MARRIAGE POLICIES

July, 2002
Contents

Introductory Letter......................................................................................................................... iii
Preface................................................................................................................................................... v

MARRIAGE POLICIES............................................................................................................... 1-1
  Topic 1: When weddings are celebrated (day and time)..................................................... 1-1
  Topic 2: Who can be married?............................................................................................... 1-3
  Topic 3: Where should weddings be celebrated?............................................................. 1-5
  Topic 4: The Official Witness of Marriage (Canonical Form)........................................ 1-7
  Topic 5: Weddings that would not be civilly recognized..................................................... 1-9
  Topic 6: Marriage Preparation............................................................................................ 1-11
  Topic 7: Marriage Ritual........................................................................................................ 1-13

BACKGROUND....................................................................................................................... 2-1
  Issues regarding the day or time for celebrating weddings.............................................. 2-1
    What do Canon Law and Liturgical Norms allow?......................................................... 2-1
    Appendix III of Bishops’ Ceremonial............................................................................. 2-2
    Ordo Key to Symbols......................................................................................................... 2-3
    Holy Days of Obligation for the Year 2000................................................................. 2-4
  Issues regarding who can marry in the Catholic Church.............................................. 2-7
    What do Canon Law and Liturgical Norms allow?......................................................... 2-7
    Prohibitions and warnings placed on the parties in a declaration of annulment:............. 2-8
  CRUX Insert............................................................................................................................... 2-10
  The Holy Mystery of Matrimony...................................................................................... 2-13
    The Power to Dispense....................................................................................................... 2-14
  Issues regarding the place of marriage........................................................................... 2-15
    What do Canon Law and Liturgical Norms require?..................................................... 2-15
  Issues regarding dispensation from canonical form...................................................... 2-19
    What does Canon Law allow?........................................................................................ 2-19
  Requests for a Church wedding that would not also be a civil marriage........................ 2-21
    What does Canon Law allow?........................................................................................ 2-21
  Issues regarding formal preparation for marriage......................................................... 2-23
    What does Canon Law require?....................................................................................... 2-23
    What if one or both parties do not speak English?........................................................ 2-24
    What if the parties are living in different locations and are not able to participate in a marriage preparation process together? ................................................................. 2-24
    What does marriage preparation need to include?......................................................... 2-24

DECREE OF PROMULGATION............................................................................................. 2-26
  Ritual Considerations in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.................... 2-27
    Music in the Wedding Liturgy......................................................................................... 2-27
    The reception of Holy Communion by non-Catholics.................................................. 2-29
    Local and Cultural Customs........................................................................................... 2-29
    Fees................................................................................................................................. 2-30
    The Use of the “Unity Candle” at Weddings................................................................. 2-31
    Musical Resources for Weddings.................................................................................... 2-33
July 3, 2002

It is with great pleasure that I promulgate these policies for the Celebration of Marriage in the Archdiocese of Portland. For more than two years, under the leadership of our Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, my brother priests and I have studied ways in which we might better serve the needs and desires of Catholic couples seeking marriage in the Church as wisely and as collaboratively as possible.

We became aware of the fact that our diversity in the practice of preparing couples for marriage and celebrating this holy sacrament was at times problematic for our people. We are aware of our responsibility to serve the Church’s essential mission of evangelization as well as we can during this important moment in the lives of our people. We want to encourage good Catholic marriages and to help couples celebrate beautiful and meaningful Catholic weddings. We are desirous that the covenant between the newlyweds and the Lord Jesus be well understood, clearly proclaimed and lovingly celebrated.

As archbishop, I am indeed grateful to all who have participated in the development of these policies. They are offered in the spirit of loving service that all pastoral ministers are eager to make the hallmark of their ministry. May God bless this good work which we now share with our people.

+ John G. Vlazny
Most Rev. John G. Vlazny
Archbishop of Portland in Oregon
PREFACE

Responding to concerns raised by council members, the Executive Committee of the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council appointed a committee to study pastoral practices surrounding funerals and weddings. With the agreement of the council, this committee adopted the following procedure:

1. Identify areas/issues where the lack of common sacramental practice is considered by clergy to be problematic from a pastoral point-of-view and confusing to the faithful.

2. Analyze these issues in light of the latitude/discretion allowed by Canon Law and liturgical documents.

3. Prepare proposals whereby the clergy of the archdiocese may identify those areas of common sacramental practice to which they would commit (covenant) themselves.

At the Archdiocesan Clergy Convocation 2000 the assembled clergy reviewed the committee’s report of the requirements of Canon Law and the Wedding Ritual relating to those marriage issues raised in vicariate meetings of clergy throughout the archdiocese. Working in small groups, the priests identified where they would like to see more consistent pastoral practice in the preparation and celebration of weddings.

The following year this committee submitted recommended practices for each of the areas previously identified. At the Archdiocesan Clergy Convocation 2001 the assembled clergy after discussing the recommendations in small groups expressed in written vote their willingness to bind themselves to the recommended common practice.

The votes and consequent revisions were approved and submitted to Archbishop Vlazny by the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council on February 7, 2002.

Rev. Joseph S. McMahon
Rev. Kelly Vandehey
Rev. Donald Buxman
Rev. Timothy Mockaitis
Sr. Jeremy Gallet, SP
MARRIAGE POLICIES
Topic 1: When weddings are celebrated (day and time)

Background: pp. 1–6

Summary: The Law does not forbid the celebration of the Rite of Marriage on any given day of the year. There are three ways of celebrating weddings:

1) Celebration of the marriage ritual Mass using readings and prayers for weddings;

2) Celebration of marriage during the Mass of the day, that is using the readings and prayers of the day;

3) Celebration of marriage outside of the Mass. The ritual of marriage allows a wedding service (i.e., a wedding without a Mass) to be celebrated virtually on any day of the year.

When weddings are celebrated during Mass, the ritual and the calendar often require that the readings and the prayers of the day be used, rather than the typical wedding readings, preface, and prayers. When the ordo states that a ritual mass cannot be celebrated on a particular day, one can still celebrate a wedding with Mass on that day using the readings and prayers of the day. If the wedding is celebrated without a Mass, the readings and prayers may come from the wedding ritual itself.

Our General Faculties allow “pastors and parochial vicars of this Archdiocese for a good reason to celebrate the Eucharist twice on weekdays, and, if a pastoral necessity requires it, three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation (Canon 905).”

Archdiocese of Portland:

In addition to the requirements listed above:

1. Weddings are scheduled during the Triduum only for those being received into the Church (RCIA).

2. Parishes should assure that adequate opportunities for celebrating weddings are available to their parishioners. Parish Priests may, however, refuse to celebrate weddings on Saturday evening, Sunday, and Holy Days of Obligation when this would make excessive demands on the available clergy who are responsible for Masses of precept. The policy should, however, be consistent and apply to all couples.

3. Weddings during Lent and Advent are allowed. Parishes may insist that the environment and church arrangement for Advent/Lent be respected. Music and decorations should respect the liturgical season.
Topic 2: Who can be married?

Background: pp. 7—16

Summary: All persons who are not prohibited by law can contract marriage; that is, people have the right to marry. Those persons prohibited by law are those who manifest those behaviors or convictions that would constitute grounds for annulment; e.g.,
• anyone previously married unless the marriage has been declared invalid through the appropriate canonical procedure;

  Note: The judge may attach a stipulation or warning to the declaration of invalidity. The minister preparing this person for marriage must contact the tribunal that issued the declaration and see that the conditions of the stipulation or warning are accomplished.
• an intention against one or all of the goods of marriage,
• a profound incapacity to assume the essential obligations of marriage,
• deceit,
• gravely lacking discretion of judgment concerning the essential obligations of marriage.

In the Archdiocese of Portland, a parish priest can give permission for a Catholic to marry a baptized non-Catholic; he can also give a dispensation for a Catholic to marry a non-baptized person provided the Catholic does not plan to abandon the practice of his/her Catholic faith and promises to do all in his/her power to see that their children are baptized and raised in the Catholic faith (cc. 1125, 1086).

The Archdiocese of Portland requires an extended and careful preparation for couples “who are young either chronologically or developmentally.” Canon Law requires an interview with the parents of persons who are not yet eighteen years of age; Oregon civil law requires parental consent.

Archdiocese of Portland:

In addition to the requirements listed above:

1. It is important to honor the right of Catholics to marry in the church. Priests may not add impediments or prohibitions not included in Canon Law.

a. While it is good to encourage engaged couples to live separately before marriage, they should not be refused the Sacrament on the grounds of their co-habitation.

b. Couples may be required to register in their parish as part of their preparation for marriage; but they may not be refused the sacrament because of a prior failure to register in their parish.

c. Couples seeking marriage in the Church should be encouraged to participate in Mass and the sacraments, but they may not be refused marriage in the Church for the reason of not having been active Catholics.
2. People who live within the physical boundaries of a parish have a right to marry in that church—even if they do not regularly attend that church or are not registered in that parish.

   a. For the purpose of celebrating marriage, couples who regularly attend Mass at a parish should be treated as having “domicile” in that parish even if they live outside the physical boundaries of that parish.

   b. For the purpose of celebrating marriage, children whose parents are members of a parish may be treated as having “domicile” in the parish when seeking to celebrate their marriage.

3. Parish clergy should make a reasonable effort to accept the request of a couple living outside their parish to marry unless this would make it impossible to provide adequate opportunities for their own parishioners to marry in their proper parish. He may request the permission of the proper pastor of either party. When it is not possible to accommodate a couple’s request to marry in his parish, the priest/deacon should refer them to their proper parish or to a priest or church able to accommodate their request.

4. When the wedding ceremony is to take place in another parish, the parish where either party resides or worships is still expected to be willing to provide immediate marriage preparation as Canon Law requires. Clergy and ministers at the couple’s proper parish should also be willing to conduct the normal pre-marriage investigation and provide the appropriate documentation, permissions and/or dispensation as they would for a marriage being celebrated in their own parish.

   It is the canonical responsibility of the priest or deacon delegated to ask for and receive the exchange of consent of the couple in the name of the Church (“Official Witness”) to assure the couple has received appropriate immediate preparation for marriage, that the pre-marriage investigation has been documented and the necessary permissions and dispensations received. The Official Witness may also approve or conduct an immediate marriage preparation other than the one provided by the couple’s proper parish.

5. When a priest/deacon refuses to celebrate a couple’s wedding on the basis of behaviors or convictions that could invalidate the marriage, he must advise them that the decision may be appealed to the Archbishop/Tribunal. The priest/deacon must notify the archbishop of his decision in writing.

6. If one of the parties is an Eastern Rite Catholic (or Orthodox) the priest/deacon must contact the Tribunal regarding special procedures, which may be required for validity.
Topic 3: Where should weddings be celebrated?

Background: pp. 17—19

Summary: Any Catholic can celebrate their marriage in the parish where they live permanently (“domicile”), periodically (“quasi-domicile”) or temporarily (as little as one month). A Catholic may also celebrate their marriage in any parish with permission of his/her pastor (although this permission is not required for the marriage to be lawful and valid).

Catholics are expected to celebrate their marriage in a Catholic Church or Chapel. The faculties of the Archdiocese of Portland allow a pastor to give permission for a “mixed” marriage to be celebrated in another church when both parties are baptized. If the church/chapel is not located in his parish he would need delegation from the local pastor. If one person is not baptized, the pastor [as well as the local ordinary] may permit the wedding to be celebrated in “another suitable place.” If the place is outside his parish, he would need the permission as well as the delegation of the local pastor.

Archdiocese of Portland:

In addition to the requirements listed above:

1. Parish Clergy must honor the right of those Catholics living within their parish to marry and may not add restrictions or requirements to those already defined in Canon Law.

2. For the purpose of celebrating weddings, Catholics who live outside the parish boundaries, but regularly worship at that particular parish, should be regarded as having “domicile” in the parish.

3. Parish clergy should make a reasonable effort to accept the request of a couple living outside their parish to marry unless this would make it impossible to provide adequate opportunities for their own parishioners to marry in their proper parish. He may request the permission of the proper pastor of either party. When it is not possible to accommodate a couple’s request to marry in his parish, the priest/deacon should refer them to their proper parish or to a priest or church able to accommodate their request.

4. In the Archdiocese of Portland, Catholic clergy must request the permission of the archbishop whenever they witness a marriage outside a church, chapel, or oratory even when one party is not baptized. A Parish priest may celebrate a wedding in a church or chapel other than his parish church provided it is located within his parish boundaries or after having secured the permission and delegation of the proper pastor of the location where the wedding takes place.
Topic 4: The Official Witness of Marriage (Canonical Form)

Background: pp. 21–22

Summary: Canonical Form states that Catholics marry validly when the exchange of consent takes place before the local ordinary (bishop, vicar general, episcopal vicar), the pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them (a parochial vicar or a deacon assigned to a particular parish, or another priest or deacon delegated by the local ordinary, pastor, or parochial vicar). These are known as Official Church witnesses. Two other witnesses must be present during this exchange of consent. The official Church witness must be the one to ask for and receive the consent of the parties seeking marriage.

Canonical form is binding on all Catholics—either baptized Catholic or received into the Church—who have not left by a formal act.

[Bishops may delegate a lay person to witness Catholic marriages when there exists a shortage of clergy.] Dispensation from Canonical Form: On occasion it happens that there exist serious difficulties that inhibit the observance of canonical form. In such cases the local ordinary of the Catholic party may grant a dispensation from form. Once a dispensation is granted the local ordinary, pastor, or other delegated priest or deacon is not to ask for and receive the consent of the parties seeking marriage. Such marriage may occur anywhere so long as there is some form of public form of celebration [required for validity].

Marriages celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form are to be recorded in the proper parish. This is the parish of the priest or deacon who inquired as to the parties' freedom to marry. Information recorded should include the place of the celebration and the public form used.

Archdiocese of Portland

In addition to the requirements listed above:

1. When a parish priest is not available to witness the marriage of his parishioner in his proper parish, it is his responsibility to arrange for a priest or deacon to witness the marriage in his absence.

2. When a couple requests a priest not assigned to their parish to witness their marriage, the parish priest should not refuse delegation.

3. When other clergy participate in a Catholic wedding service, the Official Witness must be the one who asks for and receives the consent of both parties seeking marriage.

4. When serious difficulty does hinder the observance of Canonical Form, the priest or deacon assisting the couple should submit a request to the Archbishop for a dispensation from Canonical Form.
Topic 5: Weddings that would not be civilly recognized

Background: p. 23

Summary: Marriages involving at least one Catholic are governed by divine law, ecclesiastical law (canon law), and by civil law (which determines the merely civil effects of the same marriage). When one encounters a situation where a marriage cannot be recognized civilly, the official witness is to first obtain the permission of the local ordinary. In the United States, this should rarely, if ever, occur. This permission would not be granted for merely financial considerations, as in the case of someone who would lose their Social Security benefits.

Performing such a marriage in this country would be a violation of civil law and could invite serious legal consequences.

Archdiocese of Portland

Any request to celebrate a Catholic marriage that would not also be recognized as a civil marriage must be referred to the Archbishop.
Topic 6: Marriage Preparation

Background: pp. 25—28

Summary: The Law speaks about four levels of marriage preparation:
• remote,
• immediate,
• liturgical,
• and on-going pastoral support

The pastor has the obligation to assure that his ecclesial community provides marriage preparation for engaged couples in his parish—even when marrying elsewhere—regardless of language or culture. When appropriate, such preparation should make use of those married couples in the parish with particular expertise.

The Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Policy revised and promulgated on March 15, 1988, provides a special policy for “young couples.”

With the dissolution of the Vicariate San Salvador, all parishes have been specifically charged with the responsibility of providing pastoral services to those who speak Spanish.

Canon Law identifies the categories for marriage preparation, but does not specify the content, form, or duration of any category.

It has been the responsibility of the pastor to determine or approve the marriage preparation a parish will offer. (This may include the use of counseling centers, sponsors, Engaged Encounter, etc.)

As of December 1, 2000, the NCCB decreed that each bishop in the United States must approve a marriage preparation program for his diocese. This program must be in compliance with appropriate civil laws and in conformity with Canons 1064, 1071, 1072, 1086§2, and 1125.

Archdiocese of Portland

In addition to the requirements listed above:

1. When the wedding ceremony is to take place in another parish, the parish where either party resides or worships is still expected to be willing to provide immediate marriage preparation as Canon Law requires. Clergy and ministers at the couple’s proper parish should also be willing to conduct the normal pre-marriage investigation and provide the appropriate documentation, permissions and/ or dispensation as they would for a marriage being celebrated in their own parish.

It is the canonical responsibility of the Official Witness to assure the couple has received appropriate immediate preparation for marriage, that the pre-marriage investigation has been documented and the necessary permissions and dispensations received. The Official Witness may also approve or conduct an immediate marriage preparation other than the one provided by the couple’s proper parish.
2. Clergy must make every effort to provide appropriate arrangements for couples who require special assistance due to their lack of familiarity with American culture or the English language.
Topic 7: Marriage Ritual

Background: pp. 29—36

Summary:

Ritual: The Introduction (praenotanda) to the Rite of Marriage states simply that the celebration of marriage [between two Catholics] should normally take place during Mass. In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized person who is not a Catholic, the rite of marriage outside Mass (nos. 39-54) shall be used. If the situation warrants and if the local Ordinary gives permission, the rite for celebrating marriage within Mass may be used, except that communion is not given to the non-Catholic, since general law does not allow it. In a marriage between a Catholic and one who is not baptized nos. 53-66 of the rite are to be followed.

Music: The only official guidance regarding music at Catholic Weddings are the famous “three judgments” found in the Music in Catholic Worship (a publication of the Bishops’ Committee for Liturgy):

- The musical judgment (#26-29)
- The liturgical judgment (#30-38)
- The pastoral judgment. (#39-41)

These basic principles received further elaboration in a second document, Liturgical Music Today (#25, 28, 29).

Cultural and Local Customs: There is no official ritual in the United States for customs specific to other cultures. L.T.P. of Chicago has published a popular resource, Primero Dios, Hispanic Liturgical Resource. Some ministers follow rituals from other countries.

The use of the Unity Candle is recognized by the Bishops’ Committee on Liturgy but is neither endorsed nor forbidden. The BCL is currently preparing a revision of the marriage ritual. We don’t know if the use of the Unity Candle will be specifically addressed in this official revision.

Intercommunion: Special permission from the local ordinary is required for a non-Catholic to receive Communion and special conditions apply. Only a person currently and regularly receiving Communion in his/her own ecclesial communion could be considered for this request.

Participation of non-Catholic Clergy: The requirement for Canonical Form would require the Catholic Priest/Deacon to ask for and receive the consent of the couple. The Nuptial Blessing is prayed in the name of the Church and so most aptly prayed by the Catholic Priest.

Marriage Policies
Fees: The Archdiocesan Clergy Personnel Manual states that, in accordance with Canon Law, all offerings given in conjunction with the celebration of sacraments belong to the parish unless the donors clearly state they wish the gift to go to the priest. Parish marriage policies which are given to those preparing for marriage should 1) list any fees charged by the parish, 2) explain that it is customary to give the parish an offering, but not required and 3) state that the couple is not expected to give the priest a gift.
BACKGROUND
Issues regarding the day or time for celebrating weddings

Celebrating weddings during Advent and Lent.
Celebrating weddings on Sunday or during Sunday Mass.
Celebrating weddings on Friday and/or Saturday evenings.
Celebrating weddings on Solemnities and Feasts.

What do Canon Law and Liturgical Norms allow?

There is no day, time, or season when celebrating a wedding is prohibited by current church law or norms. There are days and times when a Wedding Mass may not be celebrated. The issue on these days is more accurately what readings may be used when a wedding is celebrated during Mass. On the days when a wedding Mass is not allowed, we can celebrate a wedding outside of Mass using the readings in the lectionary for weddings. We may still celebrate a wedding during Mass on these days, but the readings must be those assigned for the day. These days are identified in #11 of the Rite of Marriage and #330 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

The attached chart from Appendix III of the Ceremonial of Bishops summarizes the days when the readings for a Wedding Mass (i.e., Ritual Mass [V1]) must follow those assigned for the day. When a wedding Mass is celebrated on the Sundays of Ordinary Time and the Christmas Season, one of the readings for a Wedding Mass may be selected from the Lectionary for Weddings (cf., #11, Rite of Marriage). The Paulist Press Ordo (see attached Key to Symbols) also indicates the days when the readings for a Wedding Mass may be taken from the Lectionary for Weddings (V1).

Weddings are not prohibited or discouraged during Advent and Lent. The ritual simply states that “the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these liturgical seasons” (#1, Rite of Marriage).

Canon 905 states:

1. It is not licit for a priest to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except for certain instances when the law permits such celebration or concelebration more than once.
2. If priests are lacking, the local ordinary may permit priests, for a just cause, to celebrate twice a day and even, if pastoral need requires it, three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mass for Various Needs and Occasions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rituall Masses (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 330)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Holy Thursday, Easter Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sundays not of Proper, All Souls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Advent Wednesday, Week before Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Days in the Easter octave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sundays of Christmas and in Ordinary Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pentecosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Wednesdays of Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Days in the Christmas octave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Weekdays of Lent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Weekdays of Ash Wednesday to 15 December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Weekdays of Advent to 15 December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Weekdays of the Easter season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Weekdays of Christmas from 2 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Weekdays in Ordinary Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**D3** Daily Mass for the Dead (Cirm), when D1 and D2 are not permitted.

**D2** Mass on the occasion of news of a death, final burial, or the first anniversary (Cirm, no. 337).

**D1** Funerary Mass (Cirm, no. 336).

**V3** Masses for various needs and occasions and vile masses in the usual form of the Roman Missal, no. 333.

**V2** The usual Missal of the Roman Missal, with the express permission of the Roman Missal, no. 332.

**V1** Rituall Masses (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 330).
Ordo Key to Symbols

* Sunday, Holyday of obligation, Mass for the People ("pro populo")
S solemnity
F feast
M obligatory memorial
m optional memorial
* Hymn of Praise (Te Deum) sung at OR
† year or date of death
Pss I, etc. respective week of the four week psalter

V¹ Ritual Masses (see General Instruction of the Roman Missal [henceforth GIRM], 333) permitted. Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions as well as Votive Masses, in case of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the direction of the diocesan bishop or with his permission (GIRM, 332), allowed.

V² Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, in cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, at the discretion of the rector of the church or the priest celebrant (GIRM, 333), permitted.

V¹ Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions and Votive Masses chosen by the priest celebrant in favor of the devotion of the people (GIRM, 329, b and c) allowed.

R¹ Funeral Mass (GIRM, 336) permitted.
R² R¹ and Mass on the occasion of news of a death, final burial or the first anniversary (GIRM, 337) permitted.
R¹ R¹ and R² and Daily Mass for the Dead (GIRM, 337) allowed. When R¹ and R² are not permitted, neither is R¹.

* indicates whatever is optional
OR Office of Readings
MP Morning Prayer (Lauds)
DP Daytime (Mid-morning, -day, -afternoon) Prayer [Terce, Sext, None]
EP Evening Prayer (Vespers)
EP I or II Evening Prayer I or II (I or II Vespers)
NP Night Prayer (Compline)
NP I or II respective Night Prayer after Evening Prayer I or II
PN Pastoral Note containing suggestions for celebration
* liturgical directive or point of information
* exact necrology information unknown
Holy Days of Obligation for the Year 2000

NCCB Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter
January 2000

The following information on Holy Days of Obligation is taken from the provisions of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal that govern the celebration of weddings and funerals on Sundays and solemnities. These notes are the application of those principles for the key dates in 2000. On any day when the Ritual Mass is prohibited, the Ritual of Marriage outside Mass may be used with no restriction. If the marriage occurs in Advent or Lent, however, people should keep the nature of the liturgical seasons in mind when planning celebrations.

Ash Wednesday - March 8, 2000
Ritual Masses, including the wedding Mass, are prohibited on Ash Wednesday (GIRM #330). Since this is a major penitential day and one of the two days of fast and abstinence in the U.S., this would not be an appropriate day to celebrate marriage. Funeral Masses are permitted (GIRM #336).

Sundays of Lent
Ritual Masses are prohibited. For couples who must plan a wedding that day, there are several options:

1. The wedding ritual outside Mass may be celebrated, keeping in mind the special Lent.
2. If the wedding during Mass is chosen, the ritual Mass of the day is used. Presidential prayers, preface, and two of the readings are taken from the Mass of the day (Sunday of Lent). One reading may be chosen from the readings for the wedding Mass, and the Nuptial Blessing is given at the usual time (GIRM #330 and the Rite of Marriage [OM] #11). The general law does not limit which reading may be changed. Funeral Masses are permitted (GIRM #336).

Holy Week - April 17-22, 2000
It seems inappropriate to celebrate weddings during this time. Ritual Masses are prohibited. For further restrictions, cf. the Sacramentary (on Good Friday and Saturday morning all Masses are prohibited). In other circumstances, the Mass of the day is celebrated and one reading may be changed only on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday of Holy Week (OM #11). The wedding ritual outside Mass may be used, keeping in mind the character of the week. Funeral Masses are permitted only on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. (GIRM #336)

Easter Sunday - April 23, 2000
Ritual Masses are prohibited. Easter Sunday is a solemnity and a day of obligation:

1. The wedding ritual outside Mass may be used with no restrictions.
2. The Mass of Easter with all its readings is used. No readings may be changed. The Nuptial Blessing is given at the usual time.

Funeral Masses are not permitted (GIRM #336).

Sundays of Easter
Ritual Masses are prohibited. Cf. the options and restrictions for Sundays of Lent. One reading may be changed for weddings during Mass (OM #11). Funeral Masses are not permitted (GIRM #336).

Octave of Easter - April 24-30, 2000
Ritual Masses are prohibited. Cf. the options and restrictions for Sundays of Lent. One reading may be changed for weddings during Mass (OM #11). Funeral Masses are permitted (GIRM #336).
Ascension Thursday June 1, 2000
There are no restrictions on Thursday for the dioceses which celebrate the Ascension on the seventh Sunday of Easter. The following prohibitions, however, then apply to the Sunday observance.

Where Thursday is a solemnity and day of obligation:

1. The wedding ritual outside Mass may be used with no restrictions.
2. For Mass, cf. the options and restrictions for Easter 2000. No readings may be changed where this is a day of obligation.

Funeral Masses are not permitted where Ascension Thursday is a day of obligation (GIRM #336). Funeral Masses are permitted on the Thursday but not on Sunday in the dioceses where the Ascension is celebrated on the seventh Sunday of Easter.

Assumption - Tuesday August 15, 2000
This is a solemnity and a day of obligation — cf. options and restrictions for Easter. For Mass, the Mass of the Assumption is used and no readings may be changed (GIRM #330, OM #II). Funeral Masses are not permitted (GIRM #336).

All Saints - Wednesday November 11, 2000
This is a solemnity and a day of obligation — cf. options and restrictions for Easter. For Mass, the Mass of All Saints is used— and no readings may be changed (GIRM #330, OM #II). Funeral Masses are not permitted. (GIRM #336)

Sundays - Advent 2000
Ritual Masses are prohibited. See options for Sundays of Lent 2000. For weddings during Mass - the Mass of the Sunday of Advent is used. One reading may be changed (GIRM #330, OM #II). Funeral Masses are not permitted. (GIRM #336)

Immaculate Conception - Friday, Dec. 8, 2000
This is a solemnity and a day of obligation — cf. options and restrictions for Easter 2000. For weddings during Mass, no readings may be changed. Funeral Masses are not permitted.

Christmas - December 25, 2000
This is a solemnity and day of obligation — cf. options and restrictions for Easter 2000. For weddings during Mass, no readings may be changed. Funeral Masses are not permitted.

Epiphany, Pentecost, Corpus Christi
The wedding ritual outside Mass may be used with no restrictions. If the wedding during Mass is chosen, the Mass of the Solemnity is used and no readings may be changed. (Rite of Marriage #11). Funeral Masses are permitted (GIRM #336).

New Year’s Day - January 1, 2001
This is a solemnity but not a day of obligation (because it falls on Monday this year). Ritual Masses, including the wedding Mass, are prohibited on all solemnities (GIRM #330). For couples who plan a wedding that day, there are several options:

1. The wedding ritual outside Mass may be celebrated with no restrictions.
2. If the wedding during Mass is chosen, the Mass of the day is used (presidential prayers, preface, and two of the readings are taken from the Mass of the day, Mary, Mother of God). One reading may be chosen from the readings for the wedding Mass, and the Nuptial Blessing is given at the usual time (GERM #330 and the Rite of Marriage #II). The general law does not limit which reading may be changed. Funeral Masses may be celebrated.

Sundays in Ordinary Time and Sundays of the Christmas Season
The wedding outside Mass may be celebrated with no restrictions. If the wedding during Mass is chosen, the Mass of the Sunday is used but one of the readings may be changed. If the Mass is not a parish Mass, the entire wedding Mass may be used (Rite of Marriage, #11).
Issues regarding who can marry in the Catholic Church.

Celebrating weddings for couples who are not active in the Catholic Church.
Celebrating weddings for couples already living together.
Celebrating weddings when only one person is an active Catholic.
Celebrating weddings for couples when one party is not baptized.
Celebrating weddings when a prohibition or warning has been attached to a declaration of annulment.

What do Canon Law and Liturgical Norms allow?

Canon Law requires that all who have been baptized in the Catholic Church or received into the Catholic Church and have not left the Catholic Church “by a formal act” to observe Canon Law regarding marriage. Canon 1058 says, “All persons who are not prohibited by law can contract marriage.”

Canon Law does not specify restrictions on Catholics who are “not active” nor on persons living together outside of marriage regarding the celebration of marriage. Elsewhere the Law emphasizes our preaching and teaching regarding the meaning and sanctity of marriage.

Regarding “mixed” marriages—when only one person is Catholic—much more is said:

Canon Law:
Marriage to a non-baptized person is “invalid” and marriage to a baptized non-Catholic is “prohibited”. The local ordinary may grant a dispensation/permission for a “just and reasonable” cause provided—

- The Catholic party declares that s/he is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his/her power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church;
- the other party is to be informed at an appropriate time about the promises which the Catholic party is to make in such a way that it is certain that s/he is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party;
- both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage which neither of the contracting parties is to exclude. (1125)

In the Archdiocese of Portland all parish priests receive faculties to give these dispensations/permissions for their parishioners. They are recorded with the pre-marriage investigation.

Place: Canon Law says these marriages for two baptized persons are to be celebrated in a parish church or in another church or oratory. A bishop may give permission for the marriage to be celebrated “in another suitable place.”
Marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person may be celebrated in a church or “in another suitable place”—no permission required if it is within the parish priest’s parish.

*Ritual:* The marriage ritual states that the celebration of marriage normally should be within Mass. A marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic should follow the Rite of Marriage outside Mass—but may be celebrated during Mass if the bishop gives permission, but Holy Communion is not given to the non-Catholic person. A variation of the Rite of Marriage outside Mass is provided for marriages between a Catholic and one who is non-baptized.

Prohibitions and warnings placed on the parties in a declaration of annulment:

On occasion, when a declaration of invalidity is granted to a petitioner and a respondent in a particular case, the Judge, acting in the name of the local ordinary, may place a prohibition (*vetitum*) or a warning (*monitum*) on one or both parties involved in the case. Such stipulations are placed on one or both parties due to the issues involved in the previous marriage. It is the thinking of the Judge that these particular issues require special attention prior to permitting the person(s) to marry in the Catholic Church.

Canon 1077 states:

§ 1: In a special case, the local ordinary can prohibit marriage for his own subjects residing anywhere and for all actually present in his own territory but only for a time, for a grave cause, and for as long as the cause continues.

§ 2: Only the supreme authority of the Church can add a nullifying clause to a prohibition.

Canon 1684 states:

§ 1 after the sentence which first declared the nullity of the marriage has been confirmed at the appellate grade either by a decree or by a second sentence, the persons whose marriage has been declared null can contract a new marriage as soon as the decree or second sentence has been communicated to them unless a prohibition attached to the sentence or decree or established by the local ordinary has forbidden this.

*The purpose of the law, in this case, is to:*

- protect the contracting parties from harm
- protect the community from harm
- maintain the dignity of the sacrament

There must be a serious cause that would provoke the local ordinary to place the prohibition. Examples of such seriousness would be a strong suspicion of:

- impediments
- one of the conditions mentioned in canon 1071
- a doubt about the party’s capacity to fulfill the obligations of marriage
- doubt about the party’s commitment to marriage
- doubt about the motivating factors leading the party to marriage

The power to place a prohibition is given only to the local ordinary, not to pastors of parishes. A prohibition does not invalidate a marriage, but does call to attention liceity (legality).
Introduction and Relevant Material Brought to CRUX Subscribers as a Special Service

Statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Implementation of the Apostolic Letter on Mixed Marriages

December 1, 1970

Introductory Principles

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council requested the Holy See to provide for the application of conciliar teaching to marriages which unite Catholics and those of differing religious convictions. Following discussions of this matter by the Synod of Bishops in 1967, the Holy See, after colloquial consultation with the episcopal conferences, prepared a response to that request. And on March 31, 1970, Pope Paul VI issued “motu proprio” the Apostolic Letter Determining Norms for Mixed Marriages. The provisions of this Apostolic Letter, effective October 1, 1970, open the way to an improved pastoral approach in support of couples united or to be united in such marriages.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops welcomes the Apostolic Letter and encourages its ready application within our country. We call to mind the principles upon which it is based and the values it seeks to uphold. Our statement is to be understood only with a view to the complete text of the motu proprio (CRUX Special 5/1/70).

First of all, the Apostolic Letter recognizes the natural right of man to marry and beget children, and to exercise this right, free from undue pressure. (Cf. Pacem in Terris, n. 15)

Within marriage the Church seeks always to uphold the strength and stability of marital union and the family which flows from it. For “the well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. Hence Christians and all men who hold this community in high esteem sincerely rejoice in the various ways by which modern society finds help in fostering this condition of love and perfecting its life, and by which spouses and parents are assisted in their lofty calling.” (The Church in the Modern World, n. 47)

As the Apostolic Letter observes, the “perfect union of mind and full communion of life” to which married couples aspire can be more readily achieved when both partners share the same Catholic belief and life. For this reason, the Church greatly desires that Catholics marry Catholics and generally discourages mixed marriages.

Yet, recognizing that mixed marriages do occur, the Church, upholding the principles of Divine Law, makes special arrangements for them. And recognizing that these marriages do at times encounter special difficulties, the Church wishes to see that special help and support are extended to the couples concerned. This is the abiding responsibility of all. For Christians “should actively promote the values of marriage and family, both by example of their own lives and by cooperation with other men of good will. Thus when difficulties arise, Christians will provide, on behalf of family life, those necessities and help which are suitable and modern.” (Ibid. n. 52)

In a particular way, priests with a pastoral ministry to families and all persons engaged in the family life apostolate are to be commended for their attention to the specific needs of individual couples. Since these will vary, the Apostolic Letter stresses the importance of individualized support for diverse situations. It recognizes that “…the canonical discipline on mixed marriages cannot be uniform and must be adapted…” and “the pastoral care to be given to the married people and children of marriage” must also be adapted “according to the distinct circumstances of the married couple and the differing degrees of their ecclesiastical communion.” Consequently, pastors, in exercising their ministry in behalf of marriages that unite Catholics and others, will do so with zealous concern and respect for the couples involved. They should have an active and positive regard for the holy state in which such couples are united.

In such marriages, the conscientious devotion of the Catholic to the Catholic Church is to be safeguarded, and the conscience of the other partner is to be respected. This is in keeping with the principle of religious liberty. (Cf. App. Decl. Declar. Freedom, Second Vatican Council, n. 31)

In all valid marriages the Church recognizes sacred and abiding values. For “the intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws. It is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. Hence by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other, a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their offspring as well as of society, the existence of this sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone.” (The Church in the Modern World, n. 48). So the sacred character of all valid marriages, including those which the Church does not consider as sacramental, is recognized. For these, too, manifest the hand of God, Who is the author of marriage, and should receive due respect.

In preparing couples for mixed marriages, pastors should make clear to the partners the deep significance which the Church perceives in their intended union as “two in one flesh.” (Mt. 19:16).

In this regard, the broad areas of agreement which unite Christians and Jews in their appreciation of the religious character of marriage should be kept significantly in mind. (Cf. Joint Statement on Jewish and Christian Understanding United States, issued by the United States Catholic Conference, the National Council of the Churches of Christ, and the Synagogue Council of America, June 8, 1966). In this context, it should be clearly noted that while Catholics are required to observe the Catholic form of marriage for validity, unless dispensed by their Bishop, the Catholic Church recognizes the reality of marriages contracted validly among those who are not Christians and among those Christians separated from us.

In addition to the sacred character of all valid marriages, still more must be said of marriages between a Catholic and another baptized Christian. According to our Catholic tradition, we believe such marriages to be truly sacramental. The Apostolic Letter states that there exists between the persons united in them a special “communion of spiritual benefit” which bonds them to each other in a manner that has its roots grounded in the “true, though imperfect, communion” which exists between the Catholic Church and all who believe in Christ and are properly baptized. (Decree on Ecumenism, n. 3). Along with us, such persons are honored by the title of Christian and are rightly regarded as brothers in the Lord. In marriages which unite Catholics and other baptized Christians, the couple should be encouraged to recognize in practical ways what they share together in the life of grace, in faith, hope and charity along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that in service to the same Lord they await the salvation which He promised to those who would be His followers.

A number of the particular difficulties faced by Catholics and other Christians in mixed marriages result from the division among Christians. However successful these marriages may be, they do not erase the pain of that wider division. Yet this division need not weaken these marriages, and given proper understanding, they may lead to a deep spiritual unity between the spouses. Such couples should accept the painful aspects of Christian division insofar as these affect their lives together as a share of the suffering of the Church. Thus they should regard their personal efforts at understanding and patience as symbolic of and a participation in the broader efforts toward unity among the separated churches. Their own love as it reaches out to relatives and friends should have a healing effect in establishing
closer relationships between groups of Christians who have been estranged due to divisions among them. In this way, such marriages, while encompassing within one home the divisions among Christians, nevertheless, like all sacramental marriages, should be seen as compelling signs of the mystery of Christ’s abiding love for His Church, a love which continually seeks to reconcile. Finally, such couples, should they achieve such a perspective in regard to their marriage, can do much to intensify the longing among Christians for the day when all shall be one.

In order to aid these couples to come to this deep understanding of their married life together, when possible, their Catholic and other Christian pastors should jointly do all that they can to prepare them for marriage and to support them and their families with all the aids their ministry can provide. They can, for example, enliven the couple’s appreciation of the virtues of fidelity, mutual trust, forgiveness, honesty, openness, love and responsibility for their children. Each of the different Christian communities can best bring the couple to a keen awareness of all that they have in common as Christians as well as to a proper appreciation of the gravity of the differences that yet remain between their churches.

In their homes, these couples should be encouraged in practice, ways to develop a common life of prayer calling upon the many elements of the spirituality which they share as a common Christian heritage and expressing their own common faith in the Lord, together asking Him to help them grow in their love for each other, to bless their families with the graces they need, and to keep them always mindful of the needs of others. The example of parents united in prayer is especially important for the children, whom God may want to undertake their personal responsibilities to each individual couple and family in the exercise of their pastoral ministry.

In addition to the customary marriage preparation programs, it is the serious duty of each one in the pastoral ministry, according to his own responsibility, office or assignment, to undertake both the spiritual and catechetical preparation, especially in regard to the “ends and essential properties of marriage (which) are not to be excluded by either party” (cf. Matrimonia Mixta, n. 6), on a direct and individual basis, of couples who seek to enter a mixed marriage, and

(a) continued concern and assistance to the wife and husband in mixed marriages and to their children, so that married and family life may be supported in unity, respect for conscience, and common spiritual benefit.

4. In the assistance which gives in preparation for marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, and his continued efforts to help all married couples and families, the priest should endeavor to be in contact and to cooperate with the minister or religious counselor of the non-Catholic.

II. Declaration and Promise (M.P., n. 7)

5. The declaration and promise by the Catholic, necessary for dispensation from the impediment to a mixed marriage (either mixed religion or disparity of worship), shall be made, in the following words or their substantial equivalent:

"I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ and, with God’s help, intend to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church.

I promise to do all in my power to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics."

6. The declaration and promise are made in the presence of a priest or deacon either orally or in writing as the Catholic prefers.

7. The form of the declaration and promise is not altered in the case of the marriage of a Catholic with another baptized Christian, but the priest should draw the attention of the Catholic to the communion of spiritual benefits in such a Christian marriage. The promise and declaration should be made in the light of the “certain, though imperfect, communion” of the non-Catholic with the Catholic Church because of his belief in Christ and baptism. (cf. Decre on Ecumenism, n. 3)

8. At an opportune time before marriage, and preferably as part of the usual pre-marital instructions, the non-Catholic must be informed of the promises and of the responsibility of the Catholic. No precise manner or occasion of informing the non-Catholic is prescribed. It may be done by the priest, deacon or the Christian party. No formal statement of the non-Catholic is required. But the mutual understanding of this question...
beforehand should prevent possible disharmony that might otherwise arise during married life.

9. The priest who submits the request for dispensation from the impediment to a mixed marriage shall certify that the declaration and promise have been made by the Catholic and that the non-Catholic has been informed of this requirement. This is done in the following or similar words:

"The required promise and declaration have been made by the Catholic in my presence. The non-Catholic has been informed of this requirement so that it is certain that he (she) is aware of the promise and obligation on the part of the Catholic."

The promise of the Catholic must be sincerely made, and is to be presumed to be sincerely made. If, however, the priest has reason to doubt the sincerity of the promise made by the Catholic, he may not recommend the request for the dispensation and should submit the matter to the local Ordinary.

III. Form of Marriage (M.P., n. 9)

10. Where there are serious difficulties in observing the Catholic canonical form in a mixed marriage, the local Ordinary of the Catholic party or of the place where the marriage is to occur may dispense the Catholic from the observance of the form for a just pastoral cause. An exhaustive list is impossible, but the following are the types of reasons: to achieve family harmony or to avoid family alienation, to obtain parental agreement to the marriage, to recognize the significant claims of relationship or special friendship with a non-Catholic minister, to permit the marriage in a church that has particular importance to the non-Catholic. If the Ordinary of the Catholic party grants dispensation for a marriage which is to take place in another diocese, the Ordinary of that diocese should be informed beforehand.

11. Ordinarily this dispensation from the canonical form is granted in view of the proposed celebration of a religious marriage service. In some exceptional circumstances (e.g., certain Catholic-Jewish marriages) it may be necessary that the dispensation be granted so that a civil ceremony may be performed. In any case, a public form that is civilly recognized for the celebration of marriage is required.

IV. Recording Marriages (M.P., n. 10)

12. In a mixed marriage for which there has been granted a dispensation from the canonical form, an ecclesiastical record of the marriage shall be kept in the chancery of the Diocese which granted the dispensation from the impediment, and in the marriage records of the parish from which application for the dispensation was made.

13. It is the responsibility of the priest who submits the request for the dispensation to see that, after the public form of marriage ceremony is performed, notices of the marriage are sent in the usual form to:

(a) the parish and chancery noted above (12)
(b) the place of baptism of the Catholic party.

The recording of other mixed marriages is not changed.

V. Celebration of Marriages Between Catholics and Non-Catholics

14. It is not permitted to have two religious marriage services or to have a single service in which both the Catholic marriage ritual and a non-Catholic marriage ritual are celebrated jointly or successively. (cf. n. 13 of Matrimonio Mixta)

15. With the permission of the local Ordinary and the consent of the appropriate authority of the other church or community, a non-Catholic minister may be invited to participate in the Catholic marriage service by giving additional prayers, blessings, or words of greeting or exhortation. If the marriage is not part of the eucharistic celebration, the minister may also be invited to read a lesson and/or to preach. (cf. the Ecumenical Directory, Part I, n. 56)

16. In the case where there has been a dispensation from the Catholic canonical form and the priest has been invited to participate in the non-Catholic marriage service, with the permission of the local Ordinary and the consent of the appropriate authority of the other church or communion, he may do so by giving additional prayers, blessings, or words of greeting and exhortation. If the marriage service is not part of the Lord’s Supper or the principal liturgical service of the Word, the priest, if invited, may also read a lesson and/or preach. (cf. ibid.)

17. To the extent that eucharistic sharing is not permitted by the general discipline of the Church (cf. n. 11, of Matrimonio Mixta, and the exceptions in n. 39 of the Ecumenical Directory, Part I, May 14, 1967), this is to be considered when plans are being made to have the mixed marriage at Mass or not.

18. Since the revised Catholic rite of marriage includes a rich variety of scriptural readings and biblically oriented prayers and blessings from which to choose, its use may promote harmony and unity on the occasion of a mixed marriage. (cf. Introduction to the Rite of Marriage, n. 9, provided the service is carefully planned and celebrated. The general directives that the selection of texts and other preparations should involve “all concerned, including the faithful…” (General Instruction on the Roman Missal, n. 73; cf. n. 313) are especially applicable to the mixed marriage service, where the concerns of the couple, the non-Catholic minister and other participants should be considered.

VI. Place of Marriage

19. The ordinary place of marriage is in the parish church or other sacred place. For serious reasons, the local Ordinary may permit the celebration of a mixed marriage, when there has been no dispensation from the canonical form and the Catholic marriage service is to be celebrated, outside a Catholic church or chapel, providing there is no scandal involved and proper delegation is granted (for example, where there is no Catholic Church in the area, etc.)

20. If there has been a dispensation from canonical form, ordinarily the marriage service is celebrated in the non-Catholic church.

VII. CONCLUSION

The practical forms for the implementation of the above directives on the local level are to be developed by the local Chancery in accordance with its normal practices.

The provisions of this document, as well as the Apostolic Letter upon which it is based, call for a renewed pastoral concern toward couples contemplating and those already in mixed marriages.

We urge all who are in any way engaged in the pastoral ministry to families to study this and related documents, and sensitively to apply these latest provisions.

To assist our priests, religious and lay people in carrying out the further implementation of this document, we pledge a cooperative effort on the part of appropriate agencies of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference. Specifically, we call upon:

The Family Life Division of the United States Catholic Conference to develop basic pre-marriage and marriage education programs incorporating the norms and spirit of this document;

The Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy to explore the possibility of an ecumenical form for mixed marriage. This should be done with appropriate consultation involving interested churches and ecclesial communities separated from us;

The Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation to develop a plan of study and renewal for the pastoral care of mixed marriages to be imparted both through seminary education and through programs for the continuing education of clergy.

While much remains to be done if the Church is to exercise more adequately a proper pastoral solicitude for couples in mixed marriages, we take this opportunity to commend the countless persons, lay, religious and clergy, at the diocesan and parish level, who are engaged in marriage education and family counseling throughout the country.

Finally, we encourage the priests of the United States, who share with us a particular responsibility for the Church's ministry, to renew their pastoral solicitude for couples already joined in a mixed marriage, and also for those engaged couples of differing religious convictions who will soon begin their married life together.

Approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, November 16, 1970
Effective January 1, 1971
APPENDIX

Excerpts from

(A) DIRECTORY FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE DECISIONS OF SECOND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF THE VATICAN CONCERNING ECUMENICAL MATTERS

N.39 "Although these (Eastern) Churches are separated from us, yet they possess true sacraments, above all — by apostolic succession — the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy. Therefore some sharing in liturgical worship (communio in sacris), given suitable circumstances and the approval of church authority, is not merely possible but is encouraged.

N.41 The principles governing this sharing set out in the Decree on Eastern Churches should be observed with the prudence that the decree recommends; the norms which apply to Oriental Catholics apply equally to the faithful of any rite, including the Latin.

N.42 It is particularly opportune that the Catholic authority, whether the local one, the synod or the episcopal conference, does not extend permission for sharing in the reception or administration of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist or Anointing of the Sick except after satisfactory consultations with the competent authorities (at least local ones) of the separated Oriental Church.

N.47 A Catholic who occasionally, for reasons set out below attends the Holy Liturgy (Mass) on a Sunday or holy day of obligation in an Orthodox Church is not then bound to assist at Mass in a Catholic Church. It is likewise a good thing of such day Catholics, who for just reasons cannot go to Mass in their own Church, attend the Holy Liturgy of their separated Oriental brethren, if this is possible.

N.48 Because of the close communion between the Catholic Church and the separated Eastern Churches, as described above (n. 40), it is permissible for a member of one of the latter to act as godparent, together with a Catholic godparent, at the baptism of a Catholic infant or adult so long as there is provision for the Catholic education of the person being baptized, and it is clear that the godparent is a suitable one. A Catholic is not forbidden to stand as godparent in an Orthodox church, if he is so invited. In this case, the duty of providing for the Christian education of the baptized person lies in the first place the godparent who belongs to the Church in which the child is baptized.

N.49 Brethren of other churches may act as bridesmaid or best man at a wedding in a Catholic church. A Catholic too can be best man or bridesmaid at a marriage properly celebrated among separated brethren.

N.50 Catholics may be allowed to attend Orthodox liturgical services if they have reasonable grounds, e.g., arising out of a public office or function, blood relationships, friendships, desire to be better informed, etc. In such cases there is nothing against their taking part in the common responses, hymns, and actions of the Church in which they are guests. Receiving Holy Communion, however, will be governed by what is laid down above, nn. 42 and 44. Because of the close communion referred to earlier (n. 40) local Ordinaries can give permission for a Catholic to read lessons at a liturgical service, if he is invited. These same principles govern the manner in which an Orthodox may assist at services in Catholic churches.

N.55 Celebration of the sacraments is an action of the celebrating community, carried out within the community, signifying the oneness of faith, worship and life of the community. Where this unity of sacramental faith is

deficient, the participation of the separated brethren with Catholics especially in the sacraments of the Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick, is forbidden. Nevertheless, since the sacraments are both signs of unity and sources of grace, the Church can for adequate reasons allow access to those sacraments to a separated brother. This may be permitted in danger of death or in urgent need (during persécution, in prisons) if the separated brother has no access to a minister of his own communion, and spontaneously asks a Catholic priest for the sacraments — so long as he declares a faith in these sacraments in harmony with that of the Church and is rightly disposed. In other cases the judge of this urgent necessity must be the diocesan bishop or the episcopal conference. A Catholic is similar circumstances may not ask for these sacraments except from a minister who has been validly ordained.

N.56 A separated brother is not to act as a Scripture reader or to preach during the celebration of the Eucharist. The same is to be said of a Catholic at the celebration of the Lord's Supper or at the principal liturgical service of the Word held by the Christians who are separated from us. At other services, even liturgical cases, it is allowable to exercise some functions, with the previous permission of the local Ordinary and the consent of the authorities of the community concerned.

N.57 With the exception already dealt with above (n. 48) it is not permissible for a member of a separated community to act as godparent in the liturgical and canonical sense at Baptism or Confirmation. The reason is that a godparent is not merely undertaking his responsibility for the Christian education of the person baptized or confirmed as a relation or friend — he is also, as a representative of a community of faith, standing as sponsor for the faith of the candidate. Equally, a Catholic cannot fulfill this function for a member of a separated community. However, because of ties of blood or friendship, a Christian of another communion, since he has faith in Christ, can be admitted with a Catholic godparent as a Christian witness of the baptism. In comparable circumstances a Catholic can do the same for a member of a separated community. In these cases the responsibility for the Christian education of the candidate belongs of itself to the godparent who is a member of the Church in which the candidate is baptized. Pastors should carefully explain to the faithful the evangelical and canonical reasons for this regulation, so that all misunderstanding of it may be prevented.

N.58 The separated brethren may act as "official" witnesses (bridesmaid or best man) at a Catholic marriage, and Catholics at a marriage which is properly celebrated between our separated brethren.

N.59 Catholics may be allowed to attend occasionally the liturgical services of other brethren if they have reasonable grounds, e.g., arising out of a public office or function, blood relationship or friendship, desire to be better informed, an ecclesiastical gathering, etc. In these cases, with due regard to what has been said above — there is nothing against Catholics taking part in the common responses, hymns and actions of the community which they are guests — so long as they are not at variance with Catholic faith. The same principles govern the manner in which our separated brethren may assist at services in Catholic churches. This participation, from which reception of the Eucharist is always excluded, should lead the participants to esteem the spiritual riches we have in common and at the same time make them more aware of the gravity of our separations.

(B) DECLARATION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,
SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

N.3 Further light is shed on the subject if one considers that the highest norm of human life is the divine law — eternal, objective, and universal — whereby God orders, directs, and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law, with the result that, under the gentle dispensation of divine Providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth. Hence every man has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious, in order that he may have with prudence form for himself right and true judgments of conscience, with the use of all suitable means.

Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue. In the course of these, men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist another in the quest for truth. Moreover, as the truth is discovered, it is by a personal act that men are to adhere to it.

On his part, man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience faithfully, in order that he may come to God, for whom he was created. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious.

For, of its very nature, the exercise of religion consists before all else in those internal, voluntary, and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind.
The Holy Mystery of Matrimony

It is at the time of an impending marriage that members of Eastern Churches often come into contact with pastors of the Latin Church. It is the canonical tradition of Eastern Churches that marriage is to be celebrated before the pastor of the groom unless particular law determines otherwise or a just cause excuses. Unlike the Latin Church, in the Eastern Churches a deacon cannot assist at a marriage. In the USA, a priest of the Latin Church cannot, without special delegation from the eparch of the Eastern Church, validly bless the marriages of the subjects of that eparch even if celebrated in his parish:

1. Two Eastern Catholics both of whom belong to the Armenian, Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Romanian, Ruthenian, Syrian, or Ukrainian Churches;
2. An Eastern Catholic belonging to the Armenian, Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Romanian, Ruthenian, Syrian, or Ukrainian Churches marrying a baptized person who is not a member of the Catholic Church or an unbaptized person; a bishop of the Latin Church has no authority to permit such a marriage or grant a dispensation for it.

In the USA, a priest of the Latin Church, with the faculty to assist at marriages, may validly bless the following marriages involving Eastern Catholics:

1. Two Eastern Catholics neither of whom belongs to the Armenian, Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Romanian, Ruthenian, Syrian, or Ukrainian Churches;
2. An Eastern Catholic who does not belong to the Armenian, Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Romanian, Ruthenian, Syrian, or Ukrainian Churches marrying a baptized person who is not a member of the Catholic Church or an unbaptized person.

The marriage between a Latin Catholic and an Eastern Catholic should take place in the Church of the man. Unlike the Latin Church, a deacon in the Eastern Catholic Churches cannot validly assist at a marriage between a man belonging to the Latin Church and a woman belonging to an Eastern Church.

In the case where the groom is a member of the Armenian, Chaldean, Maronite, Melkite, Romanian, Ruthenian, Syrian, or Ukrainian Churches, and the bride is a Latin Catholic, the Eastern Eparch may grant a dispensation so that the marriage may be lawfully celebrated.

When dealing with the faithful of the Eastern Churches, Latin pastors must be aware of the differences in the legislation of the Latin Church and that of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches in regard to marriage. For example, the impediment
of affinity extends in the collateral line to the second degree, that is, prohibiting marriage with one's sister/brother-in-law. The impediment of spiritual relationship is retained in the Eastern Churches so a marriage between a sponsor and the baptized person and the parents of the same is invalid.

The Power to Dispense

Eastern Catholics can only be dispensed by their own eparch. Any dispensation granted by a Latin bishop to the faithful of these Churches is invalid.

Those Eastern Catholics who do not have their own eparchy or exarchate established in the USA are placed under the jurisdiction of the local Latin bishop and may be validly dispensed by him.
Issues regarding the place of marriage

Celebrating a wedding outside a church building.
Couples who want to celebrate their wedding at a church that is not their parish church.
Requests by non-Catholic couples to use a Catholic Church for their wedding.
Procedures for investigation when preparation and marriage occur in different locations.

What do Canon Law and Liturgical Norms require?

There are a number of questions concerning where a wedding may take place and who is to complete the pre-marriage investigation and prepare the couple for marriage. The responses to these questions have both legal and pastoral ramifications.

1. Canon 1115 states that marriages are to be celebrated in a parish where either of the parties has domicile, quasi-domicile, or a month long residence.
   a. Domicile is acquired, according to canon 102§ 1, when there is an intention of remaining in a particular parish or diocese permanently unless called away, or the party has already completed five years in that parish or diocese.
   b. Likewise, quasi-domicile (canon 102§2) is acquired with the intention of remaining for three months unless called away or the party has in fact already completed three months in that location.

2. A couple may celebrate their marriage in a church that is not the proper parish of either party when at least one of the Catholic parties has obtained permission from his/her proper pastor or ordinary to do so (canon 1115). Should the Catholic party fail to obtain this permission from his/her proper pastor the marriage would still be valid.
   a. Pastoral circumstances may dictate that permission should be given because of family connections and the like. However, communication between the proper pastor and the pastor of the Church where the marriage is to take place, can assure that the parties seeking marriage are properly prepared and cared for by the Church.
      i. Marriage preparation is the responsibility of the pastors of souls. They are to see that their ecclesiastical community offers the Christian faithful the necessary assistance to enter into marriage (canon 1063, 1°).
      ii. This occurs through remote preparation by preaching, catechesis and other instructional moments; immediate preparation with the particular couple wishing to enter into marriage; a fruitful celebration of the marriage ceremony which signifies Christ’s love for the Church; and follow-up assistance so that the parties may more fully live out the marriage covenant (canon 1063, 2-4°).
   b. Pre-marriage investigations are the responsibility of the person assisting at the marriage. Should this person not be assured of the free status of the contracting parties, he acts illicitly (canon 1114).
i. Someone other than the one assisting at the marriage may perform the pre-marriage investigation (canon 1070). This person is to notify the one assisting of the results as soon as possible through an authentic document (original signatures, seal, etc.).

ii. The norms to be followed for pre-marriage investigation are determined by the conference of bishops (canon 1067).

3. Should a couple, when both parties are baptized, wish to have their marriage celebrated in a place other than a Catholic Church, Chapel, or Oratory ("another suitable place"), they must have the permission of the local ordinary (canon 1118§1).

Note: In the case of a mixed marriage involving a baptized non-Catholic, Archdiocesan faculties allow a parish priest to give permission for the marriage to be celebrated in a non-Catholic Church within his pastoral jurisdiction.

a. This is different from a dispensation from canonical form, which is necessary for validity should a couple wish to have a non-Catholic minister assist at the marriage. Rather, this would refer to a couple wishing to celebrate their marriage in a park or a non-denominational chapel.

i. This is very rarely, if ever, granted when both parties are Catholic. This is to honor the sacramental nature of marriage; it is not just a public witnessing of a private commitment between two persons, rather it involves the whole Church.

ii. Permission may be granted by the local ordinary when one party is non-Catholic for such reasons as:
   1. One of the parents of the non-Catholic is a minister in another denomination
   2. Serious illness of one of the parties or a close family member
   3. Serious aversion to entering a Catholic Church.

b. When the marriage is occurring between a baptized Catholic and a non-baptized person, permission may be granted by either the local ordinary or the pastor to be celebrated in “another suitable place” (canon 1118§3).

The pastor should be prudent when granting such permission to assure that the dignity of the sacred nature of marriage is not removed or lessened.

4. When a priest is going to witness a marriage outside of his own parish boundaries, unless he has general delegation to witness marriage throughout the archdiocese (which Portland priests do not), he must first obtain delegation from the pastor or the parochial vicar (if so delegated) of the parish where the marriage is to occur. This is for validity (canon 1111 §§ 1 and 2).
5. Requests by non-Catholic couples to use a Catholic Church for their wedding is not addressed in the Code of Canon Law; however, this area is addressed by the 1993 Directory of Ecumenism, which does permit such a use, with permission of the local bishop, as stated in Par. 137 of the Directory.

a. The question is more pastoral. So as not to establish an indifferentism among the various denominations of Christianity, it would be most prudent to assist the non-Catholic parties to understand that we celebrate the sacraments within the context of a particular community. In this way we also are called to respect other denominations and their practices.

b. The question may also be distinguished from the concern with whether or not the pastor, parochial vicar, or another priest or deacon would witness the marriage vows of two non-Catholics and situations when a couple is asking to use the Catholic Church because of space considerations or other legitimate issues.
Issues regarding dispensation from canonical form

What does Canon Law allow.

Canon 1108:
§ 1: Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the local ordinary, pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and before two witnesses according to the rules expressed in the following canons and without prejudice to the exceptions mentioned in canons 144 [Ecclesia supplet in probable and positive doubt of law or fact], 1112§1 [delegated lay person], 1116 [extraordinary form: the two parties before two witnesses without an official Church witness, under particular circumstances], and 1127§12 [dispensation from canonical form].

§2: The person who assists at a marriage is understood to be only that person who is present, asks for the manifestation of the consent of the contracting parties, and receives it in the name of the Church.

Canon 1117:
The form established above must be observed if at least one of the parties contracting marriage was baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it and has not defected from it by a formal act, without prejudice to the prescripts of can. 1127§2 [dispensation from canonical form].

Canon 1127:
§1: The prescripts of canon 1108 are to be observed for the form to be used in a mixed marriage. Nevertheless, if a Catholic party contracts marriage with a non-Catholic party of an Eastern rite, the canonical form of the celebration must be observed for liceity only; for validity, however, the presence of a sacred minister is required and the other requirements of law are to be observed.

§2: If grave difficulties hinder the observance of canonical form, the local ordinary of the Catholic party has the right of dispensing from the form in individual cases, after having consulted the ordinary of the place in which the marriage is celebrated and with some public form of celebration for validity. It is for the conference of bishops to establish norms by which the aforementioned dispensation is to be granted in a uniform manner.

Canon 121:
§3: For a marriage contracted with a dispensation from canonical form, the local ordinary who granted the dispensation is to take care that the dispensation and celebration are inscribed in the marriage registers of both the curia and the proper parish of the Catholic party whose pastor conducted the investigation about the free status. The Catholic spouse is bound to notify as soon as possible the same ordinary and pastor about the marriage celebrated and also to indicate the place of the celebration and the public form observed.
Canonical form = official Church witness & two other witnesses. This applies to all baptized Catholics (and those received into the Catholic Church) unless:

- he/she has formally defected;
- OR
- he/she has received a dispensation by the local ordinary, after he has consulted with the local ordinary of the place where the marriage is to take place.

then:

1. a Catholic minister is not to witness the marital vows, but may be present;
2. the Catholic party is bound to inform the local ordinary who granted the dispensation and his/her proper pastor about the location and the public form observed.
   a. the marriage is then to be inscribed in the marriage registers of the curia and the proper parish of the Catholic party;
   b. and the baptismal register of the Catholic party, indicating a dispensation had been granted.

Should a Catholic party request from his/her local ordinary a dispensation from canonical form because his/her intended spouse is either a baptized non-Catholic, or not baptized, the following must be present:

- A grave difficulty which would hinder the observance of canonical form:
  a. the non-Catholic party has a conscientious objection to a Catholic celebration;
  b. there exists a possibility that the non-Catholic party would be estranged from his/her family or religious denomination;
  c. the non-Catholic party requests that a parent or other close relative officiate at the ceremony;
  d. a Catholic officiant cannot be present;
  e. when the only church in the vicinity is a non-Catholic church;
  f. a nominal Catholic marries a devout non-Catholic.

- The Catholic party has made his/her declaration that he/she is prepared to remove any dangers of falling away from the faith, and makes a sincere promise to do all in his/her power to baptize and educate any children born in this marriage in the Catholic church (canon 1125, 1°)
- The non-Catholic party is informed of this declaration and promise (canon 1125, 2°)
- Both parties have been instructed in the essential elements and properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either party (canon 1125, 3°)

Should the Catholic party wish to enter into a marital union with an non-baptized person, the following additional requirement must be met:

A dispensation from the Disparity of Cult (canon 1086§§ 12)

2-20 Background
Requests for a Church wedding that would not also be a civil marriage

Senior citizens on Social Security
 Undocumented aliens

What does Canon Law allow:

Canon 1059:
Even if only one party is Catholic, the marriage of Catholics is governed not only by divine law but also by canon law, without prejudice to the competence of civil authority concerning the merely civil effects of the same marriage.

In essence, the Church is not to act contrary to civil law regarding the merely civil effects of marriage, that is, the marriage is to be recognized legally by the state also. Under extraordinary circumstances a marriage may be celebrated secretly as described in canons 1130-1133:

Canon 1130:
For a grave and urgent cause, the local ordinary can permit a marriage to be celebrated secretly.

Canon 1131:
Permission to celebrate a marriage secretly entails the following:
1° the investigations which must be conducted before the marriage are done secretly;
2° the local ordinary, the one assisting, the witnesses, and the spouses observe secrecy about the marriage celebrated.

Canon 1132:
The obligation of observing the secrecy mentioned in can. 1131 2° ceases on the part of the local ordinary if grave scandal or grave harm to the holiness of marriage is imminent due to the observance of the secret; this is to be made known to the parties before the celebration of the marriage.

Canon 1133:
A marriage celebrated secretly is to be noted only in a special register to be kept in the secret archive of the curia.
Issues regarding formal preparation for marriage

What does Canon Law require.

One of the least specific aspects of marriage in the Catholic Church is the requirement for marriage preparation. Questions such as, how does it occur? Who is responsible for giving the preparation? What if the parties do not speak English? What happens if both parties are not living in the same location? What does it need to include? While the Code of Canon Law does not necessarily answer all of these questions, it does present some guidelines and the legal responsibility.

Canon 1063:
Pastors of souls are obliged to take care that their ecclesiastical community offers the Christian faithful the assistance by which the matrimonial state is preserved in a Christian spirit and advances in perfection. This assistance must be offered especially by:

1° preaching, catechesis adapted to minors, youth, and adults, and even the use of instruments of social communication, by which the Christian faithful are instructed about the meaning of Christian marriage and about the function of Christian spouses and parents;

2° personal preparation to enter marriage, which disposes the spouses to the holiness and duties of their new state;

3° a fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage which is to show that the spouses signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church;

4° help offered to those who are married, so that faithfully preserving and protecting the conjugal covenant, they daily come to lead holier and fuller lives in their family.

To summarize:

• Pastors are to make sure some form of marriage preparation is occurring in the parish, either by him personally, or other means (counseling centers, sponsor couples, Engaged Encounters, etc.). The canon suggests that while the pastor is obliged to make sure something exists, the actually carrying out of the preparation belongs to the ecclesial community.

• Purpose: to preserve the Christian spirit of marriage and to promote it.

• This is done by:
  o remote preparation: preaching
  o immediate preparation: working directly with the engaged couple
  o liturgical celebration befitting the sacrament
  o after-care.
Canon 1064:
It is for the local ordinary to take care that such assistance is organized fittingly, after
he has also heard men and women proven by experience and expertise if it seems
opportune.

To summarize:
• The local ordinary is responsible at the diocesan level
• If helpful, he is to listen to those with expertise when developing a
  preparation process

What if one or both parties do not speak English?

Canonically there is nothing which speaks to this question, except that, as
mentioned in canon 1063 that the pastor is obliged to take care that something is
offered. The canon is clear, this is not an option. Therefore, each ecclesial
community is to see to it that couples have access to some form of marriage
preparation in their particular language.

This may occur by using:
• Vicariate resources;
• Catholic/Christian counseling centers;
• bilingual parishioners, etc.

Implicitly the canon is clear in stating that it is not sufficient to say, “We do not have
the language capabilities, therefore nothing is required.” Although what we offer
may not be perfect, we do have the responsibility to offer something of value.

What if the parties are living in different locations and are not able to
participate in a marriage preparation process together?

Again the Code of Canon Law does not address this issue. Often times it is possible,
at least, to have the parties attend a weekend Engaged Encounter. While this may
not be as complete a preparation as we would like, it does provide for a time when
the important issues are addressed and also allows for the parties to discuss the issues
as a couple. If for some reason a weekend is also impossible, then it would be
appropriate for each party to meet individually with a pastoral minister in his or her
respective parish. Such situations may require ingenuity on the part of the pastoral
minister.
What does marriage preparation need to include?

There are a number of issues that should be included in the marriage preparation process. However, there are some issues that must be included in order to have a Catholic understanding of what marriage involves. Those things are (cc. 1055 and 1056):

- marriage is a partnership of the whole of life
- ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses
- the procreation and education of offspring
- that there does exist a sacramental dignity
- marriage indissoluble
- the parties are to remain faithful to his/ her spouse.

All of the other issues derive from these that are most basic. Other such issues may include:

- communication skills
- finances
- family of origin
- expectations concerning children, religion, etc.
On November 18, 1998, the Latin Rite de iure members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved complementary legislation for canon 1067 of the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Rite dioceses of the United States.

The action was granted recognitio by the Congregation for Bishops in accord with article 82 of the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus and issued by Decree of the Congregation for Bishops signed by His Excellency Most Reverend Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect, and His Excellency Most Reverend Franciscus Monterisi, Secretary, and dated September 30, 2000.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 1067 and with due regard for canon 1068, hereby decrees that the following norms shall be observed in preparation of a couple for marriage:

1) The couple should receive appropriate education and pastoral preparation through participation in a marriage preparation program approved by the diocesan bishop;
2) Parties should be questioned as to their freedom to marry;
3) Baptized Catholics should present a recently issued annotated baptismal certificate;
4) Where necessary, additional documentation (such as affidavits of parents) attesting to a Catholic party's freedom to marry should be presented;
5) Baptized non-Catholics should present satisfactory proof of baptism and freedom to marry;
6) Unbaptized persons should present satisfactory proof of freedom to marry;
7) Preparation for marriage should be in conformity with the prescriptions of canon 1063 (regarding what must precede marriage) and canons 1064, 1071, 1072, 1086§2 and 1125, which entrust certain situations to the special care of local ordinaries;
8) Preparation for marriage should be in compliance with appropriate civil laws.

As President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby decree that the effective date of this decree for all the Latin Rite dioceses in the United States will be December 1, 2000.

Given at the offices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, on October 20, 2000.

Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza
Bishop Of Galveston-Houston
President, NCCB

Reverend Monsignor Dennis M. Schnurr
General Secretary
Ritual Considerations in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage

*Wedding Music*

*Use of the Unity Candle*

*Reception of Holy Communion by non-Catholics*

*Wedding practices specific to certain cultures*

*Participation of non-Catholic clergy*

*Fees*

The Church celebrates marriage in the context of word and sacrament. The Order of Christian Marriage, like all liturgies of the Church, is an action of Christ and the people of God, and is likewise an action of the bride and groom and their families and friends, as well as that of the local Church community. It is especially and most profoundly an action of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. For this reason the manner in which the liturgy is celebrated must take into account the Church year, the basic demands of the liturgy—whether the rite is celebrated within mass or within a service of the word—the assembled community, and the couple themselves.

**Music in the Wedding Liturgy**

Appropriate hymns, psalms, acclamations and instrumental music enhance the celebration. The principles used in choosing music for any liturgical celebration of the Church apply also to the wedding celebration. The music must support the ritual of marriage and encourage the full, active, conscious participation of the assembled faithful.

Considerations:

- Music should be an expression of the worship of the local community.
- Music should include sung prayer for the congregation.
- Individuals who sing are not “soloists,” but cantors, and animators of the assembly.
- Instrumental music has a place in the wedding liturgy—such as the processions (which may be followed by an entrance or gathering song) and the recessional.
- Music used in films or daytime TV for weddings is not an appropriate model.
- Recorded music to replace the assembly’s sung prayer is not appropriate.
- Music should reflect the repertoire of the parish.
Criteria for choosing songs:

- Will it enhance the worship of the community?
- Is it appropriate for the celebration of a sacrament of the church and express the church’s understanding of married love?
- Does it speak inclusively about men and women?
- Does it fit the part of the rite for which it is intended?
- Is the song within the musical ability of those who are to sing/play it?
- Love songs which are significant only to the couple are appropriate only at other parts of the celebration—the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception.

Any music chosen for the ceremony should take into account the “three judgments” listed in *Music in Catholic Worship*: the music judgment (26-29), the liturgical judgment (30-38), and the pastoral judgment (39-41). *MCW* (82) also states that, “Great care should be taken, especially at marriages, that all people are involved in the important moments of the celebration, that the same general principles of leading worship and judging music are employed as at other liturgies, and, above all, that the liturgy is a prayer for all present, not a theatrical production.”

*Liturgical Music Today* (25) notes that in sacramental celebrations within Mass, “the assembly should sing not only at times noted for the ritual in that sacrament while singing nothing during the celebration of the Word. Rather a proper balance would require that singing be an essential element throughout the entire prayer experience.”

Regarding music in the wedding liturgy, *LMT* goes on to state—

28. Weddings present particular challenges and opportunities to planners. It is helpful for a diocese or a parish to have definite [but flexible] policy regarding wedding music. This policy should be communicated early to couples as a normal part of their preparation in order to avoid last-minute crises and misunderstandings. Both musician and pastor should make every effort to assist couples to understand and share in the planning of their marriage liturgy. Sometimes the only music familiar to the couple is a song heard at a friend’s ceremony and one not necessarily suitable to the sacrament. The pastoral musician will make an effort to demonstrate a wider range of possibilities to the couple, particularly in the choice of music to be sung by the entire assembly present for the liturgy.

29. Particular decisions about the choice and placement of wedding music should grow out of the three judgments proposed in *Music in Catholic Worship*. The liturgical judgment: is the music’s text, form, placement and style congruent with the nature of liturgy? The musical judgment: is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good irrespective of musical idiom or style? The pastoral judgment: will it help the assembly to pray? Such a process of dialog may not be as easy to apply as an absolute list of permitted or prohibited music, but in the long run it will be more effective pastorally.
The reception of Holy Communion by non-Catholics

Canon 844 states:
§ 1 Catholic ministers administer the sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone, who likewise receive them licitly from Catholic ministers alone, without prejudice to the prescripts of §§2, 3, and 4 of this canon, and can. 861 §2.

§3. Catholic ministers administer the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick licitly to members of Eastern Churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church if they seek such on their own accord and are properly disposed. This is also valid for members of other Churches which in the judgment of the Apostolic See are in the same condition in regard to the sacraments as these Eastern Churches.

§4. If the danger of death is present or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops, some other grave necessity urges it, Catholic ministers administer these same sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these sacraments and are properly disposed.

Points to remember:
• This is not to be used as a means of restoring Christian unity.
• Not to be used in a wedding Mass between a Catholic and non-Catholic to make the non-Catholic feel better.
• Danger of error and indifferentism are to be avoided.
• The other Churches whose sacraments are valid are those that “have kept the substance of eucharistic teaching, the sacrament of orders, and apostolic succession.” Other Christians refers to those, who by judgment of the Apostolic See, are in the same situation (such an example might be the Anglican Church, however the Apostolic See has not issued a formal ruling in thus regard).
• There must be a serious need.
• Sacraments must be requested the person who is properly disposed and manifesting a Catholic faith in the Eucharist.

Local and Cultural Customs

Arras, Rosary, and Bible: At the present time, the blessing and bestowal of the arras (coins) take place after the blessing and exchange of rings. The giving of the Bible and Rosary follows this. In the giving of the arras care should be taken that it be an expression of mutuality between husband and wife as well as a sign of sharing goods with those in need. (For a suggested text, see Primero Dios, Hispanic Liturgical Resource, published by Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago.)
Unity Candle: The use of the Unity Candle has become increasingly popular in the wedding liturgy. While there is no prohibition concerning its use, there are questions surrounding the nature and meaning of this custom.

- It is not one of the primary symbols of the wedding liturgy. It should never overshadow those symbols—the giving of consent and the exchange of rings.
- One of the greatest criticisms of the Unity Candle is that it is not integrated into the liturgy and has to be explained in some detail when it is used. Its use should flow out of the very rites of the liturgy and not appear as something added on but connected to the actions and prayers of the liturgy (BCL Newsletter, 1991).

Fees

The Clergy Personnel Manual of the Archdiocese of Portland states:

Parish marriage policies which are given to those preparing for marriage should
- list any fees charged by the parish, e.g., cleaning fee,
- explain that it is customary to give the parish an offering, but not required,
- state that the couple is not expected to give the priest a gift.

(Chapter XVI: Mass Stipends, Offerings, Gifts).
The Use of the “Unity Candle” at Weddings

NCCB Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter
July/August 1991

In March 1991 the members of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy asked its Secretariat to address the issue of the use of the “Unity Candle “in the marriage liturgy. Accordingly, the following statement was prepared by the Secretariat staff and was approved for publication by the NCCB Liturgy Committee at its meeting in Saint Paul, MN, on June 17, 1991.

With the recent publication by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments of a second revised edition of the Rite of Marriage, it is appropriate that a serious study of and reflection upon wedding practices and customs currently observed in the United States be undertaken with a view toward identifying those elements in the rite which require further catechesis of the Christian faithful. Similarly, practices which have arisen popularly during the past twenty years should be studied and, if found to be appropriate, they should be proposed as possible adaptations of the marriage liturgy for use in this country. The “unity candle” is one such practice which falls into this latter category.

Shortly after the first edition of the revised Rite of Marriage was published in English (1969), it was proposed that the ceremonial lighting of a large candle from two smaller candles, held by the bride and groom, be included in the marriage rite after the exchange of vows or after communion. In the ensuing years this practice, although never formally approved, has become fairly common. The rite apparently comes from an Eastern European context and has the intention of showing that the “two become one flesh” through the sacrament of marriage.

This popular practice raises several questions which call for reflection. The liturgical use of candles, other than for producing light itself, is most commonly related to seeing the lighted candle as a symbol of the light of Christ. This is epitomized in the Easter Vigil in the use of the paschal candle and in the lighting of the people's candles at the beginning of the liturgy. As the paschal candle is lighted, the priest prays: “May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.” The holding of lighted candles for the renewal of the baptismal promises harkens back to the rite of baptism when a lighted candle is given to a newly baptized adult or to the parents or godparents of an infant. As this is done, the minister says: “You have been enlightened by Christ. Walk always as children of the light...” This same symbolism is found in the rite for the dedication of a church when the deacon receives a lighted candle from the bishop so that he may light the candles at the altar, the bishop says: “Light of Christ, shine forth in the Church and bring all nations to the fullness of truth.” Similarly, in popular celebrations of Evening Prayer, the use of the lucenarium service (lighting of a large candle and prayer of thanksgiving) recalls the Light of Christ in the darkness of the night.
Considering this liturgical usage of candles, what is the symbolism of lighting one larger candle from two smaller ones, which are then extinguished? If the larger candle does not represent Christ, what does it symbolize? The couple? If so, it seems to be at variance with liturgical tradition. And if the two smaller candles are meant to represent the individual baptized Christians entering this marriage, should not that symbolization be made explicit, such as, by the bride and the groom each carrying their candle in the entrance procession? And are those individual lives in some way “snuffed out” when the two who have become one in Christ extinguish their candles?

If the larger candle represents Christ, should it not be burning from the very beginning of the liturgy? The light of Christ does not come from the couple, but rather is shared with the couple. If this symbolism is the intended one, the couples’ candles should be lighted from the “Christ candle” and stand next to it as a sign that the unity of the couple comes from Christ. For they are united with each other by being united in Christ.

One of the greatest criticisms of the “unity candle” is that it is not integrated into the liturgy and has to be explained in some detail when it is used. Its use should flow out of the very rites of the liturgy and not appear as something added on but not directly connected to the actions and prayers of the liturgy.

The Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy invites liturgical commissions and interested individuals to reflect upon the use of the unity candle, both its positive and negative features, and to communicate their thoughts to the Committee.
Musical Resources for Weddings

Oregon Catholic Press

United as One, Volumes 1 and 2 (Vocal)
Like a Seal on Your Heart (Vocal)

GIA

Eight English Voluntaries for Trumpet and Organ arr. Slater (Instrumental)
Postlude - Partita on the old One Hundredth arr. Hytrek
Three Celebrated Trumpet Tunes Purcell/ Clark
Three Celebrated Trumpet Tunes vol. II Chapentier/ Mouret (“Masterpiece Theater”)

Processionals/Recessionals (Found in many music stores)

Trumpet Tune Purcell
Air (From Water Music Suite) Handel
Wedding Processional (Sound of Music) Rodgers
Trumpet Voluntary Clark
A llegro Maestoso (From Water Music Suite) Handel
Psalm 19 (The Heavens Declare) Marcello
Marche Nuptiale Allan Caron
The Bride’s March (From Rebecca) Barnby
Petit Suite, Finale Bales
Recessional from the Wedding Suite Clokey
Hornpipe (From Water Music)
Now Thank We A ll Our God Karg-Elert
Trumpet Voluntary (in Music for Wedding Services, an Ecumenical Collection, Novalis) Stanley
Symphony I.- Finale Vierne
Symphony V.- Toccata Widor
Final Jubilante (Organ Music of Canada, volII) Willan
Toccat a in E minor Pachelbel
Processional In Westminster A bbey Wetsler
A Wedding Processional Near
St. A nthony’s Chorale Haydn

Collections of Wedding Music

Everything for the Wedding Organist. Edited by Jack Schroeder Hope Publishing Company (add contents)
Wedding Music. Part I and II. Concordia Publishing House (add contents)

Other Collections with Suitable Music

Contemporary Postludes. Jeffrey Honore. OCP
For Manuals Only. Edited by John Christopher. McAfee Music Corporation, NY

Background 2-33
Collections of Wedding Music for Trumpet and Organ


Hymns and Psalms

Psalms: 33, 34, 103, 128, 145, 148

OCP - Breaking Bread
A mor de Dios (O Love of God)
Beatitudes
Bless This Place
Christians, Let us Love One Another
Come Down O Love Divine
Companions on the Journey
For the Beauty of the Earth
Gather Us Together
Gather Your People 't
God Is Love
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father
In Perfect Charity
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
Let Us Go Rejoicing
Love Which Never Ends
May God Bless You
Now Thank We All Our God
One Bread One Body
Our Blessing Cup (Ps 116)
Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
Song of Thanksgiving
Thanks Be to God
This Day Was Made by the Lord
Ubi Caritas (Hurd)
Ubi Caritas (Rosania)
We Are God's People (psalm 100)
Where Charity and Love Prevail
Wherever You Go

GIA - revised Gather

A Nuptial Blessing (Joncas)
Blessing the Marriage
God, In the Planning
I Have Loved You
In Love We Choose to Live
Love Is the Sunlight
Love One Another
No Greater Love
We Have been Told
We Will Serve the Lord
When Love Is Found
Wherever You Go (Haas)

GIA - Worship III

A Spendthrift Lover Is the Lord
Beloved, Let Us Love
Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life
Jesus, Come! We Invite You
Lord of Our Growing Years
O Father, All Creating
Where True Love and Charity Are Found/ Ubi Caritas
APPENDICES
Issues regarding the time of the celebration of weddings:

- Celebrating weddings during Advent and Lent
- Celebrating weddings on Sunday/during Sunday Mass
- Celebrating weddings on Friday and/or Saturday evenings
- Celebrating weddings on Major Feast Days (Christmas, etc.)

Issues regarding the place of weddings:

- Celebrating wedding outside a parish church building (c.1118)
- Couple who want to celebrate their wedding in a church that is not their parish church (cc. 1111 and 1115) involves delegation issues also.
- Requests by non-Catholic couples to use a Catholic Church for their wedding.
- Procedures for investigation when preparation and marriage occur in different locations (cc. 1060, 1067, 1070)

Issues regarding the couples seeking to marry in the Church

- Celebrating weddings for couples who do not live in the parish (c.1115):
  - What constitutes a member of the parish?
  - Couples who are not active in any parish?
- Celebrating weddings for couples who are not active in the Catholic Church (cc.1058, 1117, 1124)
- Celebrating weddings when only one person is an active Catholic (cc.1124, 1125, 1126, 1128)
- Celebrating weddings for couples who are already living together (cc.1063, 1064)
- Celebrating wedding for couples who have been previously married (cc.1063, 1064)
- Celebrating wedding for couples when one party is not baptized (cc.1086, 1025, 1026)

Issues regarding formal preparation for marriage:

- Couples who are not able to participate in a preparation program together (cc.1063, 1064)
- Preparation for couples when one or both do not speak English? (cc.1063, 1064)
- Preparation for Spanish-speaking couples (cc.1063, 1064)

Issues regarding the Marriage ritual:

- Wedding music
- Use of the Unity Candle (c.1120)
- Reception of Holy Communion by non-Catholics (c. 844)
- Wedding practices specific to certain cultures (e.g., laso, coins, etc.) (c.1120)
- Participation of non-Catholic clergy (c.1108)

Issues regarding dispensation from Canonical Form (cc.1108, 1117, 112§3, 1127)

Requests for a Church wedding that would not also be a civil marriage (c.1059)

- Senior Citizens on Social Security
- Undocumented

Wedding fees

Other Issues:

- Confirmation (c.1065)
Canon 844: §1: Catholic ministers administer the sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone, who likewise receive them licitly from Catholic ministers alone, without prejudice to the prescripts of §§2, 3 and 4 of this canon, and can. 861§2.

§2: Whenever necessity requires it or true spiritual advantage suggests it, and provided that danger of error or of indifferentism is avoided, the Christian faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister are permitted to receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.

§3: Catholic ministers administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick licitly to members of Eastern Churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church if they seek such on their own accord and are properly disposed. This is also valid for members of other Churches which in the judgment of the Apostolic See are in the same condition in regard to the sacraments as these Eastern Churches.

§4: If the danger of death is present or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops, some other grave necessity urges it, Catholic ministers administer these same sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these sacraments and are properly disposed.

§5: For the cases mentioned in §§2, 3, and 4, the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops is not to issue general norms except after consultation at least with the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or community.

Canon 1058: All persons who are not prohibited by law can contract marriage.

Canon 1059: Even if only one party is Catholic, the marriage of Catholics is governed not only by divine law but also by canon law, without prejudice to the competence of civil authority concerning the merely civil effects of the same marriage.

Canon 1063: Pastors of souls are obliged to take care that their ecclesiastical community offers the Christian faithful the assistance by which the matrimonial state is preserved in a Christian spirit and advances in perfection. This assistance must be offered especially by:

1°: preaching, catechesis adapted to minors, youth, and adults, and even the use of instruments of social communication, by which the Christian faithful are instructed about the meaning of Christian marriage and about the function of Christian spouses and parents;

2°: personal preparation to enter marriage, which disposes the spouses to the holiness and duties of their new state;

3°: a fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage which is to show that the spouses signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church;

4°: help offered to those who are married, so that faithfully preserving and protecting the conjugal covenant, they daily come to lead holier and fuller lives in their family.

Canon 1064: It is for the local ordinary to take care that such assistance is organized fittingly, after he has also heard men and women proven by experience and expertise if it seems opportune.

Canon 1065: §1: Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience.

§2: To receive the sacrament of marriage fruitfully, spouses are urged especially to approach the sacraments of penance and of the Most Holy Eucharist.

Canon 1066: Before a marriage is celebrated, it must be evident that nothing stands in the way or as valid and licit celebration

Canon 1067: The conference of bishops is to establish norms about the examination of spouses and about the marriage banns or other opportune means to accomplish the investigations necessary before marriage. After these norms have been diligently observed, the pastor can proceed to assist at the marriage.
Canon 1070: If someone other than the pastor who is to assist at marriage has conducted the investigations, the person is to notify the pastor about the results as soon as possible through an authentic document.

Canon 1086: §1 A marriage between two persons, one of whom has been baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it and has not defected from it by a formal act and the other of whom is not baptized, is invalid.

§2: A person is not to be dispensed from this impediment unless the conditions mentioned in cann. 1125 and 1126 have been fulfilled.

§3: If at the time the marriage was contracted one party was commonly held to have been baptized or the baptism was doubtful, the validity of the marriage must be presumed according to the norm of can. 1060 until it is proven with certainty that one party was baptized but the other was not.

Canon 1108: §1: Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the local ordinary, pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and before two witnesses according to the rules expressed in the following canons and without prejudice to the exceptions mentioned in cann. 1144, 1112§1, 1116, and 1127§§1-2.

§2: The person who assists at a marriage is understood to be only that person who is present, asks for the manifestation of the consent of the contracting parties, and receives it in the name of the Church.

Canon 1115: §1: As long as they hold office validly, the local ordinary and the pastor can delegate to priests and deacons the faculty, even a general one, of assisting at marriages within the limits of their territory.

§2: To be valid, the delegation of the faculty to assist at marriages must be given to specific persons expressly. If it concerns special delegation, it must be given for a specific marriage; if it concerns general delegation, it must be given in writing.

Canon 1117: The form established above must be observed if at least one of the parties contracting marriage was baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it and has not defected from it by a formal act, without prejudice to the prescripts of can. 1127§2.

Canon 1118: §1: A marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic party and a non-Catholic baptized party is to be celebrated in a parish church. It can be celebrated in another church or oratory with the permission of the local ordinary or pastor.

§2: The local ordinary can permit a marriage to be celebrated in another suitable place.

§3: A marriage between a Catholic party and a non-baptized party can be celebrated in a church or another suitable place.

Canon 1120: The conference of bishops can produce its own rite of marriage, to be reviewed by the Holy See, in keeping with the usages of places and peoples which are adapted to the Christian spirit; nevertheless, the law remains in effect that the person who assists at the marriage is present, asks for the manifestation of consent of the contracting parties, and receives it.

Canon 1121: §3: For a marriage contracted with a dispensation from canonical form, the local ordinary who granted the dispensation is to take care that the dispensation and celebration are inscribed in the marriage registers of both the curia and the proper parish of the Catholic party whose pastor conducted the investigation about the free status. The Catholic spouse is bound to notify as soon as possible the same ordinary and pastor about the marriage celebrated and also to indicate the place of the celebration and the public form observed.

Canon 1124: Without express permission of the competent authority, a marriage is prohibited between two baptized persons of whom one is baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it after baptism and has not defected from it by a formal act and the other of whom is enrolled in a Church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church.
Canon 1125: The local ordinary can grant a permission of this kind if there is a just and reasonable cause. He is not to grant it unless the following conditions have been fulfilled:
1°: the Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church;
2°: the other party is to be informed at an appropriate time about the promises which the Catholic party is to make, in such a way that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party;
3°: both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage which neither of the contracting parties is to exclude.

Canon 1126: It is for the conference of bishops to establish the method in which these declarations and promises, which are always required, must be made and to define the manner in which they are to be established in the external forum and the non-Catholic party informed about them.

Canon 1127 §1: The precepts of can. 1108 are to be observed for the form to be used in a mixed marriage. Nevertheless, if a Catholic party contracts marriage with a non-Catholic party of an Eastern rite, the canonical form of the celebration must be observed for liceity only; for validity, however, the presence of a sacred minister is required and the other requirements of law are to be observed.

§2: If grave difficulties hinder the observance of canonical form, the local ordinary of the Catholic party has the right of dispensing from the form in individual cases, after having consulted the ordinary of the place in which the marriage is celebrated and with some public form of celebration for validity. It is for the conference of bishops to establish norms by which the aforementioned dispensation is to be granted in a uniform manner.

§3: It is forbidden to have another religious celebration of the same marriage to give or renew matrimonial consent before or after the canonical celebration according to the norm of § 1. Likewise, there is not to be a religious celebration in which the Catholic who is assisting and a non-Catholic minister together, using their own rites, ask for the consent of the parties.

Canon 1128: Local ordinaries and other pastors of souls are to take care that the Catholic spouse and the children born of a mixed marriage do not lack the spiritual help to fulfill their obligations and are to help spouses foster the unity of conjugal and family life.
RITE OF MARRIAGE: INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

1. In virtue of the sacrament of marriage, married Christians signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love that exists between Christ and his Church; they thus help each other to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and rearing children; and they have their own special place and gift among the people of God.

2. A marriage is established by the marriage covenant, the irrevocable consent that the spouses freely give to and receive from each other. This unique union of a man and woman and the good of the children impose total fidelity on each of them and the unbreakable unity of their bond. To make the indissoluble marriage covenant a clearer sign of this full meaning and a surer help in its fulfillment, Christ the Lord raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, modeled on his own nuptial bond with the Church.

3. Christian couples, therefore, are to strive to nourish and develop their marriage by undivided affection, which wells up from the fountain of divine love: in a merging of the human and the divine, they remain faithful in body and in mind, in good times as in bad.

4. By their very nature, the institution of marriage and wedded love have as their purpose the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown. Children are the most precious gift of a marriage and contribute most to the well-being of the parents. Therefore, married Christians, without in any way considering the other purposes of marriage of less account, should be steadfast and ready to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will constantly enrich and enlarge his own family.

5. A priest should bear in mind these doctrinal principles, both in his instructions to those preparing to be married and when giving the homily during the marriage ceremony; he should relate the homily to the text of the sacred readings.
   The catechesis for marriage should include the teachings on marriage and the family, on the sacrament itself and its rites, prayers, and readings. In this way the bridegroom and the bride will receive far greater benefit from the celebration of the sacrament.

6. In the celebration of marriage (which normally should be within Mass), certain elements should be stressed. The first is the liturgy of the word, which brings out the importance of Christian marriage in the history of salvation and the duties and responsibilities it involves in the sanctification of the couple and their children. Also to be emphasized are: the consent of the contracting parties, which the priest asks and receives; the special nuptial blessing on the bride, by which the priest implores God's blessing on the wedding covenant; and, finally, the reception of holy communion by the groom and the bride and by others present, which above all is the source of love and lifts us up into communion with our Lord and with one another.

7. Priests should first of all strengthen and nourish the faith of those about to be married, for the sacrament of marriage presupposes and demands faith.

CHOICE OF RITE

8. In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized person who is not a Catholic, the rite of marriage outside Mass (nos. 39-54) shall be used. If the situation warrants and if the local Ordinary gives permission, the rite for celebrating marriage within Mass (nos. 19-38) may be used, except that communion is not given to the non-Catholic, since the general law does not allow it.

   In a marriage between a Catholic and one who is not baptized, the rite in nos. 53-66 of the ritual is to be followed.

9. Furthermore, priests should show special consideration for those who take part in liturgical celebrations or hear the Gospel only on the occasion of a wedding, either because they are not Catholics or because they are Catholics who rarely if ever take part in the eucharist or who apparently have lost their faith. Priests after all are ministers of Christ's Gospel to everyone.

10. In the celebration of marriage, apart from the liturgical laws providing for due honors to civil authorities, there is to be no preferential treatment of any private persons or classes of person, whether in the ceremonies or by external display.
Whenever marriage is celebrated during Mass, white vestments are worn and the wedding Mass is used. If the marriage is celebrated on a Sunday or solemnity, the Mass of the day is used with the nuptial blessing and the special final blessing according to the circumstances.

The liturgy of the word as adapted to the marriage celebration, however, is a highly effective means for the catechesis on the sacrament of marriage and its duties. Therefore when the wedding Mass may not be held, one of the readings from the texts provided for the marriage celebration (nos. 67-105) may be chosen, except from Holy Thursday to Easter, on the solemnities of Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, or Corpus Christi, or on holydays of obligation. On the Sundays of the Christmas season and in Ordinary Time, the entire wedding Mass may be used in Masses that are not parish Masses.

When a marriage is celebrated during Advent or Lent or other days of penance, the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these liturgical seasons.

PREPARATION OF LOCAL RITUALS

Without prejudice to the faculty spoken of in no. 17 for regions where the Roman Ritual for marriage is used, particular rituals shall be prepared, suitable for the customs and needs of individual areas, in conformity with the norms of the Constitution on the Liturgy art. 63 b and 77. Decisions on this matter are to be reviewed by the Apostolic See. In making adaptations, the following points must be remembered.

The formularies of the Roman Ritual may be adapted or, as the case may be, supplemented (including the questions before the consent and the actual words of consent). When the Roman Ritual has several optional formularies, local rituals may add others of the same type.

Within the actual rite of the sacrament of marriage, the arrangement of parts may be varied. If it seems more suitable, even the questions before the consent may be omitted as long as the assisting priest asks for and receives the consent of the contracting parties.

After the exchange of rings, the crowning or veiling of the bride may take place according to local custom. In any region where the joining of hands or the blessing or exchange of rings does not fit in with the practice of the people, the conference of bishops may allow these rites to be omitted or other rites substituted.

As for the marriage customs of nations that are now receiving the Gospel for the first time, whatever is good and is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error should be sympathetically considered and, if possible, preserved intact. Such things may in fact be taken over into the liturgy itself, as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

RIGHT TO PREPARE A COMPLETELY NEW RITE

Each conference of bishops may draw up its own marriage rite suited to the usages of the place and people and approved by the Apostolic See. A necessary condition, however, is that in the rite the priest assisting at such marriages must ask for and receive the consent of the contracting parties “and the nuptial blessing should always be given.”

Among peoples where the marriage ceremonies customarily take place in the home, sometimes over a period of several days, their customs should be adapted to the Christian spirit and to the liturgy. In such cases the conference of bishops, according to the pastoral needs of the people, may allow the sacramental rite to be celebrated in the home.
DELEGATIONS

1. As a pastor or parochial vicar of this Archdiocese, you are hereby granted habitual delegation to assist at marriages anywhere within your parish boundaries. (If you are to assist at a marriage outside your parish, delegation of the pastor or parochial vicar of the parish in which the marriage is to be performed will be necessary.) In the case of non-parishioners, permission of the proper pastor of either the bride or the groom is needed for liceity.

2. Pastors may grant general delegation to assist at marriage in accordance with Canon 1111, but only for the territory of their parish and provided the delegation is in writing.

3. The faculty is granted to pastors and parochial vicars to grant special delegation to a determined priest or deacon for a specific wedding.

DISPENSATIONS

4. The faculty is granted to pastors and parochial vicars to dispense from the impediment of disparity of cult (Canon 1086), provided the conditions of Canon 1125 have been fulfilled. The fact that the dispensation was granted should be recorded in writing in the marriage papers and in the marriage register, including the date and the name of the pastor or parochial vicar who granted the dispensation.

PERMISSIONS

5. Pastors and parochial vicars are permitted to assist at a marriage between two baptized persons, one of whom is Catholic and the other of whom belongs to a church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church. This permission may not be used unless the conditions mentioned in Canon 1125 are fulfilled and proof of the non-Catholic baptism is available by certificate or sworn testimony.
6. Pastors and parochial vicars may also assist at the marriage between a Catholic and a former Catholic who has publicly left the Catholic faith, provided the conditions mentioned in Canon 1125 are fulfilled.

7. Pastors and parochial vicars are permitted to assist at the marriage of a party or parties bound by moral obligation towards a former spouse or children from a former marriage provided: (a) freedom to enter marriage in the Catholic Church is established in accordance with canon law; (b) special premarriage preparation is given in accordance with Archdiocesan policy; (c) the party or parties are aware of their moral obligations and committed to fulfilling them.

8. Pastors and parochial vicars are permitted to assist at the marriages of transients (vagi) provided the couple is adequately prepared for marriage and freedom to marry is established in accordance with Archdiocesan policy.

PLACE OF MARRIAGE

9. The proper place for the celebration of the marriage of two Catholics, or of a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, is the parish church. However, the faculty is granted to pastors and parochial vicars to permit such marriages in another Catholic church or oratory with the permission of the pastor or rector, and with the delegation of the local pastor or parochial vicar, if the other church or oratory is outside the boundaries of the parish.

When pastoral necessity exists, the proper pastor or parochial vicar may permit the celebration of a mixed marriage (between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic) to take place in a non-Catholic church or chapel with the permission of the rector or person in charge, and provided the church or chapel is located within their parish boundaries; otherwise, the priest assisting at the marriage for validity must receive specific or general delegation from the pastor or parochial assistant in whose jurisdiction the church or chapel is situated. If general delegation is given, it must be in writing for validity; in all cases the delegation should be given in writing so that, should it be necessary to prove subsequently that delegation had been given, a record of the granting of the delegation will exist. (Canons 1108, 1110, 1111 and 1118.)

10. Canon 1118, 3, states that a marriage between a Catholic party and a non-baptized party can be celebrated in a church (generally the parish church) "or in some other suitable place." If a church or chapel outside the proper parish is used, the assisting priest will need delegation from the local pastor or parochial vicar for validity, and the delegation should always be in writing for the record.

In all of the above cases a record of the marriage is to be entered in the marriage register of the parish in which the marriage took place by either the pastor of the place of celebration, the parochial vicar, or by the priest delegated to assist at the marriage. The entry should include the names of the spouses, the priest who assisted at the marriage, the witnesses, the place and date of the marriage, and, if applicable, the identity of the marriage dispensation, including the grantor and the date of the grant, and delegation, including when it was given and by whom. In this connection, Canon 1121 should be conscientiously observed.

11. In all other cases, permission for marriage to be celebrated outside of a church, chapel or oratory
must be obtained from the diocesan Bishop or the Judicial Vicar, and will be granted only on condition that the pastor of the parish where the marriage is to take place consents.

12. In accordance with Canon 540, parochial administrators also enjoy the above faculties.

Most Reverend John G. Vlazny
Archbishop of Portland

Mary Jo Tully
Chancellor

Given at the Pastoral Center
Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon  

«Date»  
Date