**SACRAMENTAL RECORDS** – Please register baptism, confirmation, marriage!

**THE KEEPING OF RECORDS**

Once again, Canon Law makes it clear that the keeping of the records for a marriage belongs to the Pastor. Canon 1121, §1 states that *after a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of celebration or the person who takes his place, even if neither has assisted at the marriage, should as soon as possible note the following in the marriage register:* ***the names of the spouses, the person who assisted and the witnesses, the place and date of the marriage celebration***. Thus, even though the recording of marriages may be done by the associate pastor, the deacon or pastoral associate, or perhaps, the parish secretary, the Pastor should occasionally be sure that the proper recording is being done. It will be the responsibility of the Vicar Forane (Dean) to note that all is in order during his visitation of the parish.

The pastor of the church where the marriage is celebrated should send notice of the marriage to the Catholic party(ies)’ parish of baptism.

It is important to remember that the records are to be kept in the place of celebration, i.e. in the archives of the parish church within whose territorial boundaries the marriage took place. The only exception, which has become a custom in the United States, is for marriages which take place outside of the territorial boundaries of the parish of the Catholic party with a **Dispensation from Canonical Form**. These marriage papers are usually kept in the archives of the parish of the Catholic party.

In the Diocese of Birmingham, the marriage records and Pre-Nuptial files are kept in the parish of the Catholic Party. For all marriages using the Dispensation from Canonical Form, the fact that the marriage takes place in another Diocese does not change this.

**NOTE: Developing Practice.** A requirement of other dioceses is that if the marriage is to take place outside the Diocese of Birmingham, where marriage preparation was undertaken and documents prepared, then those documents must be sent to the Diocese of Birmingham Chancery for a *nihil obstat* (all is in order), and then forwarded to the Chancery of the Diocese where the wedding will take place.

Revised 10/2017