

Canon 1151 states that the motivations which excuse spouses from the obligation of living together must be legitimate. This qualification is to be understood as being provided for by the law or decided by the competent ecclesiastical authority. It is not, in fact, possible to find a list of legitimate reasons in the substantive norms. They can, nevertheless, be discovered through an exegesis of the norms contained in canons 1152 to 1155, and through the nature of the conjugal obligations themselves as we have just related. We repeat them here, *brevitatis causa*:

- with regard to the obligation of reciprocal faithfulness, the primary reason for separation is adultery;⁵
- with regard to the obligation to strive for mutual spiritual and material perfection, the second reason is serious physical, psychological or spiritual danger inflicted by the spouse on his or her partner;⁶
- with regard to the obligation to strive for the material and spiritual wellbeing of the children, the reason for separation can be a grave material or physical danger to the children;⁷
- with regard to the obligation of mutual respect, the reason for separation can be whatever serious cause which renders life together very difficult or impossible;⁸
- with regard to the obligation of cohabitation, the fraudulent abandonment of the spouse can be a sufficient reason.

Of the reasons listed, not all of them are in the Code. Some are derived from the jurisprudence of the Roman Curia, particularly from the jurisprudence of the Roman Rota. The