

§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)

In his Pastoral Letter on the Church, The Family Gathered Here Before You, Cardinal Bernardin affirms the importance of family life in helping people live a life a faith:

The "domestic Church," whatever its particular shape, contains in a very simple form many of the essential ingredients of ecclesial life in the Catholic tradition: proclamation of God's Word, sacramental life, works of service, forgiveness and reconciliation, worship, and the impetus to mission in and to the world. It leads its members naturally to live the fullness of ecclesial life in the larger community of the Church.

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 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 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.

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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 Archdiocese of Chicago.

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. (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. A Life-Time Commitment

401.1. 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.

§401.2. Minimum of 4 Months of Preparation

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

§401.3. Setting the Wedding Date

401.3.1. Policy No firm date for a wedding shall be set until the conclusion of the couple's first meeting with the parish minister.

§401.4. Marriage Preparation Programs

401.4.1. Policy In addition to personal interviews, instruction and counseling from the parish staff, the Archdiocese of Chicago offers 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 minister to engaged couples.

b) It is strongly urged that there be 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:

• PreCana	• PreCana for the African-American community
• Special PreCana	• Italian PreCana
• PreCana II	• Polish PreCana
• PreCana Hispana	• Discovery Weekend
• Hispanic PreCana in English	• Parish Marriage Preparation Program
• PreCana Hispana Especial	•

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

c) Expectations for marriage preparation are to appear in the parish bulletin and in parish 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 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 Episcopal Vicar.

Procedures

- a) The parish minister should consult with the Episcopal Vicar.
- b) Upon consultation with the Episcopal Vicar, 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 Archdiocese provide that all priests incardinated in the Archdiocese of Chicago have the faculty to witness all marriages within the Archdiocese 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 Archdiocese of Chicago 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 Archdiocese provide that permanent deacons, incardinated in the Archdiocese and having completed the certification program in marriage preparation, are granted the faculty to assist validly at all marriages within the Archdiocese 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.

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- 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) Transitional deacons may witness a Catholic marriage only with the proper delegation of the ordinary. This delegation may be obtained through the the Office for Canonical Services.
- e) For weddings that would involve a non-Catholic officiant, consult the Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines (1986).

§402.2. Special Language and Cultural Needs

402.2.1. 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 Archdiocese of Chicago.

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 or the Ethnic Ministries Office 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 Archdiocese will have to seek an indult from Rome allowing a lay person to witness marriages in the Archdiocese.

§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 for Canonical Services. 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. (Interdiocesan Program for Ecumenism, 1971, p. 33).

§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 Souls 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 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. 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 Rite of Marriage, # 11). 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 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 Archdiocesan 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 Rite of Christian Marriage 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 Rite of Christian Marriage 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 Rite of Christian Marriage. 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 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. (Also see §106.1. *Christian Marriages Involving Catechumens*, herein)

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Concelebration at marriage liturgies is ordinarily to be avoided, since concelebration is a sign of the unity of the priesthood and not a means of adding more solemnity to the liturgy. Only at the invitation of the bride and groom is a priest to consider concelebrating at the nuptial Mass.

§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 Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, or the University of Illinois at Chicago, or for those who have graduated within the past six months from these universities, marriages may be celebrated in the Sheil Chapel, the Bond Chapel, or Rockefeller Chapel, or the John Paul II Center, 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.

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 Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside 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." (See the Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, # 111)

404.4.2. Policy In the Archdiocese of Chicago, the distribution of Holy Communion shall not be included in marriage ceremonies celebrated outside of Mass. While the Rite of Christian Marriage allows a communion service to be celebrated after the wedding ceremony, a sufficient number of priests available to celebrate a wedding Mass in the Archdiocese of Chicago makes the use of this option unnecessary in the Archdiocese.

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. (See Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, Chapter 5: Worship Services.)
- c) Clergy and laity are to make every effort to implement the *procedures* and norms set forth in the Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines for dealing with Eastern non-Catholics. (See chapter VI: The Sacraments and Eastern non-Catholics)

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- d) Parish ministers who have questions regarding an inter-ritual marriage should seek the counsel of the Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs or the Office for Canonical Services.

§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 for Canonical Services 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

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 the Office for Canonical Services.

It is advisable to consult with the Office for Canonical Services 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 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.

§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 Rite of Marriage, # 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 Rite of Marriage 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 Catechuminate, # 10 and §100 *The Sacraments of Initiation*, Policy 106.4, herein)

§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.

Procedures

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, the 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 possible under present circumstances for members of non-Catholic churches. Specific norms governing admission are clearly articulated in the Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, Chapter 6 for Orthodox Christians and Chapter 7 for Anglican and Protestant Christians.

§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.

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.

§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 should be avoided during the liturgical celebration.

§404.16. Responsibility for Necessary Documentation

404.16.1. 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.

- 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.
- d) Permission for mixed religion may be granted by any priests who are in good standing and who are incardinated in the Archdiocese or who have been approved by the Archbishop to minister within the Archdiocese.(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 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.)
- 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 Matrimonial Tribunal handles only formal and documentary annulment processes and all Pauline Privilege and Privilege of the Faith Cases.
- 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

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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 for Canonical Services to the diocese where the marriage will be celebrated.
- l) 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.
- 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)

§404.17. Wedding Offerings

404.17.1. Policy The Bishops of the Province of Chicago have established a limit of \$500.00 as the suggested offering for weddings, exclusive of other expenses (i.e., musicians). (See §203.3. *Offerings for Weddings and Funerals*, herein)

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.

RESOURCES

Preparation

1. The Rite of Christian Marriage, nos. 5 & 7.
2. Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation in the Archdiocese of Chicago, revised edition, 1991.
3. Cana Office, A Ministry to Marriage, Chicago, 1985.
4. Cana Office, Cana Conference Marriage Preparation Brochure, Annual Calendar of Programs in the Archdiocese of Chicago.
5. "A Marriage in the Lord," Cana Office, 1991.
6. Austin Fleming, Parish Weddings, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1987.
7. "Un Matrimonio en el Señor," Cana Office, 1986.

Presiders

1. The Rite of Christian Marriage, nos. 6, 8, & 9.
2. The Code of Canon Law, Canons 905, 1108 & 1111.
3. Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, 1986, nos. 95-115.
4. Michael Kwatera, The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1985, pp. 63-66.
5. USCC Department of Education, Faith and Culture, A Multicultural Catechetical Resource, Washington, USCC, 1987. See the section on resources for Southeast Asian Communities, Black Communities, Hispanic Communities, Native American Communities, and Intercultural and Interracial Relations.

Scheduling

1. The Code of Canon Law, Canons 905 & 1118.
2. Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, 1986, nos. 105-108.
3. Congregation for Divine Worship, Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, 1988, nos. 8 & 10.

Style

1. The Rite of Christian Marriage, nos. 6-11.
2. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Concelebration Guidelines, 1987.
3. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Study Text 5: Eucharistic Concelebration, 1978.
4. Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines, 1986, nos. 28, 37, 39, 40-41, 60-62, 101-102, 95-115, & the Appendix on Non-Catholic Ministers Preaching in the Catholic Church.
5. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Music in Catholic Worship, 1972.
6. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Liturgical Music Today, 1982.

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7. Paul Covino, Ed., Celebrating Marriage, Preparing the Wedding Liturgy, A Workbook for Engaged Couples, Washington: Pastoral Press, 1987.
8. Austin Fleming, Parish Weddings, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1987.
9. Catholic Conference of Illinois, A Unique Grace, Statement on Episcopal/Roman Catholic Marriages, 1990.