

Remarried Divorcees Still Banned From Catholic Communion

The **Vatican** confirmed on Tuesday that Catholics who have remarried after divorce are barred from receiving Communion, dashing hopes that the ruling could change soon.

Archbishop Gerhard Mueller, head of the Holy See's doctrinal office, said in a long article in the Vatican newspaper that such couples could receive **communion** only if they had a Church annulment.

But he said "even if there is no possibility of admitting remarried divorcees to the sacraments," priests must show particular pastoral concern for people in difficult circumstances.

The question of married divorcees is a major issue in Catholic Churches in a number of developed countries, particularly in Germany, where bishops say it is a growing problem.

Earlier this month the Vatican blocked a move by a German diocese to allow some divorced and remarried **Catholics** to receive communion. The Vatican said local dioceses could not enact reforms on their own.

The Church teaches that marriage is indissoluble. It does not recognize divorce but only a Church-sanctioned annulment, which is a ruling that the conditions for a marriage, such as free will and psychological maturity, did not exist when it took place.

Reporting By Philip Pullella; editing by Barry Moody

