

§400 THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Introduction

What a wonderful gift it is for a parish community to celebrate the love of a man and woman in the sacrament of matrimony! In witnessing this love the community is reminded of the love of Christ for his bride, the Church. (Ephesians 5:22)

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. (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #11)

Pope Saint John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation on the role of the Christian wrote, "More than ever necessary in our times is preparation of young people for marriage and family life....experience teaches that young people who have been well prepared for family life generally succeed better than others....there must also be a deeper knowledge of the mystery of Christ and the Church, of the meaning of grace and of the responsibility of Christian marriage, as well as preparation for taking an active and conscious part in the rites of the marriage liturgy. (Familiaris Consortio 66)

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 culture 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 fear or apprehension. 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 on 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 minister 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 Lafayette-in-Indiana.

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. Pastors may use discretion regarding policy exceptions after discussing a proposed exception with the Office of the Vicar General.

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. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1601-1666)

§401 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.

§401.1. Requirements For a Valid Catholic Marriage

401.1.1. Policy For a Catholic Marriage to be Valid, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- 1) The marriage must be between two individuals. One individual must be a natural born male, and the other individual must be a natural born female.
- 2) Neither individual has any impediments to marriage.
- 3) Neither individual is subject to coercion regarding the intended Marriage.
- 4) Both individuals intend for the marriage to be exclusive, permanent, and open to procreation.

§401.1.2. Other Conditions (that shall be met) to be Married in the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana

401.1.2. Policy At least one individual must be a practicing Roman Catholic. A practicing Roman Catholic in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana is a person who:

- † received the appropriate sacraments of initiation,
- † Is a registered member of the pastorate (or is a dependent of a registered member),
- † Attends Mass regularly,
- † Believes in the tenets of the Nicene Creed.
- † If either party is under 21 years of age, parental consent is required.

Procedure

With regard to impending marriages, ministers can and should always use Pastoral discretion in their deliberations and decisions.

§401.1.3. A Life-Time Commitment

401.1.3. 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.

§401.2. Minimum of 6 Months of Preparation

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

§401.3. Setting the Wedding Date

401.3.1. Policy A date for the wedding may be set at the conclusion of the couple's first meeting with the Pastor or his pastorate minister designee; and it has been affirmed there is no doubt that the couple is free to marry, and they make a firm commitment to meet the Marriage Preparation Requirements in Policy §401.4.1. All requirements for marriage preparation are to be satisfied by no later than six weeks prior to the tentative date for the wedding.

§401.4. Marriage Preparation Requirements

The Pastor, or his delegate, is responsible for ensuring the couple to be wed are properly prepared for the formation of a Roman Catholic marriage.

401.4.1. Policy In order to satisfy the requirements for marriage preparation, the engaged couple must complete all steps as follows:

Procedures

- a) Initial meeting and interview with the Pastor or his pastorate minister designee.
- b) Their freedom to marry is affirmed.
- c) Completion of the administrative paperwork and provision of all required supporting documents.
- d) Completion of a pre-marital inventory (e.g., FOCCUS).
- e) Completion of instruction in Natural Family Planning (NFP) from a certified program instructor (in-person/virtual), if applicable.
- f) Any subsequent meetings deemed necessary by the Pastor or by a pastorate minister to address outstanding spiritual, canonical, or liturgical issues.

§401.4.2. Marriage Preparation Programs

401.4.2. Policy In addition to personal interviews, administrative requirements, pre-marriage inventories and general instruction and counseling from the pastorate staff, the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana offers a variety of marriage preparation programs to meet the specific needs of engaged couples. The pastorate minister shall recommend the appropriate marriage preparation program from a diocesan approved list in which the couple is to participate.

Procedures

- a) Priests, deacons, and pastoral associates are highly encouraged share the responsibility for preparing couples for marriage with parishioners who have received suitable catechesis and training in marriage preparation through the Office of Pastorate Life Services/Catechesis and Formation or an alternative method approved by the diocese.
- b) Each pastorate will select a particular approach and corresponding program for marriage preparation from among an approved list maintained by the diocesan Office of Family Life. Generally, these options include three major approaches:
 - Pastorate Mentor Couple-led,
 - Hybrid (a mix of pastorate staff and pastorate mentor couples),
 - A diocesan-led or endorsed Pre-Cana retreat.
- c) Expectations for marriage preparation are to appear in the parish/pastorate bulletin and in parish/pastorate sacramental handbooks.

§401.5. Delaying the Wedding

401.5.1. 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 ensure that a couple's rights are respected, a couple must be informed of their right to appeal against the decision to delay their wedding date to the Vicar General.

Procedures

- a) The parish/pastorate minister should consult with the Vicar General.
- b) Upon consultation with the Vicar General, 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.

§402 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.

§402.1. Responsibility for Witnessing

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

Procedures

- a)** Presbyteral faculties of the Diocese provide that all priests incardinated in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana have the faculty to witness all marriages within the Diocese when one party is of the Latin rite. For liceity, this faculty is to be exercised only with the consent of the local pastor or his delegate. (See Faculties 805.1. and 805.2., herein)

Religious order priests or externs, who are assigned as territorial pastors or associate pastors, have the faculty to assist validly at marriages within their boundaries for parishioners or for non-parishioners provided one is of the Latin rite. For liceity, permission of the proper pastor is required.

Religious order priests or externs, who are pastors or associate pastors of non-territorial parishes, can assist validly only at marriages within the limits of their jurisdiction involving at least one of their own parishioners.

Visiting priests, who have faculties to witness marriages in their dioceses, may obtain faculties to witness a marriage in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana from the local pastor of the parish in which the marriage is to take place or from the chancery (Canon 1111).

Diaconal faculties of the Diocese provide those permanent deacons, incardinated in the Diocese are granted the faculty to assist validly at all marriages within the Diocese when one party is of the Latin rite. If the local parish does not have a copy of the deacon's certification on file, the local pastor should contact the Vicar for the diaconate community for verification and a copy of the certification. For liceity, this faculty is to be exercised only with the consent 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.

- b)** The responsibility for celebrating marriage outside of Mass is not the sole responsibility of deacons. Priests and deacons share this responsibility.
- c)** When deacons minister at a marriage celebrated at Mass, the priest who presides at the Mass is ordinarily the witness of the marriage vows. For pastoral reasons, exceptions may be allowed to permit the deacon to witness the marriage vows at Mass.
- d)** For weddings that would involve a non-Catholic officiant, consult the Office of the Chancellor.

§402.2. Special Language and Cultural Needs

402.2.1. Policy Pastors and parishes should be open to receiving a Catholic Cleric who can attend to the special language and cultural needs of those being married in the Churches of the Diocese of Lafayette-in Indiana; and should assist the couples to identify such Catholic ministers.

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 special 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 General 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 §404.6. *Latin Rite and Eastern Rite/Eastern Catholic Weddings*.
- d) In the foreseeable future it does not appear that the number of clergy will be so limited that the Diocese will have to seek an indult from Rome allowing a lay person to witness marriages in the Diocese.

§402.3. Non-Catholic Witnesses

402.3.1. 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 from the Office of the Chancellor. It should be noted that if there are other attendants in addition to the best man and maid/matron of honor, any two Catholics among them may be designated as the official witnesses. (Statement on the Implementation of the Apostolic Letter on Mixed Marriages, NCCB, January 1, 1971, p. 14, n. 58).

§402.4. Catholics as Witnesses at Non-Catholic Weddings

402.4.1. 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.

§403 ESTABLISHING MARRIAGE CELEBRATION SCHEDULES

A fair and reasonable parish policy needs to be established to ensure that Catholics have reasonable options available to them in scheduling their marriages at Mass or outside 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 at 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. (See §202 Mass Schedules, herein)

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.

§403.1. Parish's Restriction of Number of Weddings

403.1.1. Policy A parish, through consultation with the parish pastoral council and the liturgy committee, 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 marriages. 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 and the liturgy committee, it is possible to eliminate the Saturday morning Mass. (See Policies 202.9. and 202.10., herein)
- 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 All Saints Day 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 Ordinary Time 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. 67-105) should be used;
 - † On feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1), the Mass of the day is used without change except for the nuptial blessings and, where appropriate, the special final blessing (see The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, # 11). Weddings are not permitted during Holy Week and 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 about 4:00 PM.

§403.2. More Than One Wedding at Same Ceremony

403.2.1. 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. (Canon 1115)

§403.3. Celebration at Saturday Evening Mass of Anticipation

403.3.1. 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.

§403.4. Visiting Clergy

403.4.1. 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.

§404 STYLE OF MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS

The Catholic experience of celebrating marriage vows clearly conveys the Church's beliefs about the Sacrament of Marriage. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony needs to be respected in its structure and content.

The pastoral circumstances of the couples' religious and family background and practice, language and culture, the available resources of the parish, liturgical norms, and canon law are to be considered in the course of planning the celebration of Christian marriage. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony offers a number of legitimate options to meet these various needs.

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 Rite of Christian Marriage for two Catholics may take place at Mass. However, this presumes that the couple regularly participates in the Sunday Eucharist and are not strangers to their own faith tradition. In some cases, pastoral ministers may need to respectfully encourage the celebration of marriage outside of Mass.

Parish policies governing the style of marriage celebrations in the parish should be clearly communicated to and available in print for engaged couples. These parish policies should appear at regular intervals in the parish bulletin.

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 law and the canon law of the Church. 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 parish priest is responsible for seeing that all necessary documentation has been procured prior to the wedding.

§404.1. Restrictions on Priest Officiating

404.1.1. Policy In The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 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. (Also see §106.1. *Christian Marriages Involving Catechumens*, herein)

§404.2. Assembly Participation

404.2.1. 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.

§404.3. Place of Wedding

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

Procedures

- a) For students or employees of colleges/universities within our diocese or for those who have graduated within the past six months from these colleges/universities, marriages may be celebrated in the proximate Catholic Church near campus (e.g., St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (near Purdue), respectively; provided they still receive permission from their proper pastor.
- 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.

404.3.2. Policy All Catholics who are baptized and free to marry in the Catholic Church may celebrate their marriages in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. Permission to be married in another parish is to be obtained from either the pastor of the bride or of the groom.

§404.4. Celebrating Marriage Outside of Mass

404.4.1. Policy In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, it is expected that The Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass be used. The eucharist is a symbol of Christian unity. Celebrating Christian marriage at Mass may make the celebration awkward for both parties by highlighting their differences in faith. This awkwardness is further accentuated in cases where non-Catholic clergy are invited to participate in a marriage celebrated at Mass.

If circumstances justify it and the non-Catholic party agrees to having a Mass, "the rite for celebrating marriage within Mass may be used, except that, according to the general law, communion is not given to the non-Catholics."

404.4.2. Policy In the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, the distribution of Holy Communion shall not be included in marriage ceremonies celebrated outside of Mass without receiving permission from the office of the Bishop. While The Order of Celebrating Matrimony allows a communion service to be celebrated after the wedding ceremony, a sufficient number of priests available to celebrate a wedding Mass in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana makes the use of this option unnecessary in the Diocese.

The only exception to this policy is when a deacon presides at a wedding ceremony in order to meet the special language or cultural needs of a couple. In such an instance, a communion service, while not encouraged, is permitted.

§404.5. Ecumenical Courtesy

404.5.1. 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. (Consult with the Officer of Ecumenical Affairs and/or the Office of the Chancellor.)
- c) Clergy and laity are to make every effort to implement the procedures and norms set forth by the Officer of Ecumenical Affairs and/or the Office of the Chancellor for dealing with Eastern non-Catholics.
- d) Parish ministers who have questions regarding an inter-ritual marriage should seek the counsel from the Officer of Ecumenical Affairs and/or the Office of the Chancellor.

§404.6. Latin Rite/Eastern Catholic Weddings

404.6.1. Policy Marriages between Catholics of the Latin rite and Catholics of an Eastern Catholic Church shall take place in the church 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. (Canon 1109)

404.6.2. Policy For validity, the officiating priest in a marriage between a Catholic of the Latin rite and a Catholic of an Eastern Church must be of the same rite as that of one of the parties.

Procedures

- a) 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 by the Office of the Chancellor.

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

§404.7. Catholic/Eastern Non-Catholic Weddings

404.7.1. Policy When a marriage is celebrated between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, 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 should not be integrated into one ceremony.

Procedures

- a) The Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana 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 is 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.

§404.8. Marriage Ceremonies Involving Non-Christians and Catechumens

404.8.1. Policy Marriages involving a non-Christian (after reception of a dispensation from disparity of cult), shall be celebrated at a liturgy of the word and not at the eucharistic liturgy. (See The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, # 8) While recognizing that catechumens are already joined to the household of the church, marriages involving catechumens shall likewise be celebrated at a liturgy of the word. Chapter III of The Order of Celebrating Matrimony is to be followed with allowance for the nuptial blessing in Chapter I, # 33 to be used (omitting all references to eucharistic sharing.) (See National Statutes for the Catechumenate, # 10 and §100 *The Sacraments of Initiation*, Policy 106.4, herein)

Procedure

A Dispensation from Disparity of Cult must be obtained from the Office of the Vicar General.

§404.9. Catholic/Jewish Weddings

404.9.1. Policy A Catholic priest or deacon with the faculty to witness marriages may witness the marriage of a Catholic/Jewish couple with 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 vows. (See Policy 404.3., herein)
- 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 §404.3. *Place of Wedding*, herein)

§404.10. Catholic/Muslim Weddings

404.10.1. 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. Because the situations of these couples are very diverse and complex, the 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.

§404.11. Catholic/Non-Monotheist Weddings

404.11.1. 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 (some of the 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.

Procedure

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

Special Note:

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, dispensation may not be possible.

§404.12. Respecting Liturgical Roles of Participants

404.12.1. 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 vows. 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 auxiliary ministers of Holy Communion can be invited to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion, if needed.

404.12.2. 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.

§404.13. Admission of Non-Catholic Persons to Holy Communion

404.13.1. Policy Admission to Holy Communion at a Catholic wedding is not permitted for members of non-Catholic churches.

§404.14. Integration of Ethnic and Folk Customs

404.14.1. 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 Rite of Christian Marriage.

Procedure

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.

§404.15. Selection of Music

404.15.1. Policy The selection of music for the wedding liturgy is often a sensitive issue for couples, parish musicians and parish staff. Choice of music at weddings must be in accord with all the norms governing music in the liturgy, especially those found in Liturgical Music Today and Music in Catholic 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. Liturgical Music Today, # 28.
- b) Particular decisions about 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 this assembly to pray?" Liturgical Music Today, # 29.
- c) 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 during the liturgical celebration.

§404.16. Wedding Vows

The most important part of a Catholic wedding is what is commonly known as the exchange of vows. The Catholic wedding vows are the heart, the essential element, of the sacrament of marriage. Through these simple words, the couple publicly exchange their consent to be married: that is, they choose to give themselves to the other, and to accept this gift of the other. The marriage cannot happen without this declaration of consent (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1625-1631).

Some couples like to write their own vows as a way of expressing their love for one another more personally. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony does not provide an option for couples to write their own vows for the wedding liturgy. The Church actually has some good reasons for sticking to traditional vows:

One of the ways that the Church expresses the unity of all believers is through the unity of the liturgy (in this case, the wedding), especially in its essential parts (Catechism #813, 815). In other words, it would become hard to recognize the unity of the Church if everyone started using different words for the most important parts of the liturgy. By using the vows provided by the Church, the couple acknowledge that they are part of something larger than themselves. The wedding unites them not only with one another, but with the whole Body of Christ, the Church.

The mutual consent of the bride and groom to be married to one another is what brings about the grace of the sacrament (Catechism #1623, 1626, 1639 - 1640). The words that express that consent should reflect the sacredness of the moment, which the Church ensures by providing the wording for the vows.

Because consent is what makes the marriage, it is important for everyone to be clear that the bride and groom have actually declared their mutual consent. If the vows aren't clear about that—or if they contain wording that might be interpreted as placing conditions or limits on the marriage—then the validity of the marriage becomes questionable (cf. Code of Canon Law #1101 - 1102, 1107; also #1119).

One option for couples who want to publicly express their love in their own words would be to include a personal statement in the printed wedding program. Other possibilities include an exchange a profession of love during wedding-related gatherings like the rehearsal dinner or the reception.

404.16.1. Policy The parish priest or deacon, responsible for overseeing the marriage celebration is responsible for ensuring the betrothed couple understand the importance of the vows, as a form of public consent, following the *stating of their intentions* in the affirmative to the three questions asked by the celebrant:

- 1) The ritual reads: N. and N., have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?
- 2) The ritual reads: Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?
- 3) Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and raise them according to the law of Christ and his Church. (Pastoral discretion required for older couples past childbearing years.)

Procedure

The betrothed couple should be able to pick out the form of their consent statements from those presented in The Order of Celebrating Matrimony.

§404.17. Responsibility for Necessary Documentation

404.17.1. 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, preferably within six months prior to the wedding date or after they begin marriage preparation, 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.
- c) Photocopies 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.
- d) Permission for mixed religion must be granted by the Bishop for any priests who are in good standing and who are incardinated in the Diocese or who have been approved by the Bishop to minister within the Diocese. (See Faculties 805.5., herein)
- e) The civil requirements for marriage (e.g., a civil marriage license) must be met prior to the celebration of the marriage in the Church.
- f) 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.
- g) If a decree of nullity of the previous marriage has been issued by the Tribunal, a copy of this should be included in the papers submitted to the Tribunal 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.)
- h) Petitions for a declaration of nullity due to lack of form must be filled out fully and signed by both the petitioner and the parish minister. Such petitions must be accompanied by the following documents: a certificate of the marriage attempted outside the Church, a record of the civil divorce or annulment, a recent baptismal certificate of the Catholic party, and affidavits from two qualified witnesses testifying that the marriage in question was never validated by a Catholic priest or deacon. No wedding date should be set for a marriage

- requiring a declaration of nullity due to lack of form until after the decree of nullity has been issued.
- i) 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 Marriage Tribunal handles formal cases and documentary processes (e.g., Privilege of Faith, Ligamen, etc.)
 - j) 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.
 - k) According to traditional protocol, marriage papers for marriages to be celebrated in a Catholic Church in another diocese should be transmitted through the Office of the Chancellor to the diocese where the marriage will be celebrated.
 - l) A Nihil Obstat is to be obtained from the Office of the Chancellor for the convalidation of civil marriages performed by a non-Catholic minister, rabbi, or civil authority.
 - m) No fee is required for marriage permissions, dispensations, or declarations of nullity due to lack of form.
 - n) Marriages are to be recorded according to the proper procedures in the parish record book of marriages. Notification of the marriage is sent to the Church of Baptism. (See §902.4. *Marriage Registers*, herein)

§404.18. Wedding Offerings

404.18.1. Policy Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana has not set a limit on the offerings given on the occasion of administering sacraments and sacramentals. However, the suggested voluntary offering will be set by each parish, exclusive of expenses related to liturgical cost of special ministries (musicians, cantors, altar servers, etc.) (Canon 1264, §2)
(See §203.3. *Offerings for Weddings and Funerals*, herein)

Procedure

The term "limit" as used herein indicates the maximum donation that a parish in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana may accept for a funeral or wedding. A person's inability to make an offering would not preclude their receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony or the Rite of Christian Burial. Sacramental offerings for weddings and funerals are customary and in accord with canon law.

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 for 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.