongly as the Synod Fathers did, the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage (FC.20) in order to dispel the shadow that seems to be cast over the value of the indissolubility of the conjugal bond by certain opinions stemming from theological and canonical research (L’osservatore Romano, 26th Jan. 2000).

Looking at our African situation whereby the marriage issue is one of the major challenges in the pastoral work in the parishes and this declaration of the Holy Father to all Christians, I started to ponder about our church here in Africa where there is a lot of an accentuate increase of marriage dissolution. Reading in the Newspapers, magazines and articles we find a lot of marriages broken e.g. separation of ratified and consummated marriage, divorce, cohabitation and the like.

Reflecting on what might be the causal factor, I realized that there is misunderstanding between our African culture and traditional understanding of marriage.
with that of Catholic Church's teaching. For instance, African culture, which allows marriage separation, polygamy etc., differs with the church's teaching on indissolubility and monogamy of marriage.

It is in line with this, we made an assumption that *African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus catholic church's teaching is a pastoral issue today* which requires an immediate solution for the betterment of African Christian people. It is from this assumption that we were prompted to carry out this research work for the justification that *African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus catholic church's teaching is a pastoral issue today*. The results, discussions carried out are placed in this research work. All findings placed in this research work are emanating from the responses of the respondents from Arusha Archdiocese in Tanzania. The data were discussed and analyzed in which the recommendations and practical pastoral suggestions for the future research were developed.
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CHAPTER ONE
1:0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1:1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the year 1999 when I was home for my long vacation, I paid my parish priest at Umbwe a visit. The parish priest gave me a warm welcome. After exchanging pleasantries, we started sharing our life experience. He asked me to share about my community life and studies. I shared about my life in the community and the difficulties I have encountered in my studies. He too shared about his life and pastoral work as a parish priest. In the course of our sharing, he said, “Personally, the greatest difficulties I encounter in my apostolate here in the parish are the marital problems”. He added, “There are many conflictual cases and difficult ones about marital life, based on sacramental marriage and the adopted traditional marriage”.

To my dismay, the parish priest did not mention any problem concerning HIV/AIDS patients and poverty of the people, which I perceived to be most rampant in the parish. I posed a question to him: “Father, what exactly are the problems that you are facing on this pastoral issue on marriage?” He mentioned a number of things. Just to mention a few of them: how to reconcile our African understanding of Ratification and Consummation of marriage with that of the Catholic Church’s teaching on marriage. The people who earnestly desire baptism and other sacraments meanwhile have contracted polygamous marriages. The problem of separation and divorce: he said, some people come to him asking for divorce, saying, ‘Father you blessed our marriage, but my wife is not conceiving, so I want to divorce and re-marry’. Others would say, “My husband is not capable of giving me a child, so I had better get another man who can give me a child”. Another problem he mentioned is widow inheritance. With all these problems concerning marriage I found that this is really a pastoral problem to be researched on.

This gave me the interest and enthusiasm to research more on this pastoral problem of the African traditional marriage versus Catholic Church marriage. Fortunately, when the college
resumed, I found among the courses offered for the first semester under 'Pastoral Choices' a 'Pastoral Psychology' course. I opted for this course expecting to discuss this marriage problem as a pastoral issue today. But among the topics offered by our professor, Wanjohi Raphael, there was a topic called “African Psycho-Religious Understanding of Ratum et Consummatum Versus the Catholic Church’s Teaching: a Pastoral Issue Today”. With some colleagues and with our lecturer, I discussed the topic in length. I became more convinced that I should develop it for the good of our pastoral work in the future. For as long as this confrontation of marriage values persists, African Catholic Christians will remain alienated from their culture; a reality that makes them marginal Christians, who marry in the church and practice African traditional norms of marriage which are contrary to church teaching.

1:2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Having great respect for the freedom of men and women, Jesus Christ entrusted his mission to us to be responsible for the progress of his church. Both clergy and laity are responsible for its growth. But as we have seen already, in the background of the study there is an obstacle for its growth. The obstacle is the pastoral problem encountered in the people’s marriage life concerning traditional customs and practices. Kirwen (African Widow, 1979, 1) justifies this by simply stating “One of the most pressing problems facing the African Christian Churches is the constant confrontation between African Marriage Customs and the Christian Marriage Customs taught and enforced by Western missionaries”

It is here that the problem lies. First of all it is impossible to study all the challenges concerning the pastoral problems on marriage. Therefore, I have chosen to consider just one aspect of it which underlines many others. This is the problem concerning an African Psycho-Religious understanding of Ratum et Consummatum versus the Catholic Church’s teaching as the subject.

In actual fact many of our people follow their African traditional marriage customs. They consider the Church blessing of the marriage as something to be added to the traditional marriage
in order to be in agreement with the teaching of the Catholic Church. After the Church celebration
some of them either take a second wife and become polygamous or divorce the first wife if there is
no offspring.

These problems (psycho-religious) result from these two contrary views of marriage. The
person who marries in the church and at the same time practices traditional marriage customs –
especially those elements contrary to church teaching becomes disintegrated and divided. They
become psychologically affected or disoriented. That is why it is necessary to have a deep
reflection on the sacrament of marriage in the life of the Church entrusted to us by Christ Jesus.

1:3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

First: to find out whether this psycho-religious problem exists and is a pastoral issue today.

Second: to identify the major cause(s) of this problems affecting both the people and those
in the pastoral field.

Third: to find out what can be done in order to reconcile the two confronting teachings on
Ratum et Consummatum i.e. the African traditional understanding and the Catholic Church’s
teaching.

Fourth: to find out whether there are common elements to be shared by the two: African
understanding of ratum et consummatum and that of the Catholic Church’s teaching.

Fifth: to investigate the pastoral approach to be followed or rather recommendations to be
applied in order to minimize if not to eradicate, this psycho-religious problem existing among the
people.

1:4 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.

This work submitted to the pastoral department is a partial fulfillment of the requirements
for Bachelor of Arts, in religious studies. The study will concentrate on the African Psycho-
Religious understanding of Ratum et Consummatum versus Catholic Church’s teaching: a pastoral
issue today.
Our study will therefore deal with two aspects: First, when are Catholic Church marriages considered ratified and consummated? Second, when are African marriages considered ratified and consummated? Is it a static or dynamic process? Where the study was carried out and when the researcher started collecting data and the methodology employed are widely discussed in the third chapter.

The study remains within the limits and requirements as set out the rule in the academic yearbook of Tangaza College. The college requires the final written project to have ten to twelve thousand words of the text (excluding preface, table of contents, bibliography etc.). The work therefore, will adhere to this requirement as much as possible. The work totals five chapters: Chapter one is the General Introduction; Chapter two is the Literature Review; Chapter three is the Research Methodology; Chapter four is the Research Findings: the results, discussion and presentations of the interpretations and Chapter five is the recommendations, pastoral suggestions and conclusion.

During the data collection, the researcher was faced with many difficulties. To mention just a few of them, the major limit problem was respondents not keeping the promise made for meeting the researcher. Some of them did not keep to the time agreed with the researcher. Some did not complete the work as required by the researcher, as we shall see in the population sampling in chapter three. Another limitation faced by the researcher was the 'Language'. The researcher was compelled to use the Kiswahili language for data collection. This is because the majority of the respondents were more conversant with it than English.

Another minor limit was that during the data collection some of the respondents were suspicious that the researcher was sent to investigate on how they do their pastoral work.

1:5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are many reasons why this study is significant. First, there is a need to research the existing pastoral situation and the African understanding of Ratification and Consummation of marriage
versus church teaching on marriage. This may be summed up in this question: how can Africans, without dissolving their cultural identity and without prejudice to the message of the Gospel, ensure mutual relationship between the two realities of marriage. The work therefore, calls for the pastoral solutions or rather approach to the problem facing our people in this sensitive area of marriage. It comes as an eye-opener and a challenge to all-pastoral agents in Africa such as the ecclesial community, religious congregations, family action movements, secular institutes, Parish Pastoral care for the young couple, catholic men or women associations etc. to re-evaluate their commitment to the integration of African Psycho-Religious understanding of Ratum et Consummatum with that of Catholic Church’s teaching in an effort to make the latter meaningful to our African Christian people.

Second, the work explores the means and ways in which the Gospel message can liberate the people from repressive customs, beliefs and practices connected with marriage. Hopefully this work will help us understand why today we need a serious reflection on the marital problems.

Third, a serious reflection on the topic of inculturation. The African Synod considered inculturation as a priority in the life of the local churches for a firm rooting of the Gospel especially here in Africa. The synod came to an understanding of inculturation as “ultimate transformation of the authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the human culture” (John Paul II, 1995, 44). The study, therefore, will indicate how we can update the customary marriage to fit the Gospel preached to the people: by providing information or ways on how to modify African traditional marriage rites to fit the values of the Gospel.

Fourth, to show that the pastoral responsibilities on marriage extended to the whole family and to the whole of the Christian community; to awaken people in their understanding of sacramental marriage and marital preparation and the integration of customary and Christian marriage values; to remind parents of their responsibilities in nurturing their children’s faith and
educating them on the values of marriage. The priests must give this apostolate an important place in their ministry.

1:6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

"Ratum" (participle), is a Latin word, derived from the word ‘roar’ which means to reckon or judge. The word ‘ratum’ in its passive sense means reckoned, determined or settled. Hence ‘ratum fecere’ means to ratify, to confirm, to make valid.

“Et” is a Latin word used as an ‘adverb’ or ‘conjunctive’. As an adverb means ‘also’ or ‘even’. As a conjunctive it means ‘and’. Hence, it is here used as a conjunctive.

"Consummatum” is a Latin word, from the word ‘consummatio’ which means a summing up, completion, consummation. Hence, consummumat (participle) means complete, perfect consummated (The Classic Latin Dictionary, 1957, 131 & 468).

In order to understand better an African psycho-religious understanding of ‘ratum et consummatum’ let us consider the two terms: Ratum et Consummatum. When we talk of the two terms we mean the following: on the one hand, the term ‘Ratum’ signifies two things: positive and negative. Positively, it means ‘ratified and confirmed’ i.e. a merely ratified marriage existing between two baptized persons, which enjoys a particular firmness because it is a sacrament. Negatively, it is not yet consummated Can.1061 par.1. Hence, ratification is the union resulting from the exchange of consent in a valid marriage ceremony before the consummation of marriage.

On the other hand, the term, ‘Consummatum’ i.e. consummation refers to sexual intercourse which takes place after exchange of consent, as the intimate expression of human love. This embraces some four elements which if they are present the couple become ‘one flesh’ (Ngono - a Swahili word for consummation) as mentioned in the book of Genesis [2:24]. These elements include: (i) Some erection of the male organ (ii) with at least some partial penetration of the vagina (iii) also with at least a minimal emission within the vagina (iv) performed in a natural manner, Can. 1061 par. 1. Consummation, therefore, means that the marriage is consummated by
the conjugal intercourse. By this we have the canonical consummation of marriage. If one of these elements is violated then there is no consummation hence we have 'non consummated marriage'.

**Christian marriage:** is defined as a partnership of the whole of life and love, while recalling that the children are its crown, (GS. No.48). The council of Trent taught that marriage is a sacrament: monogamous marriage was willed by creator and saviour, and the natural love of the partner make them capable of grace and sanctification (Mt.19ff), (Ganoczy, 1984, 134-137).

**Ratified and Consummated Christian Marriage:** is a union resulting from the exchange of consent in a valid marriage ceremony which has been completed by sexual intercourse done in a natural manner. I.e. when two baptized partners to a ratified marriage have had proper marital intercourse with each other after the baptism of both (De Bekker & Taylor, 1964,13).

**Marriage in African tradition** is bond that, through the union of the two persons, a man and a woman, seals an alliance between the two families to which the partners belong (Kabasele 1998, 71). Marriage is here considered more as an institution, which means a complex norm governing the relationship of a mated pair, their kinsmen, their offspring, and their society (Spitzer, 1967, 258).

**Types of African Customary Marriage:** *monogamous*, which is one man to one wife. *Polygamous marriage*, means one man, many wives. African custom does not go against this kind of marriage, as does Christianity. *Polyandry* is the situation where one woman marries more than one man. There was also a *Group marriage* in which both sexes are represented by more than a single party. *Arranged marriages* is whereby the parents choose a girl for their son, and *Gift marriages*, whereby a girl could be given to a chief or a king for marriage. Other marriages in existence were *Ghost marriages*, which is a social intervention if a young man died before getting married. To avoid discontinuity of his name, the family or clan get together and marry a wife in the name of the deceased. A close male relative is chosen to act as a genitor (Mbiti, 1969,144).

*Child marriages,* is a kind of marriage traditionally arranged in cases where the elderly couple
bore an only son in their old age. The boy's father chooses a girl for his son and then proposed to the girl's family. If the family of the girl accepted, the bride wealth was paid and then she was taken to the boy's home. This was done to ensure that before the father died, his son would have children to remember him. The girl was given to one of the close relatives to act, as a genitor until the son was old enough (Mbiti 1969, 144). *Sorority marriages*, is a practice that, when a woman fails to bear children with her husband, the latter has the right to demand one of her sisters as a replacement or as a secondary wife under the terms of the bride wealth (Shorter, 1973, 157-58).

"Africa" refers to its Subsahara part.

1.7 CONCLUSION

As we come to the end of this chapter, which is the general introduction, we have seen different aspects dealt with. The background of the study gives the reason why the researcher chose this particular topic. The statement of the problem highlights the pastoral problem concerning the African psycho-religious understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage versus that of Catholic Church's teaching on marriage. Hence the problem faced by our priests in the pastoral work in the parishes that have still respect traditional customs. The objective of the study is to express clearly and work towards the reconciliation of the opposite views. The scope and limitation of the study expressed the aim and the aspects of the study. And the limits required by the College and the difficulties faced by the researcher during data collection. The significance of the study indicated why the study is significant and important. Last but not least is the definition of the key terms, which define the major terms involved in this study work for better clarification. The proceeding chapter expresses what has been said by the other people concerning this particular subject.
CHAPTER TWO

2:0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2:1 INTRODUCTION

In this second chapter, we intend to review some important works that have been written on this subject. The literature review on the different ideas and insights which have been highlighted by other people concerning the conflict between African psycho-religious understanding of Ratum et Consummatum versus Catholic church’s teaching will shed light on this burning pastoral issue. We hope to develop or modify these ideas and insights to fit our contemporary people’s marriage life, to find out the point of reconciliation between them.

2:3 SURVEY OF RELEVANT LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief historical background of Ratum et Consummatum: the first documentation about the problem of ratification and consummation of marriage appeared during the middle ages. This was a result of the controversy between the school of Bologna which taught that; “consummation” effectively made ‘a marriage’ per se, and the school of Paris, which taught that the consent made the marriage and consummation completed it (O’Donoghue, 1990, 398).

On the one hand, according to the teaching of Bologna, there was no marriage until the consummation had taken place and so the idea of ‘ratum’ was not separated from ‘consummation’. While on the other hand, according to the teaching of Paris, the two are separate though one is the complement of the other. This controversy led to the canonical discussion of the 12th and 13th centuries concerning the ratification and consummation of marriage in the Catholic Church.

The church accepted the teaching of Paris, which taught that the consent of the parties made the marriage and consummation completed it (O’Donoghue, 1990, 398). In other words: the two elements constitute the ratified and consummated Christian marriage.

In the 14th C. the problem concerning the dissolution of marriage arose. The difficulty was whether the Pontifical power can dissolve the bond of a Christian marriage since no human power
can dissolve a ratified and consummated marriage. On the 16th July 1599, the findings of the report offered by the eight cardinals, assisted by the canonical experts commissioned by Pope Clement VIII, declared that the Pontiff has only the power to dissolve the ratified non consummated marriage "rata sed non consummata" (O'Donoghue, 1990, 399). This statement included that of a natural bond which means the dissolution of the bond of a ‘consummated non sacramental marriage’ {consummatum, non-ratum} and ‘ratum non consummatum’ which means the dissolution of the sacramental bond of a valid marriage that has not been completed by the conjugal act. During the age of Gasparri, the time of the most authoritative canonical statements concerning marriage, the provisions of this report were implemented by the Benedictine privilege, a declaration by the great canonist, Pope Benedict XIV, 4th Nov. 1741. The declaration exempted the heretics from the law when they were married amongst themselves, or married to Catholics because the bond of such marriage never existed. In his election Pope Pius X, in August 1903, began the tremendous work of the compilation of the code of canon law.

In the new code of canon law there are different canons, which concern marriage. We will consider the few, which specifically deal with the ratification and consummation of marriage. The code of canon law of 1983 in the English translation, states on one hand that:

A valid marriage between baptized persons is said to be merely ratified, if not consummated, ratified and consummated, if the spouses have in human manner engaged together in a conjugal act in itself apt for the generation of offspring. To this act marriage is by nature ordered and by it the spouses become one flesh” {Can1061par.1}. “If the spouses have lived together after the celebration of their marriage, consummation is presumed until the contrary is proven {par.2}.

On the other hand;

A valid marriage which is ratified and consummated cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any cause other than death {Can.1141}. 
Emphasizing canon 1141, the Holy, Father John Paul II, in his address to the Prelate Auditors and Officials of the Roman Rota on 21st Jan. 2000, strongly reminded them and all the faithful that “Ratified, Consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power, not even the Roman Pontiff’s”. He said that, “the church has the duty to reaffirm the indissolubility of marriage” (L'Osservatore Romano, 26th Jan. 2000, 1-2).

Although all marriages are intrinsically indissoluble i.e., they cannot be dissolved by the parties themselves, we have already seen that, the Roman Pontiff has the power to dissolve ‘a non consummated marriage’. Such a marriage is intrinsically indissoluble but extrinsically dissoluble by the Supreme Pontiff. The canon testifies that:

A non consummated marriage between a baptized persons or between a baptized party and unbaptized party can be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff for a just reason, at the request of both parties or of either party, even if the other is unwilling {Can.1142}.

This is to say that: ‘a ratum non-consummatum’ i.e. the sacramental bond of a valid marriage that has not been completed by the conjugal act and ‘Consummatum, non-ratum’ i.e. the bond of a consummated non-sacramental marriage can be dispensed by the Roman Pontiff. In the favour of the faith, the Pontiff can also dissolve the non- consummated marriage of two unbaptized parties Can.1143.

At this stage we can mention two other important points concerning dissolution of such marriages by the Pontiff. There are two privileges in which the pontiff relies on in dissolving such marriages. These include the Petrine and the Pauline privileges. The Petrine privilege: For a just cause the pontiff can dissolve any marriage that is not both ratified and consummated, provided at least one of the parties is baptized at the time of dissolution is given. The Petrine privilege may be used in a non-sacramental marriage contracted by the one baptized and one unbaptized, even if this marriage has been consummated. Whereas, the Pauline privilege is used in cases where two unbaptized persons marry and one-then-convert. This is to say that a marriage of unbaptized
persons can dissolved by the Pauline privilege in favour of the faith of the party who received baptism, by the very fact that a new marriage is contracted by the party, provided the unbaptized person departs. The unbaptized is considered to have departed if he or she does not wish to cohabit with the baptized party or to cohabit peacefully without contumely toward the creator, unless the baptized party after baptism has given a just cause for the unbaptized party’s departing {Can.1143}, (Zimmermann, 2000,115-120)

As the Catholic Church accepted the teaching of Paris on the understanding of 'ratum et consummatum' it became the traditional teaching of the church on marriage. With the advent of the Catholic missionaries in Africa the teaching was taught and implemented in African cultures. They taught and served the church as well as they could, but their teaching on marriage was not fully accepted and integrated in the African cultures. The reason was that the missionaries did not always understand African customs and ideas. And in many areas, their teaching on marriage did not match with the African traditional teachings. Hasting, states that “in Africa the church’s teaching and laws about marriage have differed widely from the traditional ideas and customs which people have accepted in the past, and which many still take for granted today” (Hasting, 1987, 6). To understand clearly the point of departure of the two conflicting worlds we have to discuss in depth the two aspects of ratum et consummatum mentioned in the scope of the study.

In the scope of the study, we mentioned two basic aspects of ‘ratum et consummatum’: first, when Catholic Church marriages are considered ratified and consummated; second, when African marriages are considered ratified and consummated.

The Catholic Church considers marriage ratified and consummated when the union resulting from the exchange of consent {ratification} in a valid marriage is approved by the church as a valid sacramental covenant: and the consummation which takes place after exchange of consent is the fulfillment climax. “To ask and receive the consent of the partners” is the fundamental disposition asked by Vatican II for all Christian marriage ceremonies.
The consent of the partners \( \text{ratum} \) and the conjugal act \( \text{consummatum} \) are therefore the conditions required in the Christian marriage Can. 1061, par. 1. This teaching expressed or rather connotes marriage as an instant act, which happens in a single moment i.e. the receiving of the consent and the first sexual act Can. 1061, par.2. As soon as the two elements are fulfilled marriage is ratified and consummated.

However, this is not the African understanding of 'ratum et consummatum'. In the African understanding the ratification and consummation of marriage is a process: a distinguishing characteristic of traditional African teaching on marriage is that ratum et consummatum is perceived as a 'dynamic process', not something that happens in a single moment. It begins with promises of marriage \( \{\text{ratification}\} \) and ends with the birth of the first child \( \{\text{consummation}\} \). Hence, it is not a contract concluded once and for all, but a lifelong or long-term process.

Archbishop A, Kaseba, speaking on behalf of the Congolese, by then Zairean Episcopal Conference, at the 1980 Synod states clearly that: "this process is a dynamic whole which creates the alliance...And it is the whole process that makes marriage a reality" (AFER, August 1991, Vol.33, No-4, 180-81). Therefore, "Marriage is never a private matter which can be left to both partners only. In the traditional understanding of it, two families or clans enter into an alliance, which means that the parents and relatives have the decisive say" (Bujo, 1990, 101). Canon 1057 is against this traditional practice.

This process involves three elements: (i) Initiation (ii) Remote preparation (iii) Immediate preparation. \textit{Initiation} is the gateway to marriage. The mysteries and secrets of married life are normally revealed to the young people at this point, to prepare them for what is soon to come. It is the time of seclusion and instructions for moral and good behaviour (Mbiti, 1975, 94).

\textit{Remote preparation}: at this stage, the young people were taught the values of married life, the respect between husband and wife, the importance of "bride wealth", which was not a price or
compensation for the bridegroom, since there was no question of selling or buying a girl. It was a symbol of alliance, and socially created stability in marriage (Mbiti, 1975, 101).

Immediate preparation: the last stage where-by negotiations are done between the two families (for the relationship between the two young people) and the actual celebration of the marriage (Mbiti, 1969, 121). At the birth of the first child, the climatic affirmation of ratum et consummatum, marriage is considered ratified and consummated.

Since the church teaching on marriage was incompatible with the African traditional way of marriage and was not well understood in Africa society, (Kabasele, 1998, 71) simply states that, “today the majority of Christians who marry continue to sit astride two worlds: the traditional and occidental Christian”. This coexistence is not always peaceful. The two conflicting worlds as elaborated above are in one way or another the cause of this unreconciled African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus Catholic Church’s teaching. Due to this psychological misunderstanding many young people in Africa today reject both African traditional customs and the church’s teaching and opt for a third way: that of engaging in cohabitation which is neither African tradition nor Christian practice.

Also in church law it is said that once a valid marriage is ratified and consummated, it cannot be dissolved by any human power or any cause other than death itself (Can.1141). Its emphasis is more on the indissolubility of marriage as Christ taught. For instance, it was very easy for Jews in the time of Jesus to divorce. This was their practice, and they believed that it was right because it was in accordance with the Law of Moses. But Jesus told them that it was not a good practice, because marriage is meant to be a life long partnership which cannot be broken, irrespective of whether the people do practice it or not as a tradition (Hasting 1987, 9). Jesus did not dwell on the manner and conditions for contracting marriage.

One of the Pioneers of the “African Synod”, the late Cardinal J.A Malula, in an important talk he gave in Younde in 1982 said that, “certainly it is divine faith that Christ has affirmed and
taught the indissolubility of marriage. In Africa we know it and we teach it also. But we believe also that Christ did not say how people of different cultures should marry, nor when the marriage validly contracted becomes absolutely indissoluble. For this reason only the affirmation of indissolubility should be considered a divine law and an absolute command. But the manner of contracting a marriage (e.g. canonical form) and the conditions of its indissolubility (e.g. consummation with one single act) are they revealed by God? Are they not cultural phenomenon in time and space?"

Apart from these, the following are other areas in which the church teaching differs widely from the African traditional teaching. The church teaches that, by the divine natural law, the essence of marriage is the free consent of the parties. And canon 1057 states that, “... no human power can substitute the consent of the parties”. This means that only the parties themselves can consent to marry each other. Not even parents, families, clan, rulers etc. can do this. As we mentioned in chapter one, the African traditional societies where the arranged, gift, child and sorority marriages are practiced or where clan or families enter into alliance for their children’s marriage (Bujo, 1990,101) here the above church law does not apply and it opposes this traditional set up.

The church considers marriage as consummated after the first sexual act Can.1061. Such an approach seems to be in conflict with the African view, which considers marriage as consummated after the birth of the first child. This marital consummation is a process seen from a different perspective and not simply by the first sexual act.

Canon 1084 par.1 teaches on the ‘antecedent’ and ‘perpetual’ impotence on sexual intercourse i.e. a failure to achieve erection, penetration of the vagina, ejaculation or difficulties in penetration on the part of a woman whether absolute or relative by its very nature invalidates marriage. But in most African marriages, impotence on the side of a man was not a problem as a brother or a relative would be asked to help. If it is on the part of a woman separation or
dissolution was possible. In the church this is considered an impediment especially if it is antecedent or perpetual (Huels, 1986,182). To Africans, it would be a problem, on the side of a woman where by separation or dissolution or polygamy would was possible.

According to canon 1134 marriage is permanent and exclusive. This militates against a brother helping in procreating children, as accepted in some of the African traditional societies. The canon is against the African practice of polygamous marriage. Such a marriage is traditionally considered as ratified and consummated but the church norms do not allow it. An African man who is asked to leave some of his wives and choose only one would find himself in conflict: either to remain a Christian or a traditional African: hence, becoming psychologically and religiously unsettled.

In African societies, if a woman is proved infertile she could be separated or polygamy could be a solution as stated above. In the church, if this marriage is ratified and consummated, then, there is no way that it could be dissolved. The marriage of those who are sterile is permitted Can. 1084 par. 3. This makes most Africans delay their church weddings until that time when their first child or children have been born. This will be elaborated on in chapter four.

As we have already seen, in African tradition there was a holistic educational approach during initiation, remote and immediate preparations, whereby, the youth were taught and instructed on sexual matters: on procreation, importance of marriage and parental responsibility. Church marital catechesis however does not touch such issues in depth.

In recent years bride wealth has become a symbol of alliance in African marriage. Today it is being abused and misused as a source of income. The daughters have been made a source of income in marriage. The church seems to sideline it because of its understanding of marriage as exclusively for the two partners.

Marriage in the church seems cold and passive. The real marriage would begin immediately after the church service. The main reason is that to most Africans, the church marital
rite seems to be imposed and not part of their life experience. They go just to fulfil the law as Archbishop P. Dery of Tamale expressed at the synod of Bishops.

As a consequence, today, we have new problems as well as old ones concerning marriage. This is why in the fall of 1969, as we have already pointed out in the statement of the problem, 45 East African Christian leaders were asked in personal interviews what they considered to be the most pressing pastoral problem facing the African Christian churches. These leaders were mostly Africans and professionals: theologians, directors of pastoral institutes, teachers, education secretaries, rectors of seminaries, pastors and curates of the parishes and bishops. They all responded that one of the most serious problems was the constant confrontation between African marriage customs and the Christian marriage customs taught by the missionaries (Kirwen, 1979, 1). The question we have to ask is that, are all the church teachings, rules and practices on marriage laid down by the missionaries right for the African church? And must they still be followed or should some be changed in order to resolve the prevailing conflict? If the church has to face this reality with faith, courage and sincerity, it needs to know how much of what missionaries brought was mere human teaching and how much was a faithful interpretation of the Gospel.

These Eastern African Christian leaders who participated in the 1969 interview complained that in many parishes throughout East Africa, many baptized persons could expect to be excommunicated from the church as a result of marriage problems. They pointed out how many men and women involved in polygamous marriage are categorized as unworthy members in the Christian community, despite the fact that some of them show positive signs of faith and are religious and political leaders. They mentioned such injustices prevailing in the church as separation from the second wife in order to allow a polygamous man to be baptized in the church (Kirwen, 1979, 2). In many parishes over half the adult Christians are permanently excluded from communion and in some dioceses they are even refused the baptism of their children and other
sacraments (Hastings, 1987, 6). Is this really fair? Do we really help the people by this practice of exclusion to come to a clear understanding of the necessity and meaning of ratifying their marriage? Certainly not.

This difficulty has amounted to a lot of controversies on marriage. Archbishop P. Dery of Tamale (Ghana) once said at the synod of bishops in 1980 that, “Most Catholics feel no need and are often in no hurry for a church marriage. Customary marriage, in the minds of most Ghananians, including Catholics, is the ‘real marriage’. The ceremony in the church is seen not as a celebration of marriage but rather a condition for the reception of the sacraments: a rule of the clergy, a simple blessing, and a foreign import” (AFER, August 1991, Vol. 33, No-4, 179).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Is it wise therefore to conclude from this perspective that the Catholic Church is here in Africa to Christianize those custom, which are not opposed to her doctrine on marriage? Is she here to implement and strengthen them? She has to do justice to African traditional customs as she did in past centuries. We read in church history that the church did not destroy Greek or Roman cultures. On the contrary she adapted them for her own use. She should also adapt in the same way the African customs, which are not opposed to her teaching for its own growth here in Africa. For instance the process toward marriage should be dynamic not static as is presently practiced and understood in church law. Also the marriage should never be a private matter left to the two lovers but rather a community affair.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

After examining what other people have said about 'ratum et consummatum' in chapter two, we now consider the methodology employed by the researcher in developing this paper. To provide enough room for openness and freedom of expression, the respondents were assured of confidentiality in all their responses. This research work was undertaken between May 2000 and January 2001. The research data were collected during long the vacation from May to August 2000 in the Archdiocese of Arusha- Tanzania where the researcher did his pastoral work.

The research was carried out in different parishes within the diocese. Those involved directly were the following: Holy Ghost Parish {Njiro}, St. Theresa Parish {Cathedral}, St. Francis of Assisi Parish {Kwangulelo}, Holy Spirit Catholic Church {Ngarenaro}, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish {Unga Limited}, St. Gabriel Catholic Church {Burka} and St. Peter and Paul Parish {Kijenge}. In these Parishes the researcher involved different people of different age and work experience: priests, married and unmarried catechists, lay people, medical doctors and High school students. The researcher considered different cases of different people and tribes, living within the Archdiocese of Arusha.

3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND METHODOLOGY

The data collection was carried out through questionnaires and personal interviews with the respondents who accepted to be interviewed by the researcher. The undertaken questionnaires were prepared by the researcher himself and approved by the supervisor. Why the questionnaire method? Because it gave the respondents freedom of expression and it was the easiest way to collect data. The personal interview gave the researcher a greater understanding of the respondent's views concerning this problem of 'ratum et consummatum'. Furthermore it was possible to acquire specific examples which were not expressed in their writings.
During personal interview in one parish, the parish priest organized for the researcher one practical case whereby the couple who had marital problem agreed to be listened to and helped by the priest and the researcher. This experience was very helpful in the data collection. It was a way to handle cases of such type in future pastoral work.

The questionnaire instrument was designed to test the attitudes of the respondents toward various issues connected to the understanding of Ratification and Consummation of marriage.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENTS

The data collection survey was divided into two sections. Section ‘A’ consisted of two parts. Part one, had four items which described the respondent: the Name (which in order to facilitate free response was made optional), indicating whether a foreigner or inhabitant, Age, Diocese/Congregation, Parish, Occupation: place/work experience, Student and marital status.

Part two, had twenty items on the attitudes toward African Psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus Catholic church’s teaching as a pastoral issue today. Also other information related to this pastoral issue as indicated in the objectives of the study in chapter one are included. The attitude statements were formulated according to the requirements of the research work. The respondents were required to indicate whether they Strongly Agree {SA}, Agree {A}, Undecided {U}, Disagree {D} or Strongly Disagree {SD} by putting a mark in the particular given statement. This was done with intention of making the whole endeavor somewhat simpler for the respondents.

The first three statements are to test whether this particular marriage issue is one of the major pastoral problems at the parish level. Also whether the causal is the existing confrontation between African traditional understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage and that of the Catholic Church’s teaching. Statements number four to eight examine if it is possible to reconcile the two teachings on marriage and look at the values to be integrated and which ones are
to be eradicated from the two. Furthermore, to establish where the church laws should be strictly observed in the pastoral field and where to use pastoral prudence.

Item nine and ten deals with the African understanding of ‘ratum et consummatum’ versus Catholic Church’s teaching. Item eleven discusses the existing problem of polygamous Christian families who wish to be admitted to the sacrament of matrimony and the baptism of their children when they request. Item twelve dwells on marriage preparation. Preparation for marriage is of great importance for the good of the church and family life. Items thirteen to eighteen took into consideration the importance of marriage instructions or education for both married and unmarried beyond the normal given catechism teaching on marriage.

Item nineteen on medical checkup before marriage was presented deliberately by the researcher. The reason was that the researcher had been thinking that medical examination before marriage would be a helpful way of discouraging young people from HIV-AIDS and other disease contamination.

Finally, item twenty analyzes attitude of people towards education for teenagers. The reasons being the young people need a lot of instructions as well as counselling before and after marriage.

Section ‘B’ consists of formally structured interview questions. It contains seventeen questions related to the attitude statements (questionnaires). But these are purposely for the interview. The questions are given before hand to the respondents who accepted to be interviewed so that they could have enough time for preparation for the information they were required to give during the interview. Some questions were made purposely and particularly to be answered by the priests only.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The questionnaire forms were distributed on time by the researcher. The respondents were instructed on how to fill them and were given enough time to fill them before they were collected
by the researcher. Four questionnaire forms were collected by Sister Lucy S. Sungu of the Congregation of the Servant of the Good News; [she assisted the researcher to collect some of the forms]. The respondents returned three forms, and two forms, were not returned. Apart from these all the other questionnaire forms were collected by the researcher.

The language used by the researcher in the research instrument was “Swahili”. The main reason for this was that the majority of the respondents were familiar with Kiswahili language and were freer to express themselves in Kiswahili than English. Kiswahili language is a common spoken language in Tanzania, hence suitable for both the researcher and the respondents.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

After the completion of the data collection, the researcher began the coding. This was done manually in order to categorize the data analysis. Finally quantitative method and data processing were employed. In tabulation the researcher used the frequency and percentage distributions for the data organization.

3.6 POPULATION SAMPLING

The questionnaire was open to people of different status. In this research work the researcher managed to get some participants whose age was above sixteen. The participants were priests, catechists, lay people, doctors and high school students.

Fifty-three questionnaires were distributed. Only 51 {fifty-one} were returned. Two of them were not given back in time. Out of fifty-one questionnaires, one was found blank and was thrown out. The researcher was left with 50 {fifty} or 94.33%, which were accurately answered.

The researcher managed to interview nineteen {19} out of fifty-one which is 37.25%. Nine were priests, which represents 47.37%, four catechists 21.05%, five lay people 26.31% and one doctor 5.27%.
3.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher discussed different components employed in the data collection. The components included its research instruments and description, data collection procedures and population sampling. Next chapter will deal with research findings.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four of this research work will analyze the research findings that are relevant to the questions and the assumption that African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus Catholic church's teaching presents a serious pastoral issue today. Under this section tables are inserted for more clarity and the summarized interpretation of the data of the research work.

This chapter, on the one hand, will analyze the description of respondents: sex, age, occupation and marital status. While on the other hand it intends to discuss the presentation and interpretation of the tabulated data.

4.2 RESPONDENTS DESCRIPTION

In the research findings, fifty-three respondents were involved. Fifty (94.33%) fully participated as they were required by the researcher. The findings were as follows:

Table one: the overall distribution of all respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priests</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catechists</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay people</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table presents the total number of 53 (100%) of the respondents. The respondents frequency were 11 (20.75%) Priests, 13 (24.53%) Catechists, 18 (33.96%) Lay people, 3 (5.66%) Doctors, and 8 (15.1%) Students.
Table two: The total number of the respondents fully participated in the data findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priests</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catechists</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay people</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals that out of 11 (20.75%) Priests, 13 (24.53%) Catechists and 18 (33.96) Lay people; only 10 (20%) Priests, 12 (24%) Catechists, and 17 (34%) Lay people fully participated or rather fully responded. All 3 (6%) Doctors and 8 (16%) Students fully participated.

Table three: The gender distribution of the respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows that out of 50 respondents participated in the research findings, 32 (64%) were male and 18 (36%) were female. The table gender distribution reveals the difference of 14% between male and female.

Table four: The Marital Status of the respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital status table reveals that married respondents were 30 (60%). 7 (58.33%) male and 5 (41.67%) female out of 12 (24%) Catechists were married. 7 (46.67%) male and 8 (53.33%) female out of 15 (30%) Lay people were married. 2 (66.67%) male and 1 (33.33%) female out of
3 (6%) Doctors were married. On the other hand, the unmarried were 10 (20%) male (Priests), 2 (11.76%) male (Lay people), and 4 (50%) male and 4 (50%) female students.

Table five: The age group for both male and female respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table illustrates the age distribution of all those respondents who participated in the research work. The table frequency shows that majority of respondents were between the age of 30-40 which is (22%) and 40-50 which is (42%).

Table six: The total number of the respondents participated in the interview discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priests</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catechists</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals that out of the total respondents only 19(37.25%) respondents participated in the interview. These were 9(47.37%) Priests, 4(21.05%) Catechists, 5(26.31%) Lay people and 1(5.27%) Doctor. The students were not available for the interview.

4.3 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION ON THE DATA

The number of the respondents, 7(70%) Priests, 9(75%) Catechists, 12(70.59) Lay people, agreed with the statement “one of the major problems in the pastoral work in the parishes is the
marriage issue”. The 3(30%) Priests, and 3(25%) Catechists strongly agreed with the statement. The 5(29.41) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 8(100%) Students were undecided. This suggests that the majority of the respondents consider this marriage issue to be one of the major problems in the pastoral work in the parishes. One of the interviewed respondents, a doctor, said the reason why he was undecided on the statement was that he never bothered to inquire from those concerned with pastoral work in the parish whether the marriage issue was one of the major problems in the parishes.

On the one hand, 10(100%) Priests, 11(91.67%) Catechists, 9(52.95%) Lay people strongly agreed with the statement “one of the problems faced in marriage teaching is how to connect the relationship between African understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage with the teaching of the Catholic Church”. 1(8.33%) Catechist, 3(17.64%) Lay people agreed with the statement. 5(29.41%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 8(100%) Students were undecided. This suggests that a large number of the respondents accepted the difficulties in connecting the two teachings. This explains how so many African Catholic couples remain caught in-between the two teachings without clear direction whether to follow their African traditional teaching or church’s teaching on ratification and consummation of the marriage. This co-existence is not always peaceful. On the other hand, this is why the majority of the respondents, 7(70%) Priests, 12(100%) Catechists, 14(82.35%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors strongly agreed with the statement: “marriage problems in Africa arise because of lack of understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage with that of catholic church’s teaching on marriage”. The 3(30%) Priests, and 3(17.65%) Lay people disagreed with this statement. And 8(100%) Students were undecided.

In the description of the instruments in chapter three, the first three statements were placed to test the assumption whether the pastoral issue on marriage exists. At this juncture the findings have suggested that it is one of the major problems faced in the pastoral work in the parishes.
There are difficulties on how to connect the two teachings and the lack of understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage among the people.

During the interview between the researcher and the respondents, the majority of respondents suggested that this prevailing problem in marriage teaching requires immediate reconciliation so that the African Catholic couples may live in accordance with the accepted Christian Catholic norms. A majority of the interviewed priests said this marriage issue is among the major issues in their pastoral work, which require a quick solution. Because most of Catholic couples in their parishes do not understand the values of matrimony as a sacrament (ratum) they consider them an obstacle to their African accepted customs.

Most of the respondents, 8(80%) Priests, 12(100%) Catechists, 16(94.11%) Lay people strongly agreed with the statement “the Catholic church needs to bring about a reconciliation between African traditional understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage with that of the Catholic church’s teaching on marriage”. The minimal number of respondents, 2(20%) Priests, 1(5.89%) Lay person agreed with the statement. The 3(100%) Doctors, and 8(100%) Students were undecided. This suggests that there is a need of harmonizing the two so as to have a common understanding suitable for the African people, which may not cause psychological misunderstanding of their Catholic faith on marriage. This also may suggest that most of the respondents have been affected psychologically by the two teachings in their marital life and they do not know which is the right way to follow.

Sharing with the interviewed respondents the majority of priests, 7(77.78%) said they find difficulties on how to minimize or end the conflicts that arise from the two teachings. Some recommendations given in order to bring mutual understanding between the two teachings will be discussed in the next chapter. A number of the respondents 3(75%) Catechists, 4(80%) Lay people and one (100%) Doctor, argued that there are other issues apart from those two teachings concerning marriage arising in the church which adds more pressure on people. Today the church
has joined with the society in projecting an ideal of marriage that the only rich can afford. Church leaders require a lot of money prior to marriage itself, which is also expensive. The 1(5%) unmarried respondents claimed that “the fees for marriage has gone up, church marriage has become so expensive to the extent that I am forced to marry customarily regardless of an exclusion from receiving of the sacraments in church”. It was also said that nowadays it is usual for a church wedding to be celebrated with a big feast costing a lot money which the young couples are not able to afford.

Another issue which was discussed during the interview between the researcher and the respondents was about the common marital problems faced by the pastors concerning marriage. In fact the majority of priests 8(88.89%), 4(100%) Catechists, 3(60%) Lay people and 1(100%) Doctor stated that there are many problems. Here we consider a few of them. A number of the respondents mentioned the problem of their fellow committed Christians who participate fully in the church activities but are refused participation in the Table of the Lord e.g. the Eucharist. This may be either because they have contracted polygamous marriage or the son or daughter has married without ratification of his or her marriage in church. In this sense the unity which the sacrament should reflect becomes a division. The delay of church marriage is another problem mentioned. It was said that many young people refuse to marry in church because of fear of tying themselves completely by ratifying their marriage. This is because they are aware of church law that once their marriage is ratified in church and then consummated will never be dissolved. Hence they prefer traditional marriage which is dissoluble. In connection to this it was said that today many young people have a misconceived idea that a church wedding requires a big function or feast with expensive items. As many cannot afford this they simply stay together as husband and wife without ratifying their marriage in church.

On the one hand, Fr. Eugen Bucher, OFMcap., a Swiss missionary priest who has worked for 33 years in Arusha diocese mentioned a current problem in marriage which seems to be
common within the diocese. According to his statistics the majority of the new couples who marry
in church have already lived together for some years or the bride is pregnant or they have a child
already (hence consummatum non ratum). In his interview with the researcher he said the reason
behind is that the new couple wants to make sure they are fertile. Much more significant is the
obligation that the bearing of the children is the totality and the crown of marriage as far as
African understanding of ratum et consummatum is concerned.

For more information the researcher inquired from other respondents especially the priests
concerning this current issue on marriage. Some of them said that today it is very rare to find a
new couple coming for ratification of marriage who has never been sexually related before their
marriage. On the other hand, Fr. Vicent Lyimo a diocesan priest, added that in his pastoral work he
has encountered some of the young people whose parents were not married in church; they also do
not marry in church. Hence they do not bother to ratify their marriages.

Almost all the respondents, 10(100%) Priests, 12(100%) Catechists, 17(100%) Lay people,
3(100%) Doctors, 8(100%) Students strongly disagreed with the statement “the African traditional
values with regard to marriage life should be discarded and replaced with that of Catholic teaching
on marriage”. A similar number of respondents 10(100%) Priests, 11(91.67%) Catechists,
15(88.23%) Lay people, 2(66.67%) Doctors, and 7(87.5%) Students strongly agreed with the
statement “some of the cultural customs and traditions of Africa should be done away with and
replaced with the Catholic teaching on marriage”. The 1(8.33%) Catechist, 2(11.77%) Lay people,
1(33.33%) Doctor and 1(12.5%) Student agreed with the statement. The reason is that they are
aware of some African marriage values, which are precious and cannot be replaced by any other
value. From the above we can say that the majority are more in favour of those African traditional
elements than those of the Catholic Church teaching. It also suggests that there are some cultural
customs concerning marriage which are inappropriate, hence need to be replaced with that of
Catholic Church’s teaching.
In the course of the interviews a few elements were mentioned which should never be discarded from the African traditional teaching. These were the dynamic African value of ratification and consummation of marriage and its communitarian aspects (diachronic). These include the manner in which African marriage begins. This includes the preparation from initiation to the actual day of wedding and the consent of the members of the group, as appears in customary marriage for marital stability i.e. not only the consent of the partners before a priest and two witnesses. The customary publicity of marriage, and the inclusion of the living dead in the rituals and ceremonies on wedding celebration.

On the other hand, they mentioned some of the church's teaching elements in regard to marriage, which should replace the African cultural customs and traditions. These include the indissolubility of marriage as Christ affirmed it as a life long partnership, which cannot be broken (Mk 10:2-12) vis-a-vis African recognition of solubility of marriage. The African understanding of child bearing as a climax and the totality of marriage which if otherwise (childless) results into dissolution of the marriage or polygamy should be replaced by the church's teaching about monogamous marriage even if there is no child bearing. The absolute stability of marriage from the start i.e. in African tradition marriage is not absolute from the beginning. The African traditional belief of childless couple as the curse by God, and traditional ghost, child, gift, sorigate, force marriages (cf. can. 1103) and widow inheritance should also be replaced by the church's teaching.

Over two thirds of the respondents, 8(80%) Priests, 11(91.67%) Catechists, 14(82.35%) Lay people, 2(66.67%) Doctors and 7(87.5%) Students agreed with the statement "some of the Catholic marriage teachings are in harmony with the African traditional teaching on marriage". The 2(20%) Priests, 1(8.33%) Catechists, 3(17.64%) Lay people, 1(33.33%) Doctor and 1(12.5%) Student strongly agreed with the statement. Almost the same number 9(90%) Priests 10(83.33%) Catechists, 15(88.23%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors, and 6(75%) Students strongly agreed with
the statement “the African traditional elements on marriage that does not conflict with those of the church should be integrated together with those of Christian marriage”. The 1(10%) Priests, 2(16.67%) Catechists, 2(11.77%) Lay people, 2(25%) Students agreed with the statement. This is because they think some elements of Catholic Church teachings on marriage are compatible with that of African traditional teaching on marriage. Hence need to be intermingled.

Some of the elements found in the Catholic Church’s teaching which are in harmony with that of African traditional teaching include the following: the ratification of marriage in church is accompanied by rituals and prayers to ask God’s grace for the couples to help them to keep the promise they have made and to live according to his will. It is the same as African traditional marriage where the blessing (ratum) is given by the elders in union with the ancestors. The words in the form of prayer to the creator are uttered for the blessing for the couple, to wish them a long life, fidelity and fruitful marriage. The church focus on offspring as central on marriage is another aspect in harmony with that of African traditional expectation for the child bearing in marriage. Albeit the approach differs in the case of childless couples. The church teaches that marriage is of divine origin, procreation as a participation in God’s work of creation and the children as a blessing from God and the like. Likewise, the African tradition understands marriage as associated with the ancestors in the world of spirits hence having divine origin and the procreation of children perpetuates ones name in the book of life.

We have already seen some African traditional elements, which cannot be discarded and replaced by that of the church. Here are some few other elements, which do not conflict with those of the church, and should be intermingled. These were the observance of the traditional dynamic process of marriage. The African traditional instructions on marriage. The strict care against marital relationships of consanguinity and affinity in marriage. The traditional association of marriage to the living dead, the ancestors and the publicity of marriage i.e. marriage should not be an affair between two people only but between the two with their families and relatives.
A number of respondents 8(80%) Priests, 8(66.67%) Catechists, 11(64.71%) Lay people, 2(66.67%) Doctors strongly agreed with the statement “some of the church’s teaching concerning ratification and consummation of marriage here in Africa require somehow readjustment for better reception and application into African culture and tradition”. The 2(20%) Priests, 4(33.33%) Catechists, 6(35.29%) Lay people, 1(33.33%) Doctor agreed with the statement. The 8(100%) Students were undecided. This probably suggest that some aspects of the church teaching on ratification and consummation of marriage are not fully accepted or rather find difficulties in their application into African traditional and cultural set up.

The majority of the interviewed respondents highlighted some of these aspects. The church’s teaching on the ratification and consummation of marriage as the union resulting from the exchange of the consent and the very first conjugal act. Unlike the African traditional marriage, the church does not allow the family or relative consent, rather than of the two partners before two witnesses. Hence the church lack the communitarian aspect of marriage. Marriage is more of the two partners. The teaching requires readjustment in order to fit into African traditional teaching, which emphasizes the dynamism of marriage with its communitarian aspect. The African view of marriage is that of dynamic process involving different stages i.e. from the engagement to the birth of the first child and the inclusion of the two families, relatives from which the two parties belong. Another aspect is about the church discipline of exclusion from Holy Communion the Catholic Christians who are married but who have not yet ratified their marriage in church. The question put forward was, whether this approach was the correct way of helping them and bringing them to church teaching? The issue of polygamy was also addressed. This issue will be later discussed in length.

The majority of the respondents 9(90%) Priests, 11(91.67%) Catechists, 13(76.47%) Lay people, 1(33.33%) Doctor, 5(62.5%) Students strongly agreed with the statement “the valid and indissoluble sacramental marriage is that which is ratified (blessed in church) and consummated.
According to African culture, a valid marriage (customary) is from the engagement to when a child is born in that marriage. Failure to get a child leads to a lot of frustrations and even to try to get a child with another person outside the marriage which, for Christians is adultery or to marry a second wife (polygamy) or to have another man (polyandry)”. The 1(10%) Priest, 1(8.33%) Catechist, 3(17.64%) Lay people, 2(66.67%) Doctors agreed with the statement. The 1(5.89%) Lay person and 3(37.5%) Students were undecided. This suggests that the respondents are aware of a lot of frustrations involved in a marriage life where there is no child bearing. Or out of the experience they find the childless couple are disturbed psychologically in both Christian and African traditional customary marriage. Or because of the African traditional expectations for a child as a totality of customary marriage.

One of the interviewed respondent, a pastor, said “for us African, it is evident that what constitute a marriage is not its consummation rather a child bearing. While for the church child bearing and its education is also the condition in marriage. If so, why should the church not consider the childless marriage as invalid so as to avoid all these troubles on the part of the catholic couples?”

The above thought was in connection to the interview question specifically for the priest. What is their advice if the married couple would like to divorce or break a valid ratified and consummated sacramental marriage for a grave reason? The majority of them 6(66.67 %) said it is against the law of Christ and of the church to do so. Some of them gave the reason based on the Scripture teaching of Jesus Christ. They based this on the book of Genesis “… Male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them ‘be fruitful, multiply’…”(Gen.1: 27-28). And the Gospel of Matthew on the question of divorce put before Christ by the Pharisees “… God made them, male and female. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and unites with his wife, and the two become one flesh. They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh. So then what God has united together man must not separate” (Mt.19: 1-12). This means that it is unlawful for what
the two spouses had vowed through matrimonial consent before God to break. The question put across was "if the two spouses understood very well the teaching of the Catholic Church on the essential properties of marriage i.e. unity and indissolubility, why then divorce?" If they really made a true exchange of consent after the series of interrogations as indicated in the Roman missal and the vow spoken by each spouse then the question of divorce is out of place and it is against the vow made willingly and knowingly.

Responding to the interview question placed for the priest, that "it is admitted that no human being has the power to break or dissolve marriage, which has been ratified and consummated except by death. What is the advice, if the married couples would like to divorce or break a valid ratified and consummated marriage for a grave reason?" Some cases were mentioned where by the marriage break up completely due to a grave reason where one or both of the partners are guilty. Such cases are such as: the family where by the behaviour of one of the party has gone astray to the extent of breaking off marital relation with the other party; for instance, marring another person or abandoning another party completely without any contact. The partners break completely their marriage but one or both are not guilty e.g. the couples who have separated for years by some circumstances such as refugee or war who have no hope of meeting the other partner or the party does not know where the other party is. Such a case has happened in Arusha archdiocese, whereby one baptized Rwandese lady who was married in Catholic Church before she was separated with her husband during Rwanda genocide wants to marry another Rwandese whom she met at Arusha in Tanzania.

The respondent priest dealing with the case said the issue whether she can marry or not was still under discussion. This will not be possible if the separated couples were baptized and their previous marriage was ratified and consummated. This would be possible if the husband was not baptized by the ‘Petrine privilege’. Or if the two were not baptized and she was baptized later, then ‘Pauline privilege’ can be applied. The majority of the interviewed priests said they have never
blessed a marriage where by the couples had not been blessed to get a child or children. But incase it happens, it was said “adoption” of a child or children is the first advice to the couple. The same reason was given to the question: how to help the childless couple who wants to divorce his or her partner in order to get one with whom they can get a child. The researcher was also infavour of this stand. The pastors should encourage such childless couples.

Over two thirds of the respondents 9(75%) Catechists, 16(94.11%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors, and 8(100%) Students disagreed with the statement “it is evident that the sacrament of marriage and the baptizing of the children of the polygamous Christians family should be encouraged”. The 10(100%) Priest, 3(25%) Catechists and 1(5.89%) Lay person agreed with the statement. On the one side, this finding suggests the polygamous marriage is not good form of marriage and may be it is out of fashion. Likewise it is contrary to the traditional church teaching whereby the monogamous form of marriage is an essential characteristic. On the other side, may be the respondents agreed because they see the necessity of giving the sacrament of marriage to the polygamous Catholic Christians and baptism to their children.

While the disagreed interviewed respondents 3(75%) Catechists, 4(80%) Lay people responding to the related interview question about polygamous man who would like to be married in the Catholic church and to receive other sacraments and also wants his children to be baptized said it is first of all contrary to the Catholic teaching of monogamous form of marriage. Polygamy is an unwanted form of marriage today because it divides the interpersonal relationship between the husband and the wives. Today's economy and social factors render polygamy out of fashion. The 8(88.89%) interviewed priests responding to the question and at the same time discussing the question whether it is true that very often the motive of the church marriage for Africans is only the desire to receive other sacraments said that to some extent it is true. Why? Because, a number of the Catholics in their parishes although living in monogamous union but not yet ratified their marriages in church are barred from the sacraments because their marriages are considered invalid
by the church. Hence, they ratify their marriage in church only to receive other sacraments. The church discipline of exclusion as we can call it was questioned in connection to the polygamous Christians who are cut off from the sacraments.

We have seen in the previous discussion this kind of disciplinary action may not be good because it takes them far away from the church teaching about the Table of the Lord which is meant to bring all believers together. It was advisable to the Catholic Christians living in monogamous union, while not yet ratified, should effectively be catechized so as to understand the meaning of Christian Sacramental Union of Marriage. And then let their marriage be ratified in Christian manner. Those who have contracted polygamous marriage and have lived more than 50 years should also be catechized in Christian marriage and their marriages be ‘informally blessed’ i.e. without formal Matrimonial Sacrament of Marriage. The church should be very strict with those baptized people who accepted from baptism the church’s teaching on Christian monogamous marriage but later on wished to become polygamous. It was said, polygamous may be admitted to other sacraments such as of Christian initiation Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation but not of matrimony. They may be freed to contract civil marriage with their wives. The baptism of polygamous children should be granted, since it is necessary for the reception of the other sacraments. It is not their fault to be born in the polygamous families.

A number of the respondents 7(70%) Priests, 11(91.67%) Catechists, 12(70.6%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 8(100%) Students strongly agreed with the statement “the church needs to teach the importance of marriage life so as to prepare well the young people entering marriage life”. The 3(30%) Priests, 1(8.33%) Catechists, 3(17.7%) Lay people agreed with the statement. Only 2(11.7 %) Lay people were undecided. This suggests that there is a crucial necessity for the teaching of this aspect of life to the young people aspiring to marriage. The findings also suggest that the preparation of marriage is of great importance for the good of the
church and the Christian families. They may help to resolve the existing problem between African psycho-religious understanding ratum et consummatum and the Catholic church’s teaching.

In response to the interview question about the ways that may be helpful for marital preparation for the young people who want to marry in Catholic Church over two thirds of the interviewed respondents maintained that the initiative for the preparation for marriage should first come from the couples. The church can promote such an atmosphere for them before marriage by promoting counselling, catechesis, sharing the Word of God for the couples; by encouraging them in family prayers, Bible reading and other spiritual literature reading concerning marriage life. This will help them appreciate their roles as future parents. The majority of the young men and women enter into marriage with great expectations but almost with no training. Most of them enter into marriage without knowing how to love each other. It is, therefore, necessary to have enough time for courtship as well as the pre-marriage preparation prescribed so as to acquire skills for living together as husband and wife. "... the church must therefore promote better and intensive programs of marriage preparation, in order to eliminate as far as possible the difficulties that many married couples find themselves in, and even more in order to favour positively the establishing and maturing of successful marriages" (FC 66).

The majority of the respondents 8(80%) Priests, 12(100%) Catechists, 15(88.23%) Lay people, 1(33.33%) Doctor and 5(62.5%) Students strongly agreed with the statement “before young people get married they need to get good instruction or counselling with regard to marriage life beside the normal catechism instruction on marriage”. The 2(20%) Priests, 2(11.77%) Lay people, 2(66.67%) Doctors and 3(37.5%) students agreed with the statement. This suggests that the respondents find the catechism teaching given in church inadequate for the preparation of the young people entering marriage. The church’s teaching lacks some of the essential elements of African traditional teaching on marriage preparation. About the similar number 7(70%) Priests, 10 (83.33%) Catechists, 16(94.11%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 4(50%) Students strongly
agreed with the statement: "it is important to increase the number of lessons for marriage life teaching in the parishes, at least three to six months instead of a few days". The 3(30%) Priests, 1(5.89%) Lay person agreed with the statement. The 4(50%) Students were undecided. This finding suggests that the time and the lessons given for the marriage life teaching in the parishes are inadequate. Also the married people have realize that marriage life teaching given during their marriage preparation was not enough and needed to be increased. The priests have seen the necessity and the importance of increasing the time and the number of the lessons on marriage life education. The majority of the respondents 9(90%) Priests, 10(83.33%) Catechists, 17(100%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 6(75%) Students strongly agreed with the statement “it is important to start marriage life teaching/counselling centers within the diocese”. The 1(10%) Priest, 2(16.62%) Catechists, 2(25%) Students agreed with the statement.

Many of the respondents strongly supported the opening of the counselling centers within the diocese for those married and those aspiring for marriage life. Through counselling centers both married and those aspiring to the married life may learn different aspects required in marriage life: the understanding of the general difference physical, emotion, mental, and sexual between the two spouses or those who want to marry. In fact it was said that most of the marital problems center on the lack of understanding of their general differences. They may learn mutual love, dialogue, transparency and accountability. The sharing of the family burdens, tolerance, perseverance and understanding, personal sacrifice and concern for the other, fidelity to each other and of the like. The couple may learn about the family planning education according to the church’s teaching, the meaning of marriage as a life-long partnership and the importance of the education for their children.

A number of the respondents 8(80%) Priests, 8(66.67%) Catechists, 16(94.11%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors, 7(87.5%) Students agreed with the statement: “marriage education should be introduced in secondary schools, colleges and the universities”. The 2(20%) Priests
4(33.33%) Catechists, 1(5.89%) Lay person, 1(12.5%) Student strongly agreed with the statement. The 2(16.67) Students were undecided. It seems the respondents are aware of the need of introducing marriage education in these areas as a preparation for the future marriage life. They are also aware of the disappearing of African traditional marriage customs due to Christian teaching. It also suggests that the church does not provide enough teaching on marriage education.

However, responding to the interview question about the establishment of marriage education in the schools (secondary, colleges and universities) the majority of the respondents viewed the need for the introduction of marriage life instruction in schools. Training for responsible parenthood education should be taught in schools and by the church, together with the parents at homes. Marriage education therefore, is not necessarily the task only of priests or catechists in schools. The church should train the Catholic teachers to run marriage education programs in schools.

The majority of the respondents 7(70 %) Priests, 10(83.33%) Catechists, 14(82.36%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors, 3(37.5%) Students disagreed with the statement: “marriage education on ratification and consummation will influence students to practice pre-marital sex or marry before age”. The 3(30%) Priests, 2(16.67 %) Catechists strongly disagreed with the statement. The 3(17.64%) Lay people and 5(62.5%) Students were undecided. The findings suggest that the teaching of marriage life education will not influence the students to practice pre-marital sex or marry before marriage. They are aware that marriage/family life education is not the same as “sex education” which may risk the children experimenting in sex.

Responding to the interview question that the couples are too shy in seeking advice on their marriage that has failed due to tension arising from sexual troubles between them, it was maintained as a fact. This is because the couple lacks understanding of their general differences. In fact it was said that, most of the marital tension arising from the sexual troubles centers around this fact. Men and women are totally different in their physical, emotional, mental and sexual
behaviour. These differences are so extreme that without a concentrated effort to understand them it is almost impossible to have a happy marriage. To understand them requires marriage life education right from secondary schools, colleges and universities. With this education the young people may be able to choose the right partner and live a happy marriage life.

Likewise the question about the stand of the Catholic church concerning the use of condom and methods of birth control in marriage life was addressed in connection to the previous discussion. It was said the Catholic Church is not in favour of the use of condom and improper methods of birth control due to matters concerning faith and her moral teaching. She teaches faithfulness to God, chastity before marriage and fidelity after marriage. Accepting the use of these items then she will obviously contradict her faith and moral teaching. She is against the use of condom and artificial means of birth control because they are against the laws of nature. All these and other information about the Catholic Church stand should be part of marriage life education; hence, required to be introduced in schools, colleges and universities.

A number of the respondents 6(60%) Priests, 9(75%) Catechists, 15(88.23%) Lay people, 1(33.33%) Doctor strongly disagreed with the statement that “bishops and priests have emphasized enough about life education on marriage in their places of work that is within the diocese and parishes”. The 4(40%) Priest, 1(8.33%) Catechist, disagreed with the statement. The 2(16.67%) Catechists, 2(11.77%) Lay people, 2(66.67%) Doctors and all 8(100%) Students were undecided. A number of the respondents are of the opinion that bishops and priests are doing their best in emphasizing marriage life education though it is still inadequate. There is not enough follow up after the first catechesis given during preparation for marriage. This finding suggests that apart from the normal catechesis given in marriage preparation, the bishops and priests should emphasize more on marriage life education through seminars and workshops also through home visitation or in Small Christian Communities. This may be organized both for those preparing for
marriage and marriage encounter for couples already married. One can make an observation that there is a need for an on-going catechesis to ensure marriage life education.

Almost all the respondents 10(100%) Priests, 11(91.67%) Catechists, 15(88.23%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors, 6(75%) Students strongly disagreed with the statement that young people preparing for marriage should go for medical test on HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases before getting married. The 1(8.33%) Catechist, 2(11.77%) Lay people, 2(25%) Students disagreed. Many of the respondents are aware that by withholding medical tests it will create fear between the young people preparing for marriage. Hence, they are of the opinion that a medical check up is a personal issue between the two people who want to marry each other.

In response to the interview question concerning the need of a law which requires that young people desiring to get married should go for medical check up for various contagious diseases including HIV/AIDS, and others, and also to show the medical test certificate before they get married to the priest, was severely rejected by almost all the interviewed respondents. It was said that the requirement for a medical test is first of all a violation of human rights and the personal love commitment of the loved ones. Because of this requirement, the love commitment becomes conditional. It is also against secrecy and confidentiality. Also it may cause fear among the young couple from ratifying their marriage. The requirement should be a personal issue between the two persons who wants to marry each other.

A number of respondents 10(100%) Priests, 12(100%) Catechists, 17(100%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 8(100%) Students strongly agreed with the statement that educating the teenagers on marriage life should be carried out by the “Priest”. Almost the similar number agreed with the “Catechists” and the “Parents”. The majority of the respondents 10(100%) Priests, 10(83.33%) Catechists, 14(82.36%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors and 7(87.5) Students disagreed with the “Teachers”. The 2(16.67%) Catechists, 3(17.64%) Lay people, 1(12.5%) Student were undecided. The 10(100%) Priest, 12(100%) Catechists 17(100%) Lay people, 3(100%) Doctors,
Students strongly disagreed with the “Friends”. The majority would prefer priests, catechists and parents because they are assured of the kind of information they will provide for the teenagers. They are not infavour of the “Teachers” because they view them with suspicion and the kind of ideas or information they may pass to the teenagers. This may be due to ignorance of the respondents, as they do not know what is contained in their teaching programs. Again the teachers may not be Catholics or well trained. The majority of the respondents were not infavour of “friends” because the information from their peer group might be misleading.

A number of the interviewed respondents wanted to include “Doctors” and the “Lawyers” in carrying out marriage life education for the teenagers. The local church should train Catholic teachers, Lay people and all other interested Christians in carrying out this task.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has been dealing with the research findings. It has come out with the results, discussions and presentations of the interpretation of the questions concerning the African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus Catholic Church’s teaching as a pastoral issue today. Different ideas, insights, thoughts and opinions have been addressed that highlight what is to be done in dealing with the issue. Now we turn to our final chapter, chapter five, which carry over the recommendations, pastoral suggestions for our future pastoral work and conclusion.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, PASTORAL SUGGESTIONS, GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

After analyzing the research findings on the pastoral issue on *ratum et consummatum*, chapter five will present some recommendations, pastoral suggestions for future research work and general conclusion.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Father Adrian Hustings (Church and Mission in the Modern World) says, “Almost all missionaries feel that there is something deeply wrong with our approach to marriage in Africa” (AFER, 1974, Vol.16, No1&2, 116). Farther Alyward Shorter on the other hand (Christian and Traditional African Ideal of Marriage and Family Life, no 5, Gaba Publication) states, “there is a wide spread feeling that the church has failed to Christianize African marriage and family”. This goes to prove that the Catholic teaching of *ratum et consummatum* has been a problem since the coming of the missionaries in Africa.

As we mentioned in the objectives of the study in chapter one, it is our duty to investigate the pastoral ways to be followed or rather recommendations to be applied in order to minimize if not to eradicate, this psycho-religious problem existing here in Africa.

5.2.2 PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We have observed from the previous chapter that African psycho-religious understanding of *ratum et consummatum* is a pastoral issue today which needs a special attention. The following are some proposed recommendations concerning this pastoral issue:

**The psycho-religious dualism:** we have seen that, in Africa today, Christians who marry lead a dualistic life, which causes conflict in them. They remain caught in-between the two teachings without clear direction to follow. Pastoral ministers do not remain unaffected by this
situation. They are always confronted with this pastoral problem of Christians whose matrimonial situations are not in agreement with the teaching of the church on marriage and conjugal life. However, the majority of the respondents felt that, through inculturation, the church should integrate all the African traditional customs and values of marriage which do not conflict with her teaching so as to avoid such dualistic life. The task is urgent and need to be carried out as an integral part, and in the spirit of evangelization.

**Marital problems:*** we have seen that one of the major challenges in the pastoral work in the parishes is marital problems: the existence of the colliding African traditional understanding of *ratum et consummatum* versus that of the Catholic church teaching; the numerous Christians who enter marriage in the traditional manner without the sacrament of matrimony and they are cut off from other sacraments by the church; the various concepts of African marriage which often do not correspond with Christian concepts and teaching; polygamy; the phenomenon of separation or divorce of married spouses. In view of these problems we wish to recommend that, the church should have a clear teaching on ratification and consummation of marriage which integrates both teachings. By this the marital problems which arise because of the lack of understanding between the two teachings will be greatly minimized if not completely eradicated. The majority of the respondents felt that the church should allow the Africans to carry out all that is according to their traditional, circumstances and local situations and only Christianize what is not compatible with her teaching. Since many young people delay to marry in church because of fear that once their marriage is ratified and consummated, it will never be dissolved in any case, canon 1141 (1983). They thus prefer traditional marriage, which is dissoluble in case of marital problems. We recommend that the church should reconsider her canons and allow Africans to carry out the whole preparation, as in customary marriage and then come for the ratification of their marriage in church. This will help the Africans to understand the values of matrimony as a sacrament (*ratum*) and not to consider them an obstacle to their African accepted norms.
Marriage preparation: the marriage preparation and marriage life education are the base foundation of Christian life. If the parents are well prepared from the start of their marriage, they too will prepare their children in a sordid, meaningful Christian life since the parents are the first teachers. We therefore, recommend that the priests, catechists, trained lay people should dedicate the marriage preparation in first place of their apostolate. In Familiaris Consortio no.66, the emphasis is on a greater pastoral commitment on marriage preparation in the diocese, parishes and apostolic movements. It is in line with this, we recommend and support the promotion of marriage education in schools, colleges and universities.

Traditional marriage and the canons of the church: although we cannot change the substance of the sacramental sign, we recommend that the church should respect the whole process of marriage that is linked to the African culture. This is in line with the few elements mentioned in chapter four, which should never be discarded from the traditional teaching. Through this, an African will feel like an African and a Christian at the same time. But the Christians should not deceive themselves as by thinking that the church can do more than she really can. The most important thing the church can do is not a matter of changing rules, but of treating people and their cultures in a more understanding manner. This means by readjusting her laws so as to harmonize the two teachings and to have a common understanding of ratum et consummatum suitable for African people.

Church marriage celebration: the majority of the respondents felt that, the way the marriage pact is concluded can and should vary according to the diverse cultural traditions. We therefore, recommend that liturgical celebration should include elements proper to each culture, which serve to express more clearly the profound human and religious significance or meaning of the marriage pact. We also felt that, the pastors should avoid conducting expensive marriages and charging heavy marriage fees, which result into delaying of marriage blessing (ratum). Those committed Christians living monogamous marriages and participating fully in the church activities
but not yet ratified their marriage, and the parents to whom their son or daughter has married without ratification of his or her marriage in church should be allowed to participate in the Table of the Lord i.e. the Eucharist and confession within the consent of their Small Christian Communities.

On the question of polygamous union, it was felt by majority of the respondents that it should be discouraged. Those Christians who after the church celebration of marriage, either take another wife and become polygamous or divorce their wife in order to take another one should strictly be disciplined by the church. This is because they are fully informed about Christian marriage and understood its essential properties and made the vow spoken by each party willingly and knowingly. Those who have lived more than 50 years as a couple should be catechized in Christian marriage and their marriages be informally blessed. The polygamous children should be baptized for their admission to other sacraments.

Childless marriage: there are a lot of frustrations and psychological torture involved in a ratified and consummated marriage when there is no child bearing. One respondent, a pastor, recommended that the church should consider the childless marriage as invalid so as to avoid all the troubles, frustrations and psychological disturbances on the part of the childless couple. The majority of the respondents recommend that the childless couple should be encouraged to keep their vow made through matrimonial consent to God and to be advised to adopt a child or children.

Marriage life education: the young people entering marriage life need to receive a sound marriage preparation, which should stress the true aims of love between husband and wife and of the sacrament of matrimony. We therefore recommend for urgent vocation guidance, the establishment of counselling centers. The counselling services should be available for those entering marriage life and those already married so as to help them understand both the two teachings as well as to cope with many other problems encountered in marriage life.
The majority of the respondents recommend that people such as priests, catechists, parents, doctors, lawyers, trained teachers and lay people should give marriage life education.

**HIV/AIDS test before marriage:** it was strongly rejected by the majority of the respondents and they recommended that the test should be a personal issue between the two persons who want to marry each other. It was also felt that the demand for the test before marriage is a violation of human rights and the personal love commitment of the two loved ones.

**5.3 PRACTICAL PASTORAL SUGGESTIONS**

In view of the above recommendations we now wish to give some practical suggestions on this pastoral issue:

1. Preparation of marriage should be the very core apostolate in the parishes. Priests, catechists and trained lay people should place this apostolate in the first place because every Christian upbringing originates from the marriage in which the family emerges.

2. Priests, pastors, catechists, trained lay people should make visitations to the people in their homes or in their Small Christian Communities with the message of marriage teaching rather than waiting for the people to come to them.

3. The church through the delegation of an approved and reliable witness to the customary marriage celebration, should recognize the traditional marriage celebration.

4. The liturgical celebration of marriage should include valuable cultural elements such as the traditional involvement of the parents, families in marriage consent.

5. Marriage counseling centers and Christian marriage life education programs should be introduced in every diocese. The church should evaluate the number of lessons for the marriage life teaching in the parishes, which should at least be three to six months instead of a few days.

6. The majority of the young people think that weddings are for the educated, working class people and not for the illiterate people. We suggest that the associations such as
Catholic men (CMA) and women (CWA), Family action movement, Parish pastoral care for the young couple etc. be well organized in the parish level so as to help them. For instance, once the young people announce their willingness to marry, the above mentioned associations can arrange to give a small contribution in order the make the occasion nice and a memorable one. This will make young people feel more supported and encouraged for the church weddings.

7. Our pastors and all those in the field need to be supported by thought, prayer and discussion within their places of work so as to get solution on how to reconcile the African understanding of *ratum et consummatum* and that of the church’s teaching.

8. The church leaders as well as the mature Christians should work hand in hand to teach others on what is really willed by God in our traditional marriage and what is only human posited law.

9. There should be a commission of African theologians to study the problem concerning this pastoral issue on understanding of *ratum et consummatum* in which the pastors and those in the pastoral field may learn and take as a reference.

10. The study of African traditions and especially on marriage customs in the schools, seminaries, theological colleges, universities should be encouraged. The courses offered will enable the students to have a thorough knowledge on how to integrate the two teachings.

11. The church as well as the government should encourage the use of mass media, literature writings to make known as widely as possible the richness of African marriage customs.

12. The last but not the least is for the Holy See in agreement with local Episcopal Conferences and African theologians to compile an African code of canon law for the African church just as we have the African Bible which is the product of biblical
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scholars working in Africa. This will be part of inculturation as elaborated in Lumen Gentium no.17.

5.3.1 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings reported in this work stress the need to carry out further study in order to discard this prevailing problem on marriage. Here we make some recommendations in some few areas for the future study:

1. The means to reconcile the *African understanding of ratum et consummatum with the catholic church's teaching*.

2. The similar survey involving other Christian churches and religions i.e. in relation to ecumenism with other churches and the dialogue with the other religions, since our people marry not only Catholics but also other believers of the other churches and religions.

3. The format of African code of canon law as a part of inculturation.

5.4 GENERAL CONCLUSION

As we have come to an end of our work, we can deduct from the data findings that the assumption that *African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus catholic church's teaching is a pastoral issue today*. From this we feel that we have managed to achieve the goals we aimed at our proposed main objectives which were the following:

First: to find out whether this psycho-religious problem exists and is a pastoral issue today.

Second: to identify the major cause of this problem affecting both the people and those in the field because of two confronting teachings.

Third: to find out what can be done in order to reconcile the two confronting teachings on i.e. African traditional understanding of *ratum et consummatum* and of the church's teaching.

Fourth: to find out whether there are common elements to be shared by the two: African understanding of *ratum et consummatum* and that of the catholic church.
Fifth: to investigate the pastoral approach to be followed or rather, recommendations to be applied in order to minimize, if not to eradicate, this psycho-religious problem existing among the people.

For us to go ahead with this research work, first of all we were to test the assumption that African psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum versus catholic church’s teachings is a pastoral issue today. The data have proved it to be a problem today. In proving that the problem really exists today the literature review in this work was of great support. What other people have highlighted on this particular problem provided us with a lot of confidence in carrying out this research work. It is in line with this we were able to analyze and discuss about this problem and come up with the results as we have them in chapter four of this study in which our assumption is identified and proved as a pastoral issue today.

However, on the one hand, in analyzing and discussing the research findings relevant to this research work, we were able to develop some recommendations, which we hope to be helpful in combating this pastoral psycho-religious problem. On the other hand, we tried to give some few pastoral suggestions for the future research work.

It is our hope as we finalize this work that, other people of good will will research for more and better solutions in eradicating this existing psycho-religious understanding of ratum et consummatum.
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2. UNSIGNED ARTICLES


5. UNPUBLISHED

Getui Mary, African Indigenous Rites/Passage, Class Notes, Tangaza College, 1999.


8. OTHER SOURCES

### APPENDIX ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Undecided (U)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. One of the major problems in the pastoral work in the parishes is the marriage issue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. One of the problems faced in marriage teaching is how to connect the relationship between African understanding of ratification and consummation with the teaching of Catholic Church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Marriage problems in Africa arise because of lack of understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage with that of Catholic church's teaching on marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Catholic church needs to bring about a reconciliation between African traditional understanding of ratification and consummation of marriage with that of Catholic church's teaching on marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The African tradition values with regard to marriage life should be discarded and replaced with Christian teaching on marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Some of the cultural customs and tradition of Africa concerning marriage should be done away with and replaced with the Catholic teaching on marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Some of the Catholic marriage teachings are in harmony with African traditional teaching on marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The African traditional elements on marriage that do not conflict with the teaching of the church should be integrated with those of Christian marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Some of the church teaching concerning ratification and consummation of marriage here in Africa requires some readjustment for better reception and applications into African culture and tradition.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10. The valid and indissoluble sacramental marriage is that which is ratified (blessed in church) and consummated (ngono). According to African culture, a valid marriage (customary) is from engagement to when the child is born in that marriage. Failure to get a child leads to a lot of frustrations and even to try to get a child with another person outside the marriage which, for Christians is adultery, or to marry a second wife (polygamy) or to have another man (polyandry).

11. It is evident that the sacrament of marriage and baptizing of the children of the polygamous Christian family should be encouraged.

12. The church needs to teach the importance of marriage life so as to prepare well the young couples entering marriage life.

13. Before young people get married they need to get good instruction or counselling with regard to marriage life besides the normal catechism instruction on marriage.

14. It is important to increase the number of lessons on marriage life teaching in the parishes, at least three to six months instead of just a few days.

15. It is important to start marriage life teaching/counselling centers within the diocese.

16. Marriage education should be introduced in secondary schools, colleges and universities.

17. Marriage education on ratification and consummation of marriage will influence students to practice pre-marital sex or marry before marriage.

18. Bishops and priests have emphasized enough about life education on marriage in their places of work that is within the diocese and parishes.

19. Young people preparing for marriage should go for medical test on HIV/AIDS and other dangerous contagious diseases before getting married.

20. Educating teenagers on marriage life should be carried out by:

   (a) Priest
   (b) Catechist
   (c) Parents
   (d) Teachers
   (e) Friends
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MASWALI YA KINA</strong></th>
<th><strong>KWELI KABIS A</strong></th>
<th><strong>KWELI</strong></th>
<th><strong>SIJUI</strong></th>
<th><strong>SI KWELI</strong></th>
<th><strong>SI KWELI KABIS A</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Moja ya matatizo makubwa yawakabilio wachungaji (mapadre) katika kazi kitume ni ‘tatizo la ndoa’.</td>
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<td>2. Katika mafundisho ya ndoa, tatizo moja kubwa ni jinsi ya kuoaanisha kati ya tamaduni za ndoa za Kiafrika (customary) na zile za kanisa katoliki kuhusu ndoa kamili.</td>
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<td>4. Kanisa Katoliki la hapa Afrika linahitaji kubuni njia mpya ya kuweza ‘kuleta uleuwano’ au ‘kupatanisha’ (to reconcile) mgongono huu katya ya mafundisho yake ya ndoa kamili na yale ya ndoa kamili katika tamaduni za Kiafrika.</td>
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<td>5. Maadili na mafundisho ya tamaduni za Kiafrika kuhusu ndoa yanastahili kufutwa kabisa na kupokea tu yale maadili na mafundisho ya dini Katoliki.</td>
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<td>7. Baadhi ya mafundisho ya ndoa ya tamaduni za Kiafrika yanaoanana na yale ya dini Katoliki.</td>
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<td>8. Ni bayana kuhushisha tamaduni za ndoa za Kiafrika zisizopingana na zile za mafundisho ya dini Katoliki kuhusu ndoa.</td>
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<td>11. Ni dhahiri kutoa sakramenti ya ndoa na sakramenti zingine (pia ubatizo kwa watoto) kwa waumini walio na ‘wake’ zaidi ya mmoja (polygamous) waombapo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Kanisa Katoliki linatakiwa kufundisha umuhimu wa maisha ya ndoa ili kuweza kuwaandaa vema vijana wanaojandaa kuwingia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
13. Vijana kabla ya kuoana wapewe/wapate elimu {counseling} kuhusu maisha ya ndoa zaidi ya yale ya kawaida ya kateksimu.


15. Ni muhimu kuanzisha vituo vya elimu-ndoa {counseling} kijimbo kwa wale waliokwisha oa na wale wanaotarajia kuoa.

16. Elimu kuhusu ndoa ni muhimu kufundishwa mashuleni {sekondari na vyoni}.

17. Elimu mashuleni kuhusu ndoa itawafanya vijana {wanafunzi} kuvutwa kwenehe mapenzi {bila ndoa}, kuoa au kuolewa mapema.


20. Ngingeshauri elimu kwa vijana kuhusu ndoa itolewe na:
   (a) Padre
   (b) Katekista
   (c) Wazazi
   (d) Waalimu
   (e) Marafiki

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**APPENDIX TWO**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. It is true that one of the major problems in the pastoral work in the parish is the marriage problem?

2. What ways or means do you suggest should be used when doing pastoral work in order to minimize or end the conflicts that arise between these two teachings on the understanding of marriage?

3. What should be done according to you in order to bring a mutual understanding between African customary marriage and Christian marriage (Catholic)? What is to be done to avoid the conflict between the two?

4. What are the major marital problems faced by the marriage couples in life?

5. Can you mention some of the customs or cultural values on marriage which are good and can be integrated in the Catholic Church’s teaching on marriage and which ones to be eradicated?
6. What would you suggest to be done in regard to some of church teaching on marriage so that its teaching may be wholly accepted and better applied in the African culture and traditions?

7. It is admitted that nobody has the power to break or dissolve marriage, which has been ratified and consummated except by death. What is your advice if the married couples would like to divorce or break a valid ratified and consummated marriage for a grave reason? {for Priest}

8. Have you ever blessed a marriage whereby the couples later on found to be childless? If so, how did you help the couples? If not, incase it happens, how will you handle the case? {for Priest}

9. Looking at number 8, if one of the couples comes to you saying that he or she wants to divorce his or her partner in order to get a partner with whom they can get a child, how will you help him or her? {for Priest}

10. What is your advice concerning a polygamous man who would like to be married in the Catholic Church and to receive other sacraments and also wants his children to be baptized?

11. Is it true that very often the motive for the church marriage for Africans is only the desire to receive other sacraments?

12. Which ways you do think may be helpful for marital preparation for the young people who want to marry in the Catholic Church?

13. What is your opinion concerning the opening of counselling centers within the diocese for those married and those aspiring to the marriage life?

14. What is your contribution toward the establishment of marriage education in the schools (secondary, colleges and Universities)?

15. Is it true that very often the couples are too shy in seeking advice on their marriage that has failed because of matters arising from the sexual relations?

16. What is your opinion concerning the stand of the Catholic Church concerning the use of condoms and responsible family planning in marriage life?

17. What is your opinion concerning a need of a law which requires that young people desiring to get married should go for medical checkup for various contagious diseases including HIV/AIDS, and others, and also to show the medical test certificate before they get married to the priest.