

§1100 THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Introduction

In ministering to the engaged couple and in celebrating their marriage, the Church not only expresses its love and support for the couple, but acknowledges the value of their married life as a help to each other to attain holiness, and as a blessing for society and the life of the Church. In forming a family, they become a domestic church. By word and example they are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children.

Because of the seriousness of the vocation of Christian marriage, the Church has an obligation to do all that it can to preserve the dignity of marriage and offer its members the guidance and support that will help to prepare a couple for their married life.

Parish ministers sometimes encounter couples for whom the beautiful and exalted image of marriage as a sacrament seems far from their experience. These couples may not worship regularly or be fully catechized. They may have drifted away from actively practicing their faith in high school or college. Their notions of marriage may be more influenced by television and the movies than by the Christian tradition. One of the partners may not be a Catholic or a Christian. This is undoubtedly a challenge to pastoral ministers.

It is not a rare pastoral experience to meet a couple for whom the marriage preparation is their first experience as adults of encountering the Church. They may come with misconceptions or unreasonable expectations, but their coming to the Church at this important time in their lives is in itself a movement of grace.

Pastoral ministers need to see in this occasion an opportunity for evangelization. A warm welcome and a genuine concern for their welfare may be a turning point in their lives as they experience the Church from a new perspective. This demands patience and sensitivity and, above all, a love that can both challenge as well as rejoice with the couple preparing for marriage.

These policies and procedures cannot cover every possible situation pastoral ministers will encounter in serving the needs of the engaged. However, they are intended to give order and direction to our celebration of marriage in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

While respecting the personal and familial nature of each marriage celebration, the Church has an obligation in the exercise of its teaching office to lead and guide all the faithful to a truly Catholic understanding of marriage as a public act, a communal treasure, a sacrament of the Church.

Through homilies, special programs and all forms of catechesis, those entrusted with pastoral responsibility must continually strive to help the faithful to achieve the ideals of Christian marriage.

§1101 PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The vocation of Christian marriage demands a serious commitment. Consequently, the Church desires to do all that it can so that couples be adequately prepared to accept the obligations of Christian marriage and to fulfill them faithfully.

§1101.1. Preparation for Christian Marriage

1101.1. Policy The parish community shall take responsibility for preparing couples not only for their wedding day, but for the life-time commitment of living a Christian marriage.

§1101.2. Minimum of 6 Months of Preparation

1101.2.1. Policy The formal preparation for marriage shall begin at least six months before the anticipated date of the wedding.

§1101.3. Setting the Wedding Date

1101.3.1. Policy No firm date for a wedding shall be set until the conclusion of the premarital questionnaire in the presence of a priest or deacon and only after it has been determined that the parties are free to marry.

§1101.4. Marriage Preparation Programs

1101.4.1. Policy In addition to personal interviews, instruction and counseling from the parish staff, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois shall offer a variety of marriage preparation programs to meet the individual needs of engaged couples. The parish minister shall recommend the appropriate marriage preparation program in which the couple is to participate.

Procedures

- a) Priests, deacons, and pastoral associates are to share the responsibility for preparing couples for marriage with parishioners who have received suitable catechesis and training in marriage preparation and who can appropriately assist to engaged couples.

b) It is strongly urged that there be at least six sessions devoted to marriage preparation:

- ✓ Session I: Initial meeting with parish minister
- ✓ Sessions II, III, and IV may be satisfied by three sessions with a pastoral minister or by attending a marriage preparation program:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PreCana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Marriage Preparation Program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOCCUS • Natural Family Planning

- ✓ Session V: Follow-up session with parish minister
- Session VI: Follow-up session with parish minister.

§1101.5. Delaying the Wedding

1101.5.1. Policy When special circumstances are present, (i.e., an unwillingness to prepare for marriage; a lack of openness to faith; a serious lack of maturity; teenagers 18 years of age or younger; pregnancy; extended separation before or after the wedding) or if some reasonable question is raised concerning the couple's readiness to marry, further consultation and evaluation are required before a wedding date can be set.

To insure that a couple's rights are respected, a couple must be informed of their right to appeal the decision to delay their wedding date to the Dean.

Procedures

- a) The parish minister should consult with the Dean.
- b) Upon consultation with the Dean, the parish minister can decide:
 - The special circumstances are not of a serious enough nature to impede a couple's ability to enter into a successful marriage. When such a decision is reached, the date of the wedding can be set and formal marriage preparation can begin.
 - ✓ Additional information is needed. The parish minister will undertake a more in-depth assessment. No date for the wedding can be set until a positive decision has been made.

§1102 THE PRESIDING MINISTER AND WITNESSES FOR THE RITE OF MARRIAGE.

The celebration of Catholic marriage takes place in the midst of the community. The presiding minister, who is the official witness of marriage for the Church, is presumed to have a pastoral relationship with the couple. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony reminds us that “it is appropriate that the same Priest who prepares the engaged couple should, during the celebration of the Sacrament itself, give the Homily, receive the spouses’ consent, and celebrate the Mass” (23).

§1102.1. Responsibility for Witnessing

1102.1.1. Policy Priests and deacons who have appropriate faculties have the responsibility for witnessing Catholic marriages.

Procedures

Presbyteral faculties of the Diocese of Springfield of Illinois provide that all pastors and parochial vicars of parishes in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois the faculty to witness all marriages within the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois when one party is of the Latin rite. For liceity, this faculty is to be exercised only with the delegation of the local pastor or his delegate.

Visiting priests, who have faculties to witness marriages in their dioceses, may obtain delegation to witness a marriage in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois from the local pastor of the parish in which the marriage is to take place or from the chancery.

Diaconal faculties of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois provide that permanent deacons, incardinated in the Diocese or who have been otherwise granted said faculties, are granted the faculty to assist validly at all marriages within the Diocese when one party is of the Latin rite. For liceity, this faculty is to be exercised only with the delegation of the local pastor or his delegate. Deacons who have not received this general grant of delegation need to obtain special delegation for each marriage from the local pastor or his delegate.

- a) The responsibility for celebrating marriage outside of Mass is not the sole responsibility of deacons; priests and deacons also share this responsibility.
- b) When deacons minister at a marriage celebrated at a Mass, the priest who presides at the Mass is the witness of the marriage vows.
- c) Transitional deacons are granted the same faculties as permanent deacons.
- d) For weddings that would involve a non-Catholic officiant, consult the Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines (1986).

§1102.2. Special Language and Cultural Needs

1102.2.1. Policy Parishes shall provide a Catholic minister who can attend to the special language and cultural needs of those being married in the churches of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

Procedures

- a) In a parish where the local ministers cannot meet the special language or cultural needs of their parishioners, parish staff is to seek the assistance of other Catholic clergy who can minister to the engaged couples with particular needs. This presumes that these Catholic clergy will also participate in the marriage preparation of those whose marriages they witness.
- b) When parishes can find no ordained clergy available to meet the special language or cultural needs of their people, they are to contact the Vicar for Priests or the Office for Marriage and Family Life to inquire about the possibility of making special arrangements for the particular individuals.
- c) When the special language or cultural needs involve Catholics of an Eastern Catholic Church, see 1104.6.

§1102.3. Non-Catholic Witnesses

1102.3.1. Policy Although it is preferable that both witnesses at a marriage ceremony in the Catholic Church be Catholic, when circumstances warrant, one or both may be other than Catholic without the need for special permission.

§1102.4. Catholics as Witnesses at Non-Catholic Weddings

1102.4.1. Policy Catholics may serve as witnesses at weddings of friends of other faiths except where there is reason to believe that the marriage to be witnessed is invalid.

§1103 ESTABLISHING MARRIAGE CELEBRATION SCHEDULES

A fair and reasonable parish policy should be established to ensure that Catholics have reasonable options available to them in scheduling their marriages within Mass or without Mass. This will have to take into account the full schedule of parish services and the number of available clergy in each parish.

The parish policy for the scheduling of marriage celebrations should be clearly communicated to all parishioners. The parish policy should appear regularly in the parish bulletin and be available in print as part of whatever marriage preparation materials are given to engaged couples.

Since the number of weddings celebrated within Mass may be limited in a particular parish, couples should be helped to understand that it will not always be possible to celebrate a wedding on the day of their first choice.

In the scheduling of marriage liturgies, the communal nature of the sacrament of marriage should be fostered. Appropriate catechesis of the faithful is necessary to help the community to understand the communal dimension of this sacrament. This is especially important, if marriages are to be celebrated occasionally at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass or if several marriages are celebrated together.

In establishing a parish marriage schedule, the integrity of the liturgical calendar and the community's celebration of Sunday should be respected.

§1103.1. Parish's Restriction of Number of Weddings

1103.1.1. Policy A parish, through consultation with the parish pastoral council, may develop a policy restricting the number of weddings on a given day depending on the pastoral situation and the number of ministers available to celebrate weddings. This parish policy also includes the scheduling of special wedding anniversary Masses.

Procedures

- a) Church law (Canon 905) expressly prohibits priests celebrating more than one Mass a day except in those cases when the law permits multiple celebrations. This law allows the Ordinary to permit a priest to celebrate two Masses on a weekday and three Masses on a Sunday or Holy Day. The Ordinary does not have the authority to authorize more Masses to be celebrated by an individual priest.

- b) If a parish has a large number of weddings, after reviewing the weekend parish Mass schedule in consultation with the parish pastoral council, it is possible to eliminate the Saturday morning Mass.
- c) When the Mass in which the sacrament of marriage is celebrated is a regular parish Sunday Mass, the Mass of the day is celebrated.
- d) On a Sunday in Ordinary Time, when a wedding is celebrated at a regularly scheduled parish Mass, one of the readings may be chosen from those provided in the Lectionary for ritual masses for weddings.
- e) Weddings on solemnities such as the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed are permitted, but the texts of the Mass are those of the solemnity.
- f) If a wedding Mass is celebrated on Sunday outside the regular Sunday Mass schedule, the selection of liturgical texts is as follows:
 - ✓ On Sundays of the Christmas Season and throughout the year, the text of the wedding Mass may be used without change;
 - ✓ On Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, the wedding Mass may not be used, but one of the readings of the Ritual (nos. 144-187) may be used;
 - ✓ On feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Mary, Mother of God, the Mass of the day is used without change except for the nuptial blessing and, where appropriate, the special final blessing (see the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 34). Weddings are not permitted during the Paschal Triduum.
- g) Since the precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass that is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite, either on the Holy Day or on the evening of the preceding day, a Catholic satisfies the obligation by attending any mass, including wedding Masses, on a Sunday, Holy Day, Saturday evening or the vigil of a Holy Day (c. 1248). While the Code of Canon Law does not provide an explicit definition, "evening" is generally understood as late afternoon from 4:00 PM on.

§1103.2. More Than One Wedding at Same Ceremony

1103.2.1. Policy Parish communities may invite more than one couple to consider celebrating their weddings at the same ceremony or Mass. Parishes shall continue to offer couples the option, however, of having individual celebrations of marriage.

§1103.3. Celebration at Saturday Evening Mass of Anticipation

1103.3.1. Policy Weddings may be celebrated at a Saturday evening Mass of anticipation, but this should ordinarily not take place more than once a month. The Sunday liturgy is to be celebrated as provided in the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar and the *Order for Celebrating Matrimony*.

§1103.4. Visiting Clergy

1103.4.1. Policy If visiting Catholic clergy have been invited to witness a wedding, it is understood that they are to honor the parish's scheduling policy as well as Diocesan and parochial expectations for marriage preparation and the celebration of the liturgy. A "letter of good standing" must be provided by visiting clergy.

§1104 ORDERS OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

Clergy and laity involved in the marriage preparation of engaged couples should help couples appreciate the liturgical nature and the liturgical norms relevant to the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. Parish ministers should encourage engaged couples to avoid all forms of extravagance that would detract from the sacred character of marriage as a sacrament of the church.

The Order for Celebrating Matrimony for two Catholics may take place at Mass. However, this presumes that the couple regularly participates in the Sunday Eucharist. In some cases, pastoral ministers may need to respectfully encourage the celebration of marriage without Mass.

Because there are a number of canonical and legal consequences to a marriage celebrated in Church, it is important for the parish priest or deacon to process all the necessary documentation required by civil and canon law. Accurate records and adherence to requirements for particular documentation, including dispensations, where applicable, are a serious pastoral responsibility. When a visiting priest is delegated to witness a marriage, the pastor or parochial administrator is responsible for seeing that all necessary documentation has been procured prior to the wedding.

§1104.1. Restrictions on Priest Officiating

1104.1.1. Policy In the Rite of Christian Marriage, the presiding minister serves as the Church's official witness. A priest is never permitted to officiate at a wedding in the role of merely a civil official; nor may he officiate at a wedding in which neither of the parties is Catholic, except in the case of catechumens.

§1104.2. Assembly Participation

1104.2.1. Policy As is the norm in all liturgical celebrations, the assembly shall be encouraged to participate in the wedding liturgy by making the proper recited and sung responses.

§1104.3. Place of Wedding

1104.3.1. Policy Marriages ordinarily shall take place in a parish church.

Procedures

- a) For students or employees of Eastern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, or Quincy University, or for those who have graduated within the past six months from these universities, marriages may

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- be celebrated in the Newman Center or Quincy University Chapel, respectively.
- b) With a dispensation from canonical form, a marriage may take place in a non-Catholic place of worship.
 - c) In the case of a Catholic-Jewish wedding, the custom of having the marriage in a hotel or place of reception may be followed with the usual dispensations from canonical form and disparity of cult.

1104.3.2. Policy All Catholics who are free to marry may celebrate their marriages in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. Permission to be married in another parish should be obtained from either the pastor of the bride or of the groom.

§1104.4. Celebration of Matrimony without Mass

1104.4.1. Policy In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic the Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass is ordinarily used.

1104.4.2. Policy The distribution of Holy Communion shall not ordinarily be included in marriage ceremonies celebrated outside of Mass. While The Order for Celebrating Matrimony without Mass allows for the distribution of Holy Communion, a sufficient number of priests available to celebrate a wedding Mass in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois makes the use of this option unnecessary in the Diocese.

1104.4.3. Policy Couples wishing to enter into Holy Matrimony according to the Extraordinary Form of the Latin rite should be accommodated to the extend possible.

§1104.5. Ecumenical Courtesy

1104.5.1. Policy When planning a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, the norms of ecumenical courtesy shall be observed.

Procedures

- a) The Norm of Reciprocity: As a general rule one should neither extend nor accept an invitation to participate in an ecumenical or interfaith activity unless one may extend or accept a similar invitation in return.
- b) The Norm of Collaboration: When planning any ecumenical or interfaith activity or service, there should be consultation and collaboration of

representatives of all the participating faiths or communions from the beginning. (See Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, Chapter 5: Worship Services.)

Clergy and laity are to make every effort to implement the *procedures* and norms set forth in the Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines for working with Eastern non-Catholics.

- c) Parish ministers who have questions regarding an inter-ritual marriage (i.e., between a Latin rite Catholic and an Eastern rite Catholic) should seek the counsel of the Office of the Chancellor and the Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officer.

§1104.6. Latin Rite/Eastern Catholic Weddings

1104.6.1. Policy Marriages between Catholics of the Latin rite and Catholics of an Eastern Catholic Church shall take place in the parish of either the bride or groom as long as the presider is a minister of one or the other Churches. Permission of both the proper pastor and the Office of the Chancellor is required to have the marriage celebrated elsewhere.

1104.6.2. Policy For validity, the officiating priest in a marriage between a Catholic of the Latin rite and a Catholic of an Eastern rite Church must be of the same rite as that of one of the parties. Due to the theology of the Eastern Catholic Churches, a deacon may not witness a marriage between a Latin Rite Catholic and an Eastern Rite Catholic.

Procedures

There are special regulations which must be followed carefully for marriages between Catholics of the Latin Rite and Catholics of Eastern Churches. All questions regarding such marriages are to be addressed to the Office of the Chancellor.

It is advisable to consult with the Office or the Chancellor on all inter-ritual cases.

§1104.7. Catholic/Orthodox Weddings

1104.7.1. Policy When a marriage is celebrated between a Catholic and a member of an Orthodox Church, only one religious ceremony is to take place. If the marriage is celebrated in the Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic ritual is used and, for the sake of integrity, the rituals of the two traditions may not be integrated into one ceremony.

Procedures

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- a) The Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, #60 provides for the following exception: In a marriage between a Catholic party and an Eastern non-Catholic, the canonical form obliges only for lawfulness; for validity, however, the presence of a sacred minister is required with the observance of the other requirements of law. While two ceremonies are not ideal, some exceptional situations involving Orthodox Christians could call for a special blessing of the marriage. So long as the vows are not repeated, this could be permitted.
- b) Christian marriages entered by an Eastern non-Catholic and another non-Catholic before someone other than an Eastern non-Catholic priest are considered invalid by the Catholic Church, and a declaration of nullity for such marriages can be obtained from the Chancery in a procedure similar to Catholic Defect of Form cases.
- c) Marriages between Latin rite Catholics and Eastern non-Catholic Christians entered without a dispensation from canonical form on or after March 24, 1967, before an Eastern non-Catholic priest are considered valid; such marriages between Eastern Catholics and Eastern non-Catholic Christians entered on or after January 21, 1965 (April 7, 1965 for Ukrainian Catholics) are also considered valid.

§1104.8. Marriage Ceremonies Involving Non-Christians and Catechumens

1104.8.1. Policy Marriages involving a non-Christian (after reception of a dispensation from disparity of cult), shall be celebrated according to The Order of Celebrating Matrimony between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian (cf. *The Order for Celebrating Matrimony*, 118ff)

§1104.9. Catholic/Jewish Weddings

1104.9.1.. Policy A Catholic priest or deacon with the faculty to witness marriages may witness the marriage of a Catholic/Jewish couple, following the usual dispensation from disparity of cult. The preferred choice would be to celebrate the marriage in the Catholic church or a chapel or other suitable place on parish property. The Catholic marriage ritual for a wedding between a Catholic and an unbaptized person is used.

Procedures

- a) The Jewish rabbi can be invited to participate in the ceremony, but the Catholic priest or deacon officially witnesses the exchange of consent.

- b) In all of the above situations, Catholic priests and deacons should be aware of the sensitive nature of ministering to a Catholic-Jewish engaged couple. Pastoral care prior to and following the wedding should offer the couple support and assistance. Priests and deacons should not hesitate to get involved in these situations and participate in the marriage ceremony.

(Also see §1104.3. *Place of Wedding*, herein)

§1104.10. Catholic/Muslim Weddings

1104.10.1. Policy A Catholic priest or deacon with the faculty to witness marriages may witness the marriage of a Catholic/Muslim couple with the usual dispensation from disparity of cult. Pastoral care before marriage must follow a different process from the usual process in mixed marriages. All preparation for Catholic/Muslim marriages should be planned in consultation with the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

Procedures

A Catholic Rite of Marriage is preferred, modified to include sensitivity to the Muslim party.

Special Note:

There is no traditional Islamic marriage rite other than the witnessing of the contract and the public transfer of the bride to the house of the groom. Given that this traditional form can include elements foreign to Christian marriage, very careful planning and agreement must precede any dispensation to allow this rite. For example, the traditional form usually requires the partner to make the profession of faith which converts a person to Islam as a prior condition. Since this would constitute apostasy by formal act, it is impossible for the Catholic to participate in such a ritual. It is conceivable, though, that, with careful consultation, a modified traditional Islamic celebration could be planned which would be acceptable and a dispensation could be granted for this form.

§1104.11. Catholic/Non-Monotheist Weddings

1104.11.1. Policy A Catholic priest or deacon with the faculty to witness marriages may witness the marriage of a Catholic to a follower of a non-monotheistic religion (e.g., Asian religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.) with a dispensation from disparity of cult. The Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs may be consulted in planning those marriages.

Procedures

The Catholic Rite of Marriage is preferred, modified to include sensitivity to the non-Christian party.

Special Note:

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The traditional wedding ceremonies in some other religions include rites which in effect would constitute joining another religion (communicatio in sacris). For this reason a pastoral minister should inquire carefully into the religious significance of traditional wedding customs before permitting them to be included in a Catholic ceremony. This becomes all the more important if a Catholic wishes a dispensation to marry in a non-monotheistic religion's ceremony. In some cases, the dispensation may not be possible.

§1104.12. **Respecting Liturgical Roles of Participants**

1104.12.1. Policy The wedding couple shall be helped to appreciate their special role in the marriage rite in which they confer the sacrament on one another through the exchange of consent. Respecting the principle that only one role should be exercised at the liturgy by each individual, other members of the family and parish community, depending on their gifts, shall be invited to participate in the marriage liturgy as lectors, cantors, musicians, or ushers. Mandated Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can be invited to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion, if needed.

1104.12.2. Policy It is inappropriate for the wedding couple to administer Holy Communion to each other or to the assembly. Their role in the marriage rite is to exchange vows, not to assist the priest in distributing communion. It is also inappropriate for the wedding couple to stand on either side of the presider during the Eucharistic prayer as if they were concelebrants.

§1104.13. **Admission of Non-Catholic Persons to Holy Communion**

1104.13.1. Policy Admission to Holy Communion at a Catholic wedding is not possible for members of non-Catholic or Orthodox Churches.

§1104.14. **Integration of Ethnic and Folk Customs**

1104.14.1. Policy Ethnic and folk customs associated with the celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church in other countries are to be respected and may be incorporated into the liturgy. The manner in which these or any other customs are incorporated into the liturgy must always respect the integrity of the liturgy and the universal principles articulated in *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*.

Procedures

When questions arise regarding the appropriateness of a proposed cultural adaptation of the rite of Christian marriage, parishes are to consult with the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate.

§1104.15. Selection of Music

1104.15.1. Policy The selection of music at weddings must be in accord with all the norms governing music in the liturgy, especially those found in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*.

Procedures

- a) Sometimes the only music familiar to the couple is a song heard at a friend's wedding ceremony and not one 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 (cf. *Sing to the Lord*, 216-224).
- b) There is to be an Entrance Chant at every celebration of Marriage between two Christians (cf. *Order for Celebrating Matrimony*, 46, 50, and 81).
- c) Except during the Season of Lent, the *Gloria* is to be sung (cf. *Order for Celebrating Matrimony*, 53).
- d) Popular love songs that were composed for entertainment rather than liturgical purposes are not ordinarily congruent with the nature of liturgy. Hence, they are not permitted.

§1104.16. Responsibility for Necessary Documentation

1104.16.1. Policy The parish priest or deacon arranging the marriage celebration is responsible for obtaining all necessary documentation and processing all forms required by the Code of Canon Law.

Procedures

- a) A baptismal certificate issued within the last six months should always be obtained.
- b) Baptismal certificates should always be authenticated personally by one of the priests, deacons, or parish ministers. They should always include a statement about the presence or absence of a notation about a previous marriage, religious profession, or ordination.

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- c) Photo copies of documents (i.e., baptismal and marriage certificates, divorce papers, etc.) should not be accepted unless they are certified by a priest or proper authority.
- e) Permission for mixed religion may be granted by pastor and parochial vicars for marriages taking place within their parish.
- f) The civil requirements for marriage (e.g. a civil marriage license) must be met prior to the celebration of the marriage in the Church.
- g) Requests for dispensations for disparity of cult and special permissions should be accompanied by the full premarital file. This includes the prenuptial questionnaire, recent baptismal records, all legal documents (civil or ecclesiastical) needed to confirm the parties' freedom to marry, and witness affidavits if needed. Dispensation forms should be filled out fully and the names of the parties should be entered on the return stub.
- h) If a decree of nullity of a previous marriage has been issued by the Tribunal, a copy of this should be included in the papers submitted to the Chancery for a *nihil obstat*. If the decree places a restriction of any kind on the party planning to enter a new marriage, no wedding date should be set before first contacting the Chancery for additional information and consultation. (Canon 1684.1.)
- i) Petitions for a declaration of nullity due to lack of form must be filled out fully and signed by the petitioner. Such petitions must be accompanied by the following documents: a recent baptismal certificate of the Catholic party, a certificate of the marriage attempted outside the Church, and a record of the civil divorce or annulment, . No wedding date may be set for a marriage requiring a declaration of nullity due to lack of form until after the decree of nullity has been issued.
- j) Requests for prenuptial permissions, dispensations, or a Nihil Obstat, as well as for declarations of nullity due to lack of form should be sent to the Chancery. The Matrimonial Tribunal handles only formal and documentary annulment processes and all Pauline Privilege and Privilege of the Faith Cases.
- k) Dispensations from canonical form can be granted only by the local Ordinary of the Catholic party and not by the Ordinary of the place where the marriage will be celebrated. Prenuptial papers for a marriage celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form are to be filed in the parish that made application.
- l) According to traditional protocol, marriage papers for marriages to be celebrated the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois should be transmitted through

the Office for Tribunal Services to the diocese where the marriage will be celebrated.

- m) A *nihil obstat* is to be obtained from the Office for Canonical Services for the convalidation of civil marriages performed by a non-Catholic minister, rabbi, or civil authority.
- n) No fee is required for marriage permissions or dispensations; declarations of nullity due to lack of form have a \$25.00 fee.
- o) Marriages are to be recorded according to the proper procedures in the parish marriage register. Notification of the marriage is sent to the parish of Baptism.

§1104.17. Wedding Offerings

<p>1104.17.1. Policy The Bishops of the Province of Chicgo have established a limit of \$500.00 as the suggested offering for weddings, exclusive of other expenses (i.e., musicians).</p>

Special Note:

The Christian vocation to the married state only begins with the celebration of the nuptial liturgy. The Church desires that Christian couples be given ample support and opportunities to grow and mature in the bond of love that is sealed before God and the community. Every parish is encouraged to provide a ministry to those who are married. Ongoing enrichment for the married couple and support for their family life as a sacred and valuable gift to the Church needs to be evident in parish life.