

In the Spirit of Cana

Pastoral Outreach to Christian Marriage

Formation, Preparation,
Celebration and Continuing Education

Diocese of Toledo

Marriage & Family Life Ministry

www.toledodiocese.org

In the Spirit of Cana
**Guidelines for Pastoral Outreach to Christian Marriage:
Formation, Preparation, Celebration, and Continuing Education**

Acknowledgements

The staff of Diocese of Toledo Catholic Charities Family Life Ministry, would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Archdiocese of Chicago for the written permission to the Diocese of Toledo Family Life Ministry for use of much of the CANA web page material as our key source of information to compile our diocesan workbook on how to work with engaged couples.

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Our goal was to compile a working document that would be useful to all clergy and parish staff assisting an engaged couple as they prepare for their marriage to be blessed in one of the parish churches in the Diocese of Toledo.

It should be noted that the following Pre-marriage Preparation Policies and Procedures were developed to be in agreement with the current Diocese of Toledo Pastoral Policy Handbook, therefore you will find the policies dealing with Marriage in these pages.

The Office of Family Life Ministry hopes that this Pre-marriage Preparation Resource will be helpful and practical as you strive to spiritually enrich your engaged couples as they prepare to share their married lives with each other and their saving Lord.

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PREFACE

The following policies and procedures were developed to assist the Diocese of Toledo in its outreach to those in and aspiring to married life in Christ. This set of instructions looks at broader aspects of the Sacrament of Matrimony rather than just the immediate preparation (the engagement period), and it seeks to develop a comprehensive approach to fostering the vocation of Christian marriage. Therefore, it is written for all who in some way minister to couples or who seek to foster Christian marriage in the Catholic Diocese of Toledo—this includes priests, deacons, pastoral leaders, pastoral associates, as well as catechists, parish secretaries, music ministers, campus ministers, as well as pastoral associates, and marriage preparation teams.

This document also addresses the cultural and lifelong influences that shape people's attitudes and understanding regarding marriage in order to meet the challenge of the our times: "The Church must therefore promote better and more intensive programs of marriage preparation, in order to eliminate as far as possible the difficulties that many married couples find themselves in, and even more in order to favor positively the establishing and maturing of successful marriages." (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* #66).

This broad approach involves four general categories: *Formation, Preparation, Celebration, and Continuing Education*. These four are distinct areas of opportunity for the Church to evangelize and catechize on the Sacrament of Marriage. Presented in this document are opportunities for persons who are considering

Christian marriage, their families, parishes, and the Diocese, to foster marital unions that are open to God's grace and reflections of His love. This effort starts at birth and continues throughout life. Hence, "the Church accompanies the Christian family on its journey through life" (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, #65).

The Diocese of Toledo has been a pioneer in preparing couples for Christian marriage and strives to sustain an effective outreach to the engaged as well as to the married. Dedicated volunteer married couples and clergy have established and conducted various programs in this ministry for many years. The quality of the marriage preparation programs and the dedication of the people who provide them give us a firm foundation on which to build a more comprehensive ministry in support of Christian marriage in the Diocese of Toledo. These guidelines are designed for ministry in the Third Millennium on the firm foundation of what the Church believes and teaches about marriage as an intimate community of life and love, raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament.

For resources in ministry to the vocation of Christian marriage, please contact the Family Life Office.

We thank all the people, clergy and laity, who work to foster the vocation of Christian marriage, and for their dedication to and care for those aspiring to live the sacrament. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide all of us in this important work of the Church.

Mission Statement

Marriage in the Lord is “an intimate communion of life and love” between a man and a woman, lived out in the midst of the Church community. As such, marriage is a community which needs the broader community to make it work. It is in the faith community that a man and a woman choose each other for the sacrament of marriage; it is in and for the faith community that they live out their vocation as a sacrament; and it is within the faith community, by God’s grace, that they grow in love, maturity, and holiness, on their way to the Lord together, forever.

DIOCESE OF TOLEDO
NORMS FOR THE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage

- 1 In the tradition of the Latin Church regarding the Sacrament of Marriage, the spouses themselves, as ministers of Christ's grace, mutually confer upon each other the sacrament by expressing their consent before the Church.¹ The priest or deacon is present as the official witness of this consent.
- 2 *The Rite of Marriage* expresses the fact that marriage is lived by the grace of God and constitutes an ecclesial reality lived out in the midst of the Church. "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."²
- 3 This Policy is written, in part, to assist parishes as they seek to fulfill the obligations of canon 1063:

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

- 1° preaching, catechesis adapted to minors, youth, and adults, and even the use of instruments of social communication, by which the Christian faithful are instructed about the meaning of Christian marriage and about the function of Christian spouses and parents;
- 2° personal preparation to enter marriage, which disposes the spouses to the holiness and duties of their new state;
- 3° a fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage which is to show that the spouses signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church;
- 4° help offered to those who are married, so that faithfully preserving and protecting the conjugal covenant, they daily come to lead holier and fuller lives in their family.

General Norms Regarding the Celebration of Marriage

Jurisdiction

- 4 For priests and deacons of the Diocese of Toledo to officiate validly at a marriage celebration, at least one of the parties must be a member of the Latin rite (canon 1109). A priest of the Latin Church (and only priests) cannot, without special delegation from the eparch of the appropriate Eastern (Catholic) Church, validly bless the marriages of the subjects of that eparch, even if it is celebrated in a Latin parish. Please contact the Chancery when there are questions about a

¹ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* 1623.

² CCC 1601 and Canons 1055 & 1056

marriage involving an Eastern Catholic.

5 In order to officiate validly, the officiating priest or deacon must have the faculty (authority) to do so. Pastors have the faculty to witness marriages in their own parish by virtue of their office. Associate pastors and deacons with a parish assignment have general delegation from the bishop to witness marriages in their assigned parish. Visiting priests and deacons must receive delegation to officiate at a wedding that is outside their own parish. This written delegation is usually obtained from the pastor of the parish where the wedding will be celebrated. It can also be obtained from the local Ordinary (diocesan bishop, vicar general, or episcopal vicar). The local dean also has the authority to delegate the faculty in “last minute” situations.

6 Only those clergy who hold a valid Ohio license are allowed to witness a marriage in Ohio. Due to the changing definition of marriage in other states, there is no reciprocity with any state, not even those contiguous to Ohio.

It is not adequate to have the Ohio licensed priest “in attendance;” he must be the one who, on behalf of the civil jurisdiction which issued the license, elicits consent from both parties.

It is important to note that a priest/deacon licensed by the State of Ohio does not lose that license by being transferred to another state, or retiring to another state or country.

7 An ordained priest/deacon of another diocese outside Ohio must apply for an Ohio license, and would be granted it, if he submits to the Secretary of State the ordinary proof of ordination. Also see paragraph 38 concerning the Letter of Aptitude.

8 Priests/deacons of the Diocese of Toledo must receive civil jurisdiction when witnessing marriages outside the State of Ohio.

9 The celebration of a valid “secret marriage” between older parties to avoid losing civil benefits is considered civil fraud and a crime for which the priest/deacon could be imprisoned and fined, and the Church subjected to criminal or civil prosecution. Such marriages are not permitted in the Diocese of Toledo.

10 Parishes have the responsibility to make known that a couple should approach the Church as soon as they decide to marry, and at least six months before the planned wedding date. Contact with the parish should precede any other commitments regarding the wedding celebration. No date should be entered in the parish calendar until the marriage preparation process is underway, and it has been ascertained that there are no impediments to the marriage. The priest or deacon who will witness the marriage may waive the minimum requirement of six months preparation in rare circumstances for serious reasons.

11 No criterion of membership shall be placed on the couple seeking marriage other than the residence of one or both of them within the parish boundaries for a minimum of thirty days. Neither registration nor financial contributions may be used as a prerequisite for the preparation and celebration of marriage as long as at least one of the parties lives within the parish boundaries (canons 107, 843, 1115).

12 Canon law requires that parties be free from all previous bonds before a marriage takes place. Any

and all previous marriages, whether in the Catholic Church, before non-Catholic clergy, or before a civil official, require an ecclesiastical decree of nullity, or a certificate of the death of the previous spouse(s), or other proof of death.

Marriage Files/Canonical Requirements

- 13 The Pre-Marriage File (formerly known as the “MA Form”) must be completed. Baptismal certificates (with all notations) are to be obtained for Catholic parties. These should be recently issued certificates (within the past six months), signed and sealed by the parish that issued them. Photocopies or reproductions of any kind are not sufficient. For baptized non-Catholic parties, as official a document as possible should be obtained from the church of baptism, if this is possible.
- 14 The freedom to marry is to be established. Any declarations of nullity (annulments) are to be documented by obtaining official copies of the final decrees.
- 15 The pastor of the parish where the marriage was celebrated is responsible for recording the marriage in the parish marriage register and for notifying the parishes of baptism.³ The marriage file is to be kept at the church where the marriage is celebrated.
- 16 Visiting priests and deacons who prepare a couple and officiate at the ceremony have the responsibility of seeing to it that the marriage file remains at the parish where the marriage is celebrated. Example: A visiting priest officiates at a wedding at Rosary Cathedral. He is responsible for forwarding the completed marriage file to the Cathedral parish office.
- 17 Dispensations from Disparity of Worship⁴ are to be requested from the local Ordinary (diocesan bishop, vicar general, or episcopal vicar) of the Catholic party. For Catholic parties who live in the Diocese of Toledo, all requests for dispensations are to be mailed to the Toledo Chancery, not the Tribunal. If the Catholic party lives outside the Diocese of Toledo, then the dispensation must be requested from the local ordinary of that diocese, and the request is to be forwarded through the Toledo Chancery, not directly from the parish. The Bishop of Toledo cannot validly dispense an Eastern Catholic. This dispensation must be obtained from the eparch of the appropriate Eastern Catholic Church. Contact the Toledo Chancery for assistance in such situations.
- 18 When a pastor/pastoral leader, priest or deacon of the Diocese of Toledo is preparing a couple to be married in another diocese outside of Ohio, all paperwork (pre-marriage file, dispensations, etc.) must be sent to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Toledo, who will send it to the diocese where the marriage will be celebrated. By agreement of the Ohio bishops (1984), all paperwork within the dioceses of the State can be sent directly parish to parish without the intervention of the Chancery.
- 19 “Ecumenical marriages” refer to sacramental marriages between two validly baptized Christians, one of whom is not Roman Catholic. “Interreligious/interfaith marriages” refer to non-sacramental marriages between a Roman Catholic and a non-baptized person of another religion.
- 20 Pastoral care and sensitivity are required when persons who are physically or mentally impeded

³ CIC 1121.

⁴ CIC 1086.

request marriage. Each case must be assessed on an individual basis, and consultation should be sought with family members and professionals who know and can assess the individual's level of dependence, use of reason, discretion of judgment, and capacity to make a permanent commitment. The priest or deacon should consult the Equal Access Office for guidance in selecting materials to use in preparation, as well as for recommendations of people who are trained to minister in these situations. If sufficient use of reason is at issue (canon 1095), the Diocesan Tribunal should also be consulted.

Dispensations from Canonical Form (canon 1127 §2)

- 21** If the parties are both Catholic, they cannot be dispensed from observance of canonical form. If one of the parties is non-Catholic, however, and if for a compelling reason the couple asks to be married in the non-Catholic party's church, house of worship, or another suitable public place, then a request for a dispensation from canonical form can be sent to the Chancery. Certain prerequisites exist:
- A. The couple must fully complete Catholic marriage preparation just as any other couple does.
 - B. The freedom to marry must be established, recent baptismal certificates with all notations obtained, and the pre-marriage file completed, with special attention given to the "Pre-Nuptial Declaration and Promise" for the Catholic party.
 - C. Only after A. and B. are completed should the Marriage Dispensation Request be completed and forwarded to the Chancery.
- 22** If the proper dispensation is obtained, the wedding may be celebrated in the non-Catholic's church, religious house of worship, or in some other suitable location, so long as the celebration is public.⁵ A Catholic priest or deacon need not be present for such celebrations, but if present, he is forbidden to receive the parties' consent (vows). The priest or deacon may, however, participate in the celebration with the officiating minister's permission, for example, by offering a blessing, leading certain prayers, or reading from sacred scripture.
- 23** The priest, deacon, or pastoral leader who prepared the couple for marriage and who submitted the dispensation request is responsible for:
- a. notifying the Chancery that the wedding ceremony did in fact take place, using the return form provided by the Chancery upon granting the dispensation.
 - b. having the marriage recorded in the marriage register of the parish of the Catholic party;
 - c. filing the marriage file in that same parish;
 - d. notifying the parish of baptism of the Catholic party.

The Place of Wedding Ceremonies

- 24** For two Catholics, or for a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic: The parish church or parish

⁵ CIC 1127 §2.

chapel is the proper place for celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. Normally, it will be the church where either the bride or groom resides or is registered. The marriage can take place in another Catholic parish church with the permission of the proper pastor(s) of the Catholic parties. Marriage ceremonies in non-parish Catholic chapels, such as high schools, convents, or hospitals are not permitted without special permission of the local ordinary.⁶ This permission is granted only in exceptional circumstances.

- 25 For a Catholic and a non-baptized person: The parish church or parish chapel of the Catholic party is the proper place for the celebration of the wedding. The marriage can take place in another Catholic parish church with the permission of the proper pastor of the Catholic party. For a compelling reason, and with the special permission of the local ordinary, the wedding may be celebrated in another suitable location.⁷
- 26 Convalidations. All marriage convalidations shall be celebrated in the parish church or parish chapel.
- 27 Marriages Dispensed from Canonical Form (cf. 194-196 above).

The Time of the Wedding

- 28 Wedding liturgies may be celebrated on Saturdays or any other day of the week, unless prohibited by the liturgical calendar (i.e. in the Ordo for Mass or the table of liturgical days found in the GIRM).
- 29 It is likewise permissible for persons to celebrate their marriage at a parish Sunday Mass utilizing the specific norms found in the Rite of Marriage; that is, with the use of the assigned readings and prayer texts of the Sunday Mass and the insertion of the Rite of Marriage after the homily and the nuptial blessing after the Lord's Prayer.
- 30 Wedding liturgies are not to be celebrated after 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays, or anytime on Sundays other than at a regularly scheduled Sunday Eucharist.
- 31 Pastors of twinned parishes have permission to adjust their latest wedding "start-time" to a slightly earlier time (such as 1:00 pm or 1:30 pm) in order to accommodate their parishes' weekend schedules. Only Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral & Historic Church of St. Patrick's in Toledo have been granted permission by the Bishop to have weddings later than 2:00 pm.
- 32 Weddings scheduled on holy days of obligation are to be celebrated according to the directives indicated in the Rite of Marriage; namely, the prayer texts and scripture readings of the Solemnity are used, with the insertion of the marriage rite after the homily, and the nuptial blessing after the Lord's Prayer.
- 33 Weddings are discouraged during the Lenten season. If, for pastoral reasons, a wedding does take place during Lent, the music should be in keeping with the nature of the season. The word

⁶ CIC 1118 §§1, 2

⁷ CIC 1118 §3.

“Alleluia” should not be included anywhere in the liturgy, and the Lenten décor of the Church is not to be altered.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage

Remote Preparation

- 34** The ecclesial community (parishes with the support of the diocese) shall help Christian family and community members assume responsibility, primarily as role models for the remote stage of marriage preparation that begins in early childhood.

Proximate Preparation

- 35** The ecclesial community shall provide appropriate catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage during the proximate stage of marriage preparation that ordinarily begins around the time of puberty and continues into young adulthood.

Immediate Preparation

- 36** The ecclesial community shall ensure that a process for immediate marriage preparation is in place. Immediate preparation begins as soon as a couple decides to marry, with the goal of giving a deeper meaning, content, and form to their understanding of marriage and family life. After the prenuptial investigation required by canon law, immediate preparation shall be carried out in two stages:
1. Preparation for living out the Sacrament of Marriage.
 2. Planning for the wedding ceremony itself (to be completed the last two to three months prior to the wedding).
- 37** Care should be taken not to impose undue burdens on the marrying couples.
- 38** It is the responsibility of a priest or deacon from outside the diocese to submit all required paperwork to the Chancery (certificate of aptitude from the diocese of residence/major superior directed to the bishop indicating canonical standing).

Responsibility of the Pastor

- 39** The pastor of the parish where the marriage is to be celebrated is ultimately responsible for sacramental preparation within his parish.⁸ The pastor/pastoral leader is ultimately responsible for the immediate preparation of couples for marriage, even if they deem it appropriate to involve trained married couples, pastoral ministers, liturgists, music ministers, and others in the preparation process. When a priest or deacon from another area or outside of the diocese is invited to witness a wedding, the pastor/pastoral leader is responsible for clarifying who will be responsible for the various parts of the preparation process.

⁸ *CIC* 843, 1063.

Couples Residing Outside the Diocese

- 40 When the couple resides outside of the Diocese of Toledo during the time leading up to their marriage, they may, with the permission of the pastor of the parish where the marriage will be celebrated, contact a priest or deacon in the diocese in which they reside and proceed with the preparation as it is done there. The pastor/pastoral leader where the wedding will take place, however, is ultimately responsible for ensuring that suitable preparation has taken place.

Importance of Prayer

- 41 The immediate process of marriage preparation shall be characterized by prayer – prayer for and on behalf of the couple, with the couple and by the couple. The couple shall be guided into a process of shared prayer and mutual blessing which will stay with them and develop over the course of their married life.

Sacrament of Confirmation

- 42 Although not required for the validity of marriage, Catholics who have not yet been confirmed should be strongly encouraged and aided to receive the sacrament: “Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience.”⁹

Sacrament of Reconciliation

- 43 Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage . . . must be, per se, valid, worthy, and fruitful.’ It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.”¹⁰

Pre-nuptial Investigation

- 44 The parish minister (priest, deacon, or pastoral minister, who usually will also witness the vows) will gather basic information from the couple and begin to fill out the Diocese of Toledo Pre-Marriage Marriage File (“MA form”) available from the Chancery. It should be completed and signed before the wedding and kept on record in the parish where the wedding takes place. The pastoral minister must seek to insure that the couple has the right intentions about entering marriage, i.e., that the object of the couple’s consent corresponds to marriage as God instituted it with regard to permanence, fidelity, and openness to children. When a couple are already married civilly, and are now seeking to have this marriage convalidated by the Church, it is important for them to understand that this is not just a renewal of vows or a blessing, but requires a new act of consent on their part (if it is a question of a simple convalidation).

FOCCUS Inventory

- 45 As soon as possible after the engaged couple has had an initial meeting with the parish minister, the couple should complete the *FOCCUS* inventory (Facilitating Open Couple Communication,

⁹ *CIC* 1065 §1.

¹⁰ *CCC* 1622.

Understanding and Study, or a preparation instrument that is comparable. The parish minister shall see to it that the couple has a facilitated discussion of their responses to help them better assess their relationship, come to see it as a growing process, and explore relationship and communication issues.

Pre-marital Catechesis

- 46** Adequate catechesis on the sacrament of marriage shall be provided to the engaged couple so that they grow in their faith, acquire a deeper knowledge of the mystery of Christ and the Church, and of marriage as a divine creation and a sacrament. They shall also be led to understand their Christian responsibilities with regard to marriage and the family, and the importance of God's grace and their faithful response to it. Catechetical themes include:
- Marriage as a partnership of the whole of life;
 - The purpose ('ends') of marriage—the mutual sanctification of the spouses and the procreation and education of children;
 - The essential properties of marriage—unity and indissolubility;
 - Marriage as a sacrament/sacred covenant;
 - Church teaching on the theology of the body and on sexual morality, family planning, contraception, and direct sterilization. Pastoral ministers will also, at a minimum, introduce the couple to the concept of Natural Family Planning and give the couple information on how and where to attend classes on NFP.
 - Engaged Couples Conference
- 47** The priest, deacon, or pastoral leader shall ensure that the engaged couple meets with other trained married couples (for example, by taking part in an Engaged Couple Conference), or with a Sponsor Couple who will bear witness to their faith, and share their knowledge and lived experience of sacramental married life.

Situations calling for Special Care

- 48** The parish minister or witnessing priest or deacon will give special attention to these social situations which require special care:
- Couples of different faith traditions, or where one party has no faith.
 - When there is a pregnancy.
 - When one or both parties are 19 years or younger.
 - When one or both parties have been married before.
 - When a couple is sexually active or cohabitating in a sexual relationship.
 - When there is reasonable evidence of chemical dependency, a professional evaluation and assessment should be sought and the marriage should not take place until there is evidence of recovery.

- When there are signs of abuse in the relationship. In such situations, both parties should be referred for special and separate counseling.

Note: The FOCCUS inventory has special sections on interfaith, remarriage, and cohabitation to help the minister dialogue with the couple on these issues.

- 49 Canon 843 states that “Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibiting by law from receiving them.” However, in rare instances the witnessing priest or deacon may have such grave concern about the couple being properly disposed or prepared, that he feels compelled to delay or postpone the celebration of the marriage. In such cases the priest or deacon should consult with the Chancery.

Liturgical Preparation

Two or Three Months Prior

- 50 Preparation for the liturgical celebration shall take place after the preparation for living out the Sacrament of Marriage has taken place, ordinarily about two to three months prior to the wedding. The preparation for the ceremony shall be carried out in a way that also allows for catechesis on the sacrament, the liturgy, and the participation of the community. The witnessing priest or deacon will go over all the parts of the ceremony with the couple so that they may more clearly understand the meaning of the rites and the grace of the sacrament that will be present to them that day and throughout their married life.

The Marriage of Catholics within Mass

- 51 For the marriage of two Catholics, the rite takes place within Mass. “It is fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so that, communicating in the same Body and same Blood of Christ, they may form but ‘one body’ in Christ.”¹¹

Mixed Religion

- 52 “In the marriage of a Catholic and a baptized person who is not Catholic, the rite of marriage outside Mass shall be used. If the situation warrants and if the local ordinary gives permission, the rite for celebrating marriage within Mass may be used, except that communion is not given to the non-Catholic, since the general law does not allow it.”¹² Non-Sacramental Marriages

¹¹ CCC 1621.

¹² *Rite of Marriage* 8.

- 53 In a marriage between a Catholic and one who is not baptized, Mass is not permitted and the special non-sacramental form in the Rite of Marriage (#55-66) must be followed.

Cultural Symbolic Rituals

- 54 While not prescribed in the liturgy of the Roman rite, the use of a Unity Candle, the placing of flowers before the statue of Mary, the Hispanic customs of the Lasso, the exchange of Arras and the Filipino custom of the Velo may be used as long as they are in harmony with the Christian faith and express clearly the profound human and religious significance of the marriage covenant.

Liturgical Music, Musicians, Worship Aids

- 55 The Wedding Music Guidelines. (revised 2006) of the Diocese of Toledo are a part of these diocesan guidelines for marriage preparation and should be consulted accordingly. The Guidelines provide norms and helpful suggestions on liturgical music, the use of parish and guest musicians, suggested fees, and copyright rules.

Parish Guidelines

- 56 Parishes may wish to develop policies covering other issues in addition to music.

Simple Convalidations and Radical Sanations

- 57 It is not uncommon for pastoral ministers to meet couples whose marriages are not valid in the Catholic Church. This often happens on the occasion of the RCIA process or the registration of new parishioners. This is an opportunity to catechize the couple and invite them to have their civil marriage convalidated in the Church. To accomplish this, there may be a need for prior marriages to be examined by the Tribunal in a nullity procedure. Other times, the couple may already be free to marry in the Church, but for various reasons have not yet done so. Still other times, a Catholic may be willing, but his or her non-Catholic spouse may not.
- 58 Assuming the couple is free to marry in the Church, the following pastoral and canonical guidelines can help to prepare them:

Step 1: Simple Convalidation or Radical Sanation?

- 59 Convalidation” is the canonical remedy by which an invalid marriage is made valid. There are two forms of convalidation:
- 60 Simple Convalidation” (marrying anew according to canonical form, see canons 1156-1160). This is a liturgical act with legal effects, and is the ordinary way of convalidating an invalid marriage.
- 61 Radical Sanation (a legal remedy by which there is no renewal of consent and which has retroactive effects).¹³ For a sanation to be granted, there must be a grave cause.¹⁴ Sanations,

¹³ Cf. *CIC* 1161-1165.

¹⁴ *CIC* 1164.

therefore, are used less frequently than simple convalidations.

Simple Convalidation

- 62 The preference in canon law for the use of simple convalidations reflects a sacramental/liturgical value—that in a simple convalidation, which is a liturgical as well as juridic act, the Word of God is proclaimed, the parties exchange the vows (if both are baptized, they are ministers of the sacrament to each other), the rings can be blessed, and the nuptial blessing prayed. This is the normal way of “getting married in the Church.”
- 63 The majority of convalidations done in a parish, therefore, should be accomplished by the couple marrying anew according to canonical form (simple convalidation).
- 64 What is meant by “marrying anew?” It means giving new consent to a new marriage. Remember, a simple convalidation is not merely blessing an existing marriage. Rather, the couple, recognizing at a minimum that their current marriage is “possibly invalid,”¹⁵ must will the creation of a new, and hence valid, marriage. On a very practical level, this means the couple will have a new “marriage date,” and hence, new “anniversary date.” It is important that this be explained to the couple so that each party understands.

Radical Sanation

- 65 The granting of a sanation requires a grave cause, and is a less common occurrence. Here are the two most common examples of what would constitute a grave cause:
- A grave cause sometimes occurs in a “mixed marriage” situation, where the non-Catholic party may refuse to marry anew according to canonical form, out of personal and/or religious conviction. This would represent a grave cause sufficient for a sanation.
 - Another situation is where, in the pastoral minister’s judgment, the parties, even after appropriate catechesis, cannot come to understand the need for the new act of consent that is demanded by a simple convalidation. This would also represent a grave cause sufficient for a sanation.
- 66 Not every marriage situation can be sanated. Please keep in mind that certain civil marriages cannot be validly sanated by the diocesan bishop. In particular, the retroactive convalidation where two Catholics would have required a dispensation from Catholic form, permission from the Holy See is necessary for the Bishop to grant the sanation.¹⁶

Summary

- 67 Most marriage convalidations should be done by using the simple convalidation. Sanations require a grave cause and are therefore less common. For two young Catholics in a civil marriage of only a few years, it is especially appropriate that they marry in the Church by giving new consent according to Catholic form (simple convalidation). Ultimately, the pastoral minister must make

¹⁵ *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*. Paulist Press. 1385.

¹⁶ *CIC* 1165 §2.

the judgment on which form of convalidation is needed given the couple's situation and understanding.

Step 2: Catholic Marriage Preparation

- 68 Although already married in a civil ceremony, the couple needs to be prepared to receive the sacrament of marriage. This pastoral preparation should be tailored to reflect the couple's life situation. Clearly, a couple in a civil marriage of 30 years, whose children are already grown, would be prepared in a different manner than a couple in a civil marriage of short duration who are hoping to have children.
- 69 Example of issues to be discussed (these are similar to any other marriage preparation):
- Marriage as a sacrament. What will be different once the marriage is validated?
 - The essential properties of marriage: unity and indissolubility.
 - Children (if appropriate to the couple's life situation).
 - Religious faith and practice of the couple, the religious faith of any children.
 - Pastoral/personal issues or problem areas.
- 70 The use of the REFOCCUS is strongly recommended (see www.foccusinc.com) to help the couple discuss their relationship and address any challenges.
- 71 The pastoral minister will also need to discuss with the couple the events leading up to their marriage "outside the Church." Did the Catholic party or parties know of the obligation to observe the canonical form in marrying? What level of faith was practiced at the time? What, if anything, has changed? Do the parties understand the importance of having their marriage convalidated?

Step 3: Completing the Marriage File

- 72 The pre-marriage file should be completed as usual. (Print "Sanation" at the top and on the line for "Date of Wedding" if a radical sanation will be sought).
- 73 A photocopy of the civil marriage license should be obtained for the marriage file.
- 74 A recent baptismal certificate, with all notations, should be obtained for Catholic parties. For parties who are baptized non-Catholic Christians, an effort should be made to obtain a certificate or letter from the church of baptism.
- 75 Copies of any nullity decrees for previous marriages should be included in the file.
- 76 Dispensations: If a simple convalidation, then any necessary dispensation for disparity of worship must be obtained from the Chancery. If a radical sanation will be sought, no dispensation requests

are required since any needed dispensations will be automatically included in the sanation decree.

Step 4: Convalidating the Marriage

- 77 If a simple convalidation is used, then everything is basically the same as any other wedding, including recordkeeping and notifications, other than that the liturgy itself is kept simpler. Much will depend on what the priest or deacon, working with the couple, will decide is appropriate.
- 78 If a radical sanation will be sought, here are some additional guidelines:
- 79 The Marriage Sanation Request must be completed. One of the parties (the Catholic party in a mixed marriage) should sign the petition. The priest, deacon, or pastoral leader must also sign the petition. No other parish staff member should sign the petition in lieu of the pastor, associate pastor, or pastoral leader.
- Please print legibly, especially surnames.
 - On the bottom of the form, please list all prior marital unions, giving marriage dates, divorce dates, and any nullity information.
 - No dispensation requests are necessary, since any needed dispensations will be included in the sanation (canon 1161 §1).¹⁷
 - Send the Marriage Sanation Request to the CHANCERY.
 - Include the baptismal certificates (recently issued, with notations).
 - Include the copy of the civil marriage license.

These documents will be returned to you.

Step 5: Record Keeping Requirements for Sanations:

- 80 After the Sanation has been approved:
- Place the original decree in the couple's marriage file. The couple should be given one of the copies provided by the Chancery.
 - Record the sanation in the parish marriage register.
 - Notify the parish of baptism of the sanation so that it can be recorded in the baptismal record of each Catholic party.
- 81 Record a sanation in the marriage register: When a marriage is sanated, the data concerning the original ceremony are to be placed in the usual columns (do not list witnesses or officiating minister). Be sure to record the date and place of the marriage (city and state). The date, diocese, and protocol number of the sanation are to be noted in the "Notations" column.

Record a sanation in a baptismal record: In the notations, write:

¹⁷ CIC 1161 §1.

Sanation of civil marriage to (full name of spouse, full maiden name if woman)
Diocese of Toledo, Sanation #XXX/XX
Granted (sanation date)

82 Notify the parish of baptism of a sanation:

Use the standard notification slip and enclose a copy of the sanation decree. On the slip write:

Sanation of civil marriage to (full name of spouse, full maiden name if woman)
Diocese of Toledo, Sanation #XXX/XX
Granted (sanation date)

INTRODUCTION

- 83 Christian marriage is a symbol of the covenant that unites God and people (*Familiaris Consortio*, 12) and, in this sense; each marriage belongs to the whole Church. Pope John Paul II writes, “By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligations, they are penetrated with the Spirit of Christ, who fills their whole lives with faith, hope and charity” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 56). The Church’s hope for married couples is that they and the entire community of believers find in marriage a “specific source and original means of sanctification” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 56) with an assurance of peace, happiness, and permanence.
- 84 Vatican II states that:
- Christian spouses, in virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that union and fruitful love which exists between Christ and the Church (cf. Ephesians 5:32). They help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and by the rearing and education of their children. And thus, in their state and way of life they have their own special gift among the people of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:7). For their union gives rise to a family where new citizens are born to human society, and in baptism they are made into children of God by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, for the perpetuation of God’s people throughout the centuries. Within the family, which is, so to speak, “the domestic church,” the parents should be first to preach the faith to their children by word and example (*Lumen gentium* 11).
- 85 The Catholic Church, on the basis of Scripture and Tradition, teaches “the permanence of the union until death” (Letter to Families, 1994); “the indissoluble character of marriage is the basis of the common good of the family” (ibid). Divorce is unacceptable. It is “a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other until death” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2383).
- 86 Having stated this, the Church recognizes that the vast majority of couples who come to the Church for marriage do so committed to grow in love and confident that God will be present with them on their journey. However, the Church realizes that many couples “ask to be married in church for motives which are social rather than genuinely religious” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 68). In some instances, pastors or parish staffs experience frustration when working with couples who do not practice their faith or who have little appreciation of the sacramentality of marriage. Some couples may be more responsive to parents or other persons who are making demands than to God’s invitation to make the moment sacred. Still others may lack the maturity needed to make the kind of commitment expected in Christian marriage. These guidelines offer assistance to pastors, deacons, pastoral ministers, and parish communities in their efforts to prepare couples for marriage and to continually evangelize them.
- 87 Our Lord Jesus promises life in abundance (John 10:10) and invites us to be a people who build the kingdom of God based on values of truth, justice, and peace. We are called to be a holy people who live according to the covenant of love that God offered from the beginning of creation. The love of God for all creation is a beautiful thread woven into the fabric of human history and is reflected in the stories of our lives, which are our response to that gift of love.

88 In his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 23:3 ff.), Paul speaks of the many qualities of love we experience in day-to-day living. He also invites and challenges us to strive for the perfection of this gift of love following the mission and ministry of Jesus himself. Throughout the centuries, the Catholic Church has reaffirmed the values of this gift of God and reaffirms the profoundly human and sacred vision of married love in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* of the Second Vatican Council:

For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes...Christ the Lord abundantly blessed this many-faceted love, welling up as it does from the fountain of divine love as structured as it is on the model of his union with the Church (*Gaudium et spes* 48).

89 It is out of deep concern for the happiness and fulfillment of couples, as well as a serious concern for the important role which marriage plays in the life of the Church, that these guidelines for marriage ministry are presented. They are intended to promote and protect the sacredness of marriage by helping couples better prepare the foundations for and sustain stable and lasting marriages.

90 Marriage is a sacred relationship. For the couple, it is profound with richness and dignity. For the community, it is an institution that serves as one of the basic bonds that holds our society together. For the Church, it is a sacramental event that gives a visible sign of God's presence and grace-filled intervention in our lives.

91 Christian marriage expresses the new creation, redeemed and restored by Christ. In it a natural union is raised to a supernatural level. Pope John Paul II says:

In Christ God takes up this human need (of communion), confirms it, purifies it and elevates it, leading it to perfection through the Sacrament of Matrimony; the Holy Spirit who is poured out in the sacramental celebration offers Christian couples the gift of a new communion of love that is the living and real image of that unique unity which makes of the Church the indivisible mystical body of the Lord Jesus (*Familiaris consortio* 19).

92 Aware of this special significance, the Diocese of Toledo has prepared these *Guidelines for Pastoral Outreach to Christian Marriage*. These guidelines are written in light of recent documents of the Church and in accord with the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which usefully synthesizes Catholic teachings as follows, "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament" (canon 1055 §1).

93 These guidelines are also intended to be a resource for the pastoral marriage minister in the important work of marriage preparation. We call upon all members of the Church to strongly support the best possible programs of marriage preparation and pastoral care in the Diocese of Toledo.

Engagement: An Opportunity

- 94 Pope John Paul II says, “The very preparation for Christian marriage is itself a journey of faith. It is a special opportunity for the engaged to rediscover and deepen the faith received in Baptism and nourished by their Christian upbringing. In this way they come to recognize and freely accept their vocation to follow Christ and to serve the Kingdom of God in the married state” (*Familiaris consortio* 51). While the proximate preparation period is an opportunity as such, engagement can be both exciting and stressful for couples. The excitement comes with the anticipation of formally committing themselves to each other in an intimate communion that is to last a lifetime. The stresses may come from fears about making a permanent commitment, the reactions of others, and the preparations that are associated with getting married and beginning married life. At times couples may be tempted to use the engagement solely for planning the wedding. In these cases, the couple’s agenda may not be that of the marriage ministers, for whom the formal marriage preparation period is in most instances an opportunity for the Church to evangelize and catechize those who come to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- 95 Christian marriage is a sacred vocation that “is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1603). It is a sacrament of the Church. While preparation for the wedding is important and often reflects a couple’s willingness to proclaim and celebrate their love with their families and friends, the time of engagement has much more significance. Engagement is really the first season of marriage. Couples who use courtship to seriously prepare for marriage find their engagement to be a time of opportunity, deepened love, growth, and new understanding. It is an opportunity for adult faith formation. Those entering into Christian marriage appreciate the importance of this time because of the significance of the sacrament they will be sharing.

The Community of the Church: Caring and Responsible

- 96 Christian marriage has inherent challenges. It also has many opportunities to witness God’s covenant. Marriage is important for the Church today as it endeavors to extend the life and love of Christ.
- 97 The Church encourages and assists those who have decided to be married in the Church to prepare for this vocation. To do this well, the Church promises, through its ministers, time and attention for the engaged. In return, the Church asks of every couple wishing to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony to see marriage preparation as something important, valuable, and necessary for them.
- 98 With family and community, the Church has great hope for married couples, that they may experience marriage’s transcendent dimension. Guided by faith and God’s loving grace, they will grow together through each phase of life and be outward signs of that grace to others.
- 99 Parishes in the Diocese of Toledo celebrate hundreds of marriages each year. Each has the potential for growth and happiness or for separation and pain. The powerful witness of a caring, nurturing community expands the options for married couples to allow them opportunities for more successful courses of action. By hearing the stories of others they find hope for their marital journey. Additionally, because Christian marriage is sacramental, these stories also reflect the story of God’s relationship with his people throughout the ages. The Sacrament of Matrimony

causes grace, which perfects the human love of the spouses. When Christians marry, they become a sign of God's faithful, fruitful, abiding love, not only for themselves but also for the community.

- 100 The continued incidence of marital breakdown points to the difficulty of creating a marriage that is viable. Marriage is a partnership of "mutual submission." This equality is really about sharing power and exercising responsibility for a purpose larger than ourselves. The needs for adequate, effective marriage preparation and support are so evident that some states are passing laws intended to encourage good preparation for and deeper commitment to marriage.
- 101 Divorce and separation are more prevalent among newly married couples than people in their middle and later years of life. Recent health statistics indicate that 32% of all divorces in the U.S. occur in the first four years; 63% in the first ten years. The dissolution of marriage is frequently becoming the option of choice for couples that have trouble in their marital relationships. These societal trends indicate that modern marriage is fragile and vulnerable. Therefore, appropriate responses from the Church that stress the importance of Christian marriage are warranted.
- 102 The Diocese offers this document as a guide to assist the Church in effective preparation and support of marriage. At times, there is confusion and a wide disparity of approaches among ministers and parishes, even within a geographical area. Thus, it is important that Diocesan norms provide direction. At the same time, because of the size and diversity of the Diocese of Toledo, it is important to apply any norms or standards with pastoral flexibility that give attention to and appreciation for the richness in that diversity.
- 103 The task of preparing couples for marriage and supporting them thereafter is a challenging ministry. It calls for bishops, priests, deacons, married couples, and the entire Catholic assembly to work cooperatively. Pope Paul VI, in addressing ministers of marriage, said, "Work ardently and incessantly for the safeguarding and the holiness of marriage, that it always be lived in its entire human and Christian fullness. Consider this mission as one of your most urgent responsibilities at the present time" (*Humanae vitae* 30).
- 104 Pope John Paul II says in the introduction of *Familiaris consortio*, "Illuminated by the faith that gives her an understanding of all the truth concerning the great value of marriage and the family and their deepest meaning, the Church once again feels the pressing need to proclaim the Gospel, that is the 'good news,' to all people without exception, in particular to all those who are called to marriage and are preparing for it, to all married couples and parents in the world."
- 105 A couple's decision to marry is momentous. Their engagement begins a time of great anticipation and preparation. The Church has a responsibility to journey with them through every phase from their initial preparation for Christian marriage to their lifelong union in Christ. These *Guidelines for Pastoral Outreach to Christian Marriage* are offered with the hope that the various communities of the Catholic Church in Northwestern Ohio will serve Christian marriage in a responsible and caring way. Through this comprehensive ministry to marriage, the Church will more effectively assist couples in recognizing the great hope to which they have been called and the great sign that they become for the Christian community.

The Origins of the Sacrament

- 106** The creation story in Genesis tells us that marriage was created by God for man and woman and was part of the goodness of creation itself. Pope John Paul II writes in *Familiaris consortio*, “The sacrament of matrimony has this specific element that distinguishes it from all the other sacraments: It is the sacrament of something that was part of the very economy of creation; it is the very conjugal covenant instituted by the Creator “in the beginning.”
- 107** Couples then have a natural right to marry. Pope John Paul II recognized this when he wrote, “One must not underestimate the necessity and obligation of the immediate preparation for marriage... nevertheless such preparation must always be set forth and put into practice in such a way that omitting it is not an impediment to the celebration of marriage.” (*The Christian Family in the Modern World* 66.)

The Tradition of Marriage in the Catholic Church

- 108** The Catholic Church has a long and rich tradition around marriage, even though it was not formally recognized as a sacrament until the twelfth century. The creation story in Genesis tells us it was created by God for man and woman and was part of the goodness of creation itself.
- 109** Our Sacred Scriptures - both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures - tells us that God cares about our relationships, and that of all relationships, marriage is special. The story of Hosea in the Hebrew Scripture uses the marriage of the prophet to the prostitute Gomer as an example of God's love for each one of us. Time and time again she is unfaithful to him, yet Hosea always responds to her with faithful, constant, unconditional and always forgiving love. In the Christian Scripture Jesus' first miracle occurs at the wedding feast in Cana, where he makes water into wine rather than allow the bridal couple to be embarrassed. Later on in Scripture He speaks of marriage as permanent, saying that what God has brought together cannot be torn asunder.
- 110** A couple's decision to marry is an occasion for rejoicing. It signals, even if not in a fully conscious way, an attitude of profound obedience to the will of God, an attitude that cannot exist without God's grace.

Marriage as Sacrament

- 111** Marriage was the seventh sacrament in the Catholic Church and this was recognized as dogma from the beginning of the thirteenth century.
- 112** One of the characteristics of a sacrament is that it is an interaction between God and us. Beginning with the wedding ceremony itself, grace emerges. The couple's totally human relationship over the years continues to multiply these graces, as it reveals qualities of the divine - unconditional love, forgiveness, fidelity, commitment, and fruitfulness among others. No other relationship can reveal glimpses of the love that God has for each one of us in as full a way as the relationship between husband and wife.

When Couples Approach the Church for Marriage

- 113** Our Holy Father points out that God is already at work in the lives of couples when they make a decision to marry. Part of the work of the marriage preparation minister then must be to help couples recognize and understand how God has already been at work in their lives, something of which they themselves may not be fully conscious.

Couples may be Imperfectly Disposed

- 114** Ours is a highly secularized culture. It is not surprising then that oftentimes couples approach the Church for marriage for social reasons rather than religious. Our Holy Father recognizes this and writes in *Familiaris consortio*, “It is true that in some places engaged couples ask to be married in church for motives which are social rather than genuinely religious. This is not surprising. Marriage, in fact, is not an event that concerns only the persons actually getting married. By its very nature it is also a social matter, committing the couple being married in the eyes of society. And its celebration has always been an occasion of rejoicing that brings together families and friends. It therefore goes without saying that social as well as personal motives enter into the request to be married in church” (68).
- 115** The American Catholic Bishops offer what may be thought of as a bottom line for working with young adults who present themselves to the Church for marriage: “Young adults approach the Church to be married for a number of reasons, including parental pressure, the desire to have a church wedding, or to reunite themselves with the Church. Regardless of why they come, the church and its minister need to welcome them as Christ welcomes them, with understanding love, and acceptance, challenging them with the gospel message, and giving them hope that a lifelong commitment is possible” (United States Catholic Bishops: *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, 1996)

CHAPTER I: FORMATION

“*Marriage preparation has to be seen and put into practice as a gradual and continuous process.*”

Pope John Paul II (*Familiaris consortio* 66)

A. Our Catholic Heritage

- 116 Preparation for a marriage begins at birth. As children grow, they experience interactions with family, friends, and neighbors, all whom may teach them about marriage. Experiences in their school years elaborate further on marriage and relationship building. We must pay attention to all the education our children receive from society, particularly the media. By the time of their engagement, most couples have already formed their perceptions of married life.
- 117 Couples approach the Church for marriage preparation with ideas and plans for what they want, which at times are different from the Church’s understanding of marriage. Therefore, this can be a time of great opportunity and teaching as well as a challenge for those preparing engaged couples for the Sacrament of Matrimony. As a couple works with the pastoral minister to plan the wedding, they should also receive their final phase of pre-marriage education.
- 118 The Catholic Church offers valuable teaching that emphasizes marriage as a sacrament which builds up the Body of Christ, who himself sanctified the marital relationship. Catholic marriages are an outward sign of God’s love for the community and for the persons themselves. According to the U.S. Bishops’ pastoral statement, *Follow the Way of Love*, “When a man and woman pledge themselves to each other in the Sacrament of Matrimony, they join in Christ’s promise and become a living sign of his union with the Church” (cf. Ephesians 5:32). This is prophetic. Church teaching on marriage clearly signifies Christian marriage as a holy institution by including it as a sacrament.
- 119 For many years of marriage preparation ministry, the Diocese of Toledo has provided valuable education for couples that marry in the Catholic Church. Education is essential to providing present and future engaged couples with the accurate information and the skills necessary to succeed in living their Sacrament of Matrimony. Catechesis is a process that occurs continually throughout life. It builds the necessary awareness and skills to live the whole of life in a Christ-like way, whether it occurs spontaneously at home or systematically in a Catholic school or a religious education program.
- 120 Pope John Paul II says, “The sacrament of marriage gives to the educational role the dignity and vocation of being really and truly a ‘ministry’ of the Church at the service of the building up of her members. So great and splendid is the educational ministry of Christian parents that Saint Thomas has no hesitation in comparing it with the ministry of priests: ‘Some only propagate and guard spiritual life by a spiritual ministry: this is the role of the Sacrament of Orders; others do this for both corporal and spiritual life, and this is brought about by the sacrament of marriage, by which a man and a woman join in order to beget offspring and bring them up to worship God’” (*Familiaris consortio* 38).
- 121 The Catholic Church locally must provide many opportunities for this message to reach families. It is the pastoral care and sensitivity during the time of engagement and in their marriage preparation

that often creates a link for newly married couples to a life of permanent, loving marriage in the Catholic Church.

- 122 Marriage is by nature a demanding endeavor. It is intrinsically multicultural by virtue of the two distinct personalities journeying together for a lifetime. Cultural influences from families of origin, ethnicity, language, and various personalities present unique challenges and opportunities for married couples. Every married couple, a new, unique creation, needs and deserves a supportive community that values the richness in such cultural diversity. Those who teach about marriage must communicate the value of cultural pluralism.
- 123 The breakdown in community due to the pervading influences of consumerism, materialism, and individualism may be obstacles to sustaining lifelong marriages. The teaching of the Church and her life of grace counters those influences and promotes stronger community bonds. Therefore, the invitation and the welcoming of those who seek marriage in the Church are also an invitation into a supportive community that will strengthen marriage and family. It is also an invitation to the couple to further develop their personal journey of faith as adults.

B. Responsibilities of the Diocese

- 124 **Goal #1: To recognize and promote the family as Domestic Church, “the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 66), and the most significant place for teaching about the Sacrament of Matrimony.**
- 125 Guideline: Provide resources for homilies during the year, which include theology of Christian marriage in catechesis at all levels. Specific resources will be provided for the Feast of the Holy Family, during Family Month (November), and when particular, family-centered scripture readings are proclaimed.
- 126 Discussion: From connections made in homilies and catechetical programs to gospel readings and Church teaching, the basic responsibility for formation in the Catholic faith occurs in the home. We recognize this Domestic Church as the greatest influence in forming awareness of the presence of Christ in the family and the most basic way God gathers us and forms us (*Follow the Way of Love*, 1994). The Domestic Church is the most formative element for lifelong Christian marriage. Pope John Paul II spoke of this when he said, “It is to the majority of the faithful who struggle each day to live up to the demands of their Christian dignity in marriage and the family that pastoral efforts are principally directed...They look to their spiritual guides for the support of sound doctrine, the grace of the sacraments and the human empathy which will sustain them in the never easy mission of being a true ‘domestic church,’ the first community to be evangelized, so that it in turn can be the proximate and immediate evangelizer of its members” (*Ad Limina Apostolorum*, 1997).
- 127 **Goal #2: To assure that all members of the parish staff who interact with the faithful are knowledgeable about the Sacrament of Matrimony.**
- 128 Guideline: Provide continuing education to parish staff ministers and assistance to parishes to clearly educate all Catholics about the Sacrament of Matrimony.

- 129 Discussion: Workshops, enrichment programs, and resources on current teaching will be provided regularly. The need for acquisition of skills in conflict resolution, relationship skills, and other interpersonal components is helpful to self-knowledge and thus a solid preparation for marriage. Suggesting programs and prayers that center on marriage and even problems in marriage will address the needs of the people choosing to be married in the Church (see Appendix B). Parish staff who model and mentor marriage in the Catholic community will be more successful and feel more secure in their role when given opportunities to be nurtured through enrichments and other learning opportunities.
- 130 School curricula should reflect the understanding of marriage and the family and the recommendations mentioned here. The earlier a person is exposed to relationship skills, the better chance he/she will have to acquire and refine them. The hope is that, from entry into school until completion of college, age- appropriate education will be provided for relationship-building and maintenance.
- 131 When a person marries in the Catholic Church, it is very important to teach what it means. Cultural influences are strong and often impact the couple at the time of marriage. Catechetical reading materials provided in church bulletins and in the marriage preparation contact meetings can generate meaningful discussion with engaged couples. These materials will be available through pamphlets and Church documentation. The Diocese will provide materials that may be used in parish bulletins.
- 132 **Goal #3: To foster an atmosphere of support for Christian marriage through prayer.**
- 133 Guideline: The Stewardship of Prayer is the first step in making Stewardship a way of life. Enhance an awareness of marriage as the foundation of successful family life through the Prayers of the Faithful and the celebrations of the marriage ceremony and milestone anniversaries. Thorough education for parish staff and clergy will help develop support.
- 134 Discussion: Public prayer at Mass for those in married life or for those struggling with married life can be achieved through the Prayers of the Faithful at Sunday Mass. It is important to invite all married persons to celebrate World Marriage Day and take part in parish and diocesan celebrations of marriage. The Diocese will provide information about World Marriage Day and special events and programs that celebrate marriage.
- 135 **Goal #4: To promote Stewardship as the sharing of appropriate gifts and talents so that all married couples and single people can become ministers in the preparation of others for marriage.**
- 136 Guideline: Through the Diocesan Office of Stewardship, to promote the development of appropriate ministries in the spirit of stewardship so that people sense the care and compassion that can be extended to engaged couples.
- 137 Discussion: It's been a principle teaching of the Universal Church that every Catholic Christian has been endowed with unique gifts which can be used to enhance family life in the Parish,

Diocese, and world. This helps people to better understand the significance of marriage as the unit cell of society, to enrich their own marriage, and to give witness to the vitality of the Sacrament. The result is that it can provide a willingness and even a desire to assist others in their own journey of faith. The recruitment of ministering teams, such as Preparing Ministers, Sponsor Couples, or mentors, should become a regular part of Stewardship development in every Parish. The Diocesan Office of Stewardship will make available training and resources to create vibrant Stewardship programs in parishes.

138 Goal #5: To promote discussion about the essential elements of Christian marriage in religious education programs, grade schools, high schools, and colleges.

139 Guideline: Provide guidance for dialogue among Catholic educators and encouragement for dialogue with non-Catholic educators concerning Christian marriage.

140 Discussion: Since marriages are living witnesses to God's love for his people, schools and religious education programs are encouraged to supplement their religious education texts with living examples of Christian marriage drawn from the community. Catholic religious educators should also be in dialogue with other educators regarding the elements of marriage we hold in common. The strengthening of marriage and family life also strengthens society, and is a common task for all of us.

141 Goal #6: To provide materials to parishes for catechesis in bulletin articles and for homilies that teach about marriage.

142 Guideline: Offer timely resources on a regular basis, through appropriate diocesan agencies, to assist parish staffs to teach about the vocation of marriage.

143 Discussion: The Diocese will review and forward to parishes information on materials to be used for educating parishioners, children and adults, about Christian marriage. Often publishers and authors send new resources to the Diocese. Appropriate agencies review these materials and offer feedback. The Diocese will promote where possible and make known to parishes the best new materials.

C. Responsibilities of the Parish

144 Goal #1: To provide catechesis on the Sacrament of Matrimony at all levels.

145 Guideline: Educate all members of the parish regarding Church teaching and practice on Christian marriage.

146 Discussion: The parish should make available workshops and continuing education opportunities for adults. Pastors should ensure that catechetical programs have relationship-building components and teach theology of Christian marriage. Parishes must also offer information on the consequences of divorce and provide resources for troubled marriages.

147 The parish will provide pamphlets, bulletin articles, and homilies in appropriate languages that

teach about marriage. Parishes can offer speakers and programs for families that teach relationship, parenting, and marital skills. It is important for parishes to teach about consumer and media influence on families. It is also important to preach on marriage when the opportunity arises and provide family/marriage perspectives in homilies throughout the year.

148 Goal #2: To make available the best possible ministry to engaged couples, every parish should actively participate in the development of a viable stewardship program.

149 Guideline: Parishes should develop strong stewardship committees in the context of pastoral planning. Stewardship should be taught as a way of life.

150 Discussion: Stewardship is nothing more than opening people's minds, hearts, and spirits to the reality of Christ's personal call to be involved in the life of the Church. At the parish level, good stewardship means recruiting good ministers. Married couples can discover in many ways that they do indeed model God's ever faithful love for His people. In that knowledge, and in a spirit of genuine sharing, they can be formed and freed to be generous stewards of marriage to the engaged and newly married by their witness and by becoming involved in the various programs for marriage preparation in the Parish.

D. Responsibility of the Christian Faithful

151 Goal: To explore and understand the various types of vocations in the Catholic Church in order to discern one's own particular vocation.

152 Guideline: Understand what it means to be a baptized Catholic and discern one's vocation in the mission of the Church, whether in single, religious or married life.

153 Discussion: Faith is God's gift to us. Living that faith is an ever-unfolding journey that extends throughout life. Understanding one's faith does not occur once and for all. As we traverse the stages of life, we have experiences that inform our faith. New situations and circumstances often demand new and different responses. For example: challenges to one's faith as a grade-schooler are different than a high schooler. Entering adulthood presents a whole set of life issues that call for faithful reflection and discernment, a practice that is ongoing.

CHAPTER II: PREPARATION

“More than ever necessary in our times is preparation of young people for marriage and family life. In some countries it is still the families themselves that, according to ancient customs, ensure the passing on to young people of the values concerning married and family life, and they do this through a gradual process of education or initiation. But the changes that have taken place within almost all modern societies demand that not only the family but also society and the Church should be involved in the effort of properly preparing young people for their future responsibilities.”
Pope John Paul II (*Familiaris consortio* 66)

A. Our Catholic Heritage

- 154** For our purposes, the formal period of marriage preparation begins at engagement. For the validity of a marriage where one or both parties are Catholic, the marriage has to be contracted in the presence of the Ordinary, the parish pastor, the priest or deacon deputed by either of them (*Code of Canon Law* 1108). When the couple makes the decision to marry in the Church they enter into discernment about their life together as married persons who are open to God’s grace. The Church’s role in assisting the couple during this time is important. Perhaps this is the very first moment of adult faith formation.
- 155** This is a time for the engaged couple to assess, explore, and envision. They assess their own family histories and cultures, and all that has shaped them—their love relationships in the family; their faith; their attitudes about, and expectations of, marriage. They each bring to their marriage a predisposition that will shape it.
- 156** This is why if the current psychological and cultural situation is taken into consideration, marriage preparation represents an urgent need. In fact preparation is educating for the respect and care for life which, in the sanctuary of families, must become a real and proper culture of human life in all its manifestations and stages...(cf. *Evangelium vitae* 6, 78, 105).
- 157** During the preparation period the couple should explore the meaning of covenant, permanence, and indissolubility. They should search for ways to be good married partners to each other. They should become “students of marriage” who seek new learning in the practical ways to “work at the relationship.” An emphasis of effective marriage preparation is to help the couple distinguish the marriage from the wedding.
- 158** Though it may be what they know about themselves and each other that has brought them to the threshold of matrimony, there is so much they cannot know about their future together. This acting on faith demands hope and trust—a belief in a promised goodness that lies ahead of them and draws them beyond themselves. This is not for them to do alone. The action of Christ makes marriage beyond limited human imagination. With the assistance of the actual and sacramental grace guaranteed by the sacrament, the engaged couple needs the Catholic Church to help them live their marriage as a sacrament—God present in them.
- 159** Therefore, it is also important for the engaged couple to reflect on their relationship with the

Catholic community. A purpose of marriage preparation is to help the engaged further develop a relationship with the faith community. Often it will be to renew a relationship with the faith community after a time of alienation, inertia, or indifference. To be in relationship with a community is to be open to and affected by it.

B. Responsibilities of the Diocese

- 160** **Goal: To provide a variety of marriage preparation opportunities that meets the needs of engaged couples.**
- 161** Guideline: Provide marriage preparation programs facilitated by competent members of the faith community who bear witness to a Christian vision of marriage.
- 162** Discussion: The couples that approach the Church seeking marriage are from a variety of backgrounds. There is no single program that can fully address the rich cultural diversity that is present in the Diocese. Therefore a variety of programs for marriage preparation are made available for the engaged. These programs respond to the “real life” issues faced by modern couples.
- 163** At the first session, once a rapport is established with an engaged couple, the priest, deacon, or pastoral associate will make arrangements for a premarital inventory, i.e., *Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS)* to be administered. The premarital inventory helps the engaged couple recognize their strengths and weaknesses in important areas of married life. This tool is best used early in the preparation process, since it will enhance their experiences in subsequent steps. The Diocese highly recommends the *FOCCUS* to be used, and will provide facilitator training for use of this premarital inventory. (*Diocese of Toledo Pastoral Policy Handbook* (page 13, paragraph 45))
- 164** Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs lists the various options of marriage preparation programs. Refer to Ch. II, p.90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory to learn more about the *FOCCUS* instrument and how you can be trained to use it.

C. Responsibilities of the Parish

- 165 Goal #1: To warmly welcome couples seeking marriage in the Church, to congratulate them on their decision to marry, and to offer the Church's assistance in their time of preparation.**
- 166** Guideline: Educate and sensitize parish staff in proper and effective contact with anyone seeking marriage in the Church.
- 167** Discussion: The first contact is critical. It is an opportunity to evangelize and bring about a richer understanding of the sacrament. The staff person, whether it is the pastor, the secretary, or someone else who happens to answer the phone, should have the necessary skills and awareness to be a welcoming presence for the couple. No one should be refused marriage over the phone. Church law provides that anyone with a domicile, quasi-domicile, or even one month's residence in a parish has a right to be married there. Note: The intention of permanent residency establishes a domicile or quasi-domicile. The Diocese encourages parishes to establish pastoral guidelines for celebrating the weddings of parishioners' children who no longer live in the parish. If possible, have these printed to be shared with the engaged couple at the first meeting. It is important to note that a positive response to young adults who have no parish affiliation can be an opportunity of evangelization and catechesis.
- 168 Goal #2: To ensure that the engaged have opportunities to prepare for marriage according to their particular circumstance and culture; To provide pastoral instruction and counseling from the pastoral staff to those seeking marriage in the Church; and To enlist the effective Christian witness to marriage from married couples as a necessary component of marriage preparation.**
- 169** Guideline: Take responsibility for preparing couples for the wedding day, and assist in their lifetime commitment of living a Christian marriage. The parish minister will recommend the appropriate marriage preparation program(s) in which the couple is to participate.
- 170** Discussion: The Catholic Church is the spiritual home for those who seek to marry in the Church. The parish church is the particular setting in which many of the great sacramental moments of a person's life are celebrated. The same should be true for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. The ordinary setting for weddings is the parish church (Canon 1061 – a dispensation is available from the Bishop). Whether a couple is registered in the parish should not be the sole criterion for determining if a marriage should take place in the parish. The theology of baptism is far more important than parish registration. For special circumstances (e.g., disparity of worship), refer to the "Special Circumstances" in chapter II, section F, beginning on page 32. You will find 22 different "Special Circumstances" listed.
- 171** The Christian community has the primary responsibility for preparing engaged couples for marriage (Canon 1063). This is done under the guidance of the pastor and the rest of the pastoral staff. The pastoral minister (priest or deacon) is ultimately responsible for directing the engaged couple's marriage preparation process. With guidance, the couple will find resources for a premarital inventory, register for a marriage preparation program, and explore pertinent faith

issues. The pastoral minister can play a very important role in the life of a couple preparing for marriage. His continued interest in the couple and his willingness to give of himself are crucial elements in that role.

- 172 Others in the faith community share in the responsibilities of preparing the engaged for marriage. Married couples that model Christian marriage are important resources and should take part as presenters for marriage preparation programs. Married couples may become “mentor-couples” who serve as ambassadors of the parish and journey with the engaged and newly married couples. Marriage preparation is an opportunity for married couples to serve the parish and enrich their own marriages.
- 173 The bride and groom’s parents, family members, friends, and the community of the parish share in this preparation, which in reality has gone on long before engagement. The parish should encourage family and friends to recognize the preparation period as a special time of discernment and to pray for and with the engaged couple.
- 174 Visiting priests or deacons who have a relationship with the engaged couple are encouraged to participate in this preparation, as well as in the celebration of the marriage. Because the pastor is ultimately responsible to ensure that marriages are celebrated properly in his parish, he (or another member of the pastoral staff) should be consulted early in the marriage preparation process. Issues such as who is responsible for the necessary paperwork, marriage preparation, rehearsal, etc., should be discussed at that time. Ministers of other faiths can be welcomed and invited to participate.
- 175 Because of the many tasks and demands on both the parish minister and the engaged couple, time can be a difficulty. Yet, the importance of marriage preparation requires the efforts of both parties. To deal with the realities of time and to provide sufficient preparation, it is very important to devote adequate time to the marriage preparation sessions. These sessions are divided into two complementary components:
1. Involvement with the parish priest, pastoral coordinator, deacon, or pastoral associate who guides the couple in their overall preparation for marriage.
 2. Involvement with programs and sessions facilitated by trained teams that include married couples who witness Christian married life. The Diocese offers a variety of programs led by married couples and to which the parish pastoral minister may send the engaged for marriage preparation (see Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs, p.88). See Appendix C, p.96 for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly.
- 176 **Goal #3: To establish norms within the Code of Canon Law to allow couples adequate time to prepare for the Sacrament of Matrimony; To provide the pastor or pastoral minister and the engaged couple an opportunity to develop a relationship with one another; and to use a pastoral approach in determining the amount of time needed for the marriage preparation process.**

- 177 Guidelines: Formal marriage preparation should begin shortly after initial contact has been made, however Diocesan policy requires at least six months preparation time, unless there are special circumstances.
- 178 No firm date for a wedding should be set until the conclusion of the couple's first meeting with the parish minister. No date for a wedding may be set unless the parties are free to marry in the Catholic Church (see "Canonical Impediments" in Appendix A). While someone else often handles the recording of a date, only a person with proper pastoral training is able to determine freedom to marry and select a wedding date with the couple. Parish and Diocesan policies and procedures should be taken into account.
- 179 Discussion: Parish pastoral ministers should not impose a time frame arbitrarily or without consideration of the circumstances. Pastoral responsibility lends toward cultural sensitivity and consideration of family situations when determining how much time is necessary for good marriage preparation. This is not a waiting period but a time of preparation and often a time of restoration. Therefore, it may be appropriate in some instances to determine a period of preparation that is other than the recommended six to eight months.
- 180 In some instances, this may change the practices or procedures of particular parishes. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile change that can ensure a couple ample time to focus on and discuss the various facets of married life. It is, however inappropriate and canonically prohibited to directly deny a couple their natural and sacramental rights to marriage (canon 1077).
- 181 **Goal #4: To provide opportunities for the engaged couple to participate in the spiritual life of the Church.**
- 182 Guideline: The parish is where the engaged experience their relationship in the context of the Church. Therefore they should be invited to take part in the Mass and the other liturgical and devotional events and particularly to take advantage of the sacrament of penance as well as participating in the life of the parish. They should be included in prayers of the community. Inviting them to give witness to their commitment would serve the larger faith community.
- 183 Discussion: The period of engagement is a time of opportunity for the couple and the parish. It is an opportunity to evangelize and celebrate the engaged couple embarking on their faith journey of committed love. How the parish welcomes and includes the engaged is critical.
- 184 However, that inclusion should be more than just good hospitality. The parish is where the engaged experience their relationship in the context of a community of faith. Therefore they should be invited into the spiritual life of the parish. The parishioners should be aware of the couples that are preparing for marriage, so that they may pray for them and support them. This could be by including them in the prayers of the faithful, having a commitment ceremony for them, or blessing their engagement according to the *Book of Blessings*.
- 185 The parish can offer service opportunities, such as assisting in catechesis, working at a shelter, serving as ushers, etc. In this way the engaged may serve the community together. This service is not just for the good of the community; it is also for the benefit of the couple. They experience

transformation in their relationship and individually. With guided reflection by the parish minister, they derive meaning from their service experience that feeds their faith. This is an opportunity for adult faith formation.

- 186** **Goal #5: To present the parish as a resource that will assist the couple when they are facing difficult times in their marriage.**
- 187** Guideline: Despite the best efforts to marry well and offer support to married couples, divorce is a reality in our culture. Many of the couples getting married today have not seen a lifelong marriage in their own families. The daily challenges of being married often seem too much for the newly married couple.
- 188** Discussion: The greatest number of divorces occurs in the first five years of marriage. A couple in a troubled marriage often does not know what to do about it or they are too embarrassed to admit there are problems. The person who helps prepare them for this life together can also be available to them after the marriage. Letting the couple know during the time of preparation that there could be difficulties as they learn to adjust to married life and their new “family culture” gives them a connection to their preparation time with the pastoral minister and will invite them to seek help if needed. The pastoral minister is a helpful resource to solving many difficulties before they become huge problems, and potentially a source of comfort to them.
- 189** Each parish can have a list of resources such as Retrouvaille, counselors, AA, to offer to couples in trouble.

D. Responsibilities of the Engaged Couple

- 190 Goal #1: To participate actively in the marriage preparation process, not just for the wedding day, but to live out their Sacrament of Matrimony.**
- 191** Guideline: Commit sufficient time and attention to the marriage preparation process.
- 192** Discussion: The engaged couple is expected to take advantage of the unique opportunity presented at their marriage preparation program to be among other engaged couples during their own time of engagement. Their intentions to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony means that they understand that this moment will never happen again!
- 193** They should consider themselves “students of marriage” and be open to new learning. If the parish offers a mentoring program, the couple should be encouraged to participate. They should continue courting each other. The engagement period is a unique time of learning for the relationship; they shouldn’t focus only on the wedding day. The couple should begin to pray together, if they have not done so already, to nurture a common faith life.
- 194** The couple should be open to the invitations from the worshipping community to involve themselves in the life of the parish. They might consider taking on a service project together or consider getting involved *together* in one of the ministries of the parish. Perhaps they could volunteer at a parish-sponsored food pantry, homeless shelter, or soup kitchen.
- 195** The couple should also be introduced to the principles of stewardship. The parish marriage preparation minister could provide information about stewardship opportunities for couples.
- 196 Goal #2: To reflect on their relationship to the Catholic community.**
- 197** Guideline: Explore what it means to be married persons in the context of the Catholic Church.
- 198** Discussion: The Sacrament of Matrimony calls for a new relationship with the Church. Engaged couples should envision the role they will play within the faith community as married persons. There should be an expectation of something different because of the sacrament that redefines and transforms them. The marriage preparation minister should discuss this with the couple, since each couple will relate to the parish community in a unique way.
- 199** Becoming married is both leaving and cleaving. To cleave to and become one with each other, the couple must also leave their families of origin. The redefining of their social roles as a couple has already begun. The wedding clearly marks this, and establishes their new life in Christ. The reshaping of relationships often begins within their families of origin, particularly with their parents, and extends to friendships.
- 200** Entering the community of marriage also begins a new relationship with the faith community. The newly married couple cleaves to a redefined relationship with the Church. Becoming married is also a process of growing into their sacramental role with the Church.

- 201** This does not happen all at once. Though they will be *getting married* on a set date and time, their *becoming married* has already begun and will continue well into the marriage. The engagement period is a time to reflect on that becoming, the shifts and turns that are in progress, and the changes to be expected in their significant relationships.
- 202** Included in their reflections should be their role in the Church. Christian marriage is a public act of faith that speaks to the community. The engaged couple should ask themselves, “How will our marriage serve the people of God?” The engaged may need to discuss this with their pastoral minister or the married team at their marriage preparation program.

E. Preparation Process

- 203** The Diocese of Toledo recommends the following process for marriage preparation with optimum conditions and no special needs. It is presented as a guide for the pastoral minister to fashion his/her own outline with each couple. Pastors may determine who has responsibility and how to manage these contacts. Please remember that there are moments in a marriage where the Parish will touch (Canon 1063) the lives of the couple, and that is what is meant by “contacts.”
- 204** Often the initial contact is a staff person other than a pastoral minister. He/She should be hospitable and knowledgeable of diocesan and parish policies.

Contact I: Initial Meeting

- 205** The priest or deacon is the person responsible at this first meeting. The basic role of the pastoral minister during this first session involves assisting the couple in assessing their own readiness for marriage. As the Church’s witness to marriage, the priest/deacon/pastoral associate has a serious responsibility and should make sure in the first session that there are no serious obstacles, e.g., a previous marriage, to the creation of a Christian marriage. This could include processing any required canonical papers. Appendixes G, p. 169 and H, p. 176 would be very helpful to complete this evaluation.
- 206** However, most couples possess the emotional maturity and faith for marriage. The pastoral minister’s basic role, therefore, is to extend support and help a couple in their decision to marry. Included in that support should be instruction on the theology and spirituality of marriage.
- 207** In the initial meeting with the engaged couple, the goals of a priest/deacon/pastoral associate are to:
- Establish a rapport and relationship with the engaged couple and show concern for them. The same person should oversee the whole process with the engaged couple.
 - Create an atmosphere in which the couple can be motivated to sense the value of preparation and thus can commit themselves to it.
 - Assist the couple in beginning to assess their strengths and weaknesses in terms of the marriage relationship.
 - Help the couple examine their views and attitudes in light of the Gospel message. This is important for all and may be especially valuable for interfaith marriages where understanding each other’s faith traditions is helpful.
 - Explain to the engaged couple the canonical requirements to celebrate a Catholic wedding in a Catholic Church.
 - Give an overview of what the entire marriage preparation process will involve.
 - Explain the options available for marriage preparation programs, informing the couple what to expect from such a program, having informally assessed the needs of a couple.

- Arrange a date for the wedding, having determined that there are no canonical impediments to the couple marrying in the Church.

Contact II: Administration of a Premarital Inventory

- 208** The parish staff/member or marriage preparation team/trained *FOCCUS* facilitator is the person(s) responsible for this meeting time. A premarital inventory (see Ch. II, *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory, p. 90) is not a test or an instrument designed to measure the readiness of a couple for marriage. It is a means for allowing the couple, with the assistance of the marriage preparation minister(s), to explore and strengthen their relationship with each other before marriage. Couples are free to take a premarital inventory even before engagement. By denoting strengths and weaknesses in key areas, the premarital inventory can direct a couple to areas on which they may want to work in order to strengthen their relationship and build an even stronger marriage.
- 209** The first session of the premarital inventory is a general overview of the process and the actual completion of the inventory. The response sheets are sent for scoring and returned to the marriage preparation minister(s). (See Ch. II, *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory for where to send response sheets for scoring, p. 90.) This part of the premarital inventory can be done with a group of couples and can be facilitated by a variety of people, e.g., a pastoral minister or a married couple.

Contact III: Premarital Inventory Follow-up

- 210** At the third meeting, the parish staff/member or marriage preparation team is the responsible party. This meeting is a follow-up session with the engaged couple and the minister(s) in which they focus on the key areas for discussion. In most cases, this requires only one meeting. However, when several differences in critical areas are evident, it is appropriate to schedule more follow-up sessions.
- 211** If the premarital inventory uncovers major differences in critical areas between the couple, the minister(s) may suggest that the couple enter a period of discernment about how to proceed with the plans to marry. This may entail counseling—pastoral and/or psychological—which may be beyond the abilities of the parish minister. In such cases the couple should be referred to an appropriate professional counseling service. If the parish minister is not aware of a local professional counseling service, the Family Life Office will provide options for counseling services.
- 212** Having done the premarital inventory early in their preparation, the engaged couples bring a heightened awareness about their relationship to the other steps of their marriage preparation. Essentially, they are better prepared for the sessions with the pastoral minister and the couple-led programs that follow.

Contact IV: Attendance at a Marriage Preparation Program

- 213** Marriage Preparation programs enable couples to concentrate more intensely on the many facets of married life so they may be more aware of all the dimensions of marriage. The program helps engaged couples explore and determine the strengths and weaknesses of their relationship in terms

of their future life together.

- 214** The topics covered within the marriage preparation programs include such components as Family of Origin, effective communication, finance in marriage, married spirituality, intimacy that includes the topics of sexuality, Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness), domestic violence. Volunteer married couples and priests/deacons who are trained by the Diocese conduct these programs. Engaged couples may participate in their parish's marriage preparation program or one of the other Diocesan programs (see Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs, 88). It is presumed that parish ministers will explore some of these areas with the couple in greater depth. The FAITH INVENTORY and HUMAN SEXUALITY INVENTORY are available at the Family Life Office and continue to be strongly recommended tools for the Preparing Minister's use, but they do not take the place of the FOCCUS marriage inventory.

Contact V: Follow-up with the priest, deacon or the pastoral associate.

- 215** The priest/deacon/pastoral associate is the responsible person for this session. The fifth session he/she reviews the areas already covered by the couple during their preparation. The minister can discuss with the couple any aspects of their relationship that might need further development. This is also a time to affirm the positive aspects of their relationship that have been observed thus far in their marriage preparation period.
- 216** If not already completed, a minister will also spend time taking care of the necessary canonical papers, which have been explained in the initial meeting. These papers invite a discussion on the Church's view of marriage. Finally, the minister and couple can devote time to more specific planning of the wedding liturgy.

Contact VI: Rehearsal

- 217** The priest/deacon/pastoral associate or church volunteer will lead this session. See Chapter III, which deals with "Celebration."

Contact VII: Wedding

- 218** The priest/deacon/pastoral associate is responsible for the wedding ceremony. See Chapter III, which deals with "Celebration."

Contact VIII: Post-wedding follow-up

- 219** The period after a wedding presents a unique opportunity to continue the evangelization of a young couple. Sending a simple card of congratulations, together with a reminder that the Preparing Minister, the training couples, and, if the parish has one, the Marriage Enrichment Team, are all available to assist with settling the marriage into appropriate models of communication and growth can be a powerful way to remind the young couple that the parish, and its community of faithful, is supporting them. It's an opportunity as well to invite the couple, individually or as a couple, to become active participants in the Mission and Ministry of the parish. Often, young people will discover that marriage brings about radical changes and challenges, and a

“simple card” opens the doors for a continuing dialogue with the original Preparing Minister, or a specialized team, which can arrange to meet with and assist that couple in forming the lasting bond of matrimony and family their consent initiated. Often, issues of faith, finance, and sexuality prove to be daunting experiences and the help provided by the parish and its teams serves to settle the nerves, open the avenues of dialogue and communication, and assures that the marriage begun at the wedding ceremony becomes the marriage that empowers the couple and enlivens the parish.

- 220** The priest/deacon/pastoral associate, or parish mentor couple, leads this post-wedding follow-up Session A, which should be in the first year of marriage, preferably around six months, and deals with expectations, adjustments, and building strengths. See Chapter IV, which deals with “Continuing Education.”
- 221** A second post-wedding follow-up Session B is recommended. It should be near the end of the first year of marriage, and deals with finances, faith, and sexuality. See Chapter IV, which deals with “Continuing Education.”

F. Special Circumstances

222 Part of what a successful marriage requires of a couple is to be mature, responsible, and free. Christian marriage requires that the dimension of faith also be present in a couple's relationship. Since each couple is unique, there is no single, objective standard by which one can judge a couple's readiness to marry, nor guarantee the success of their marriage. However, specific, identifiable special circumstances may be present which indicate a need for further assessment and growth before the final decision is made to proceed with the marriage. The following are considered special circumstances.

Marriage after a Previous Bond

223 There are two situations possible:

1. One or both parties have had previous marriage declared null through the judicial process in a Tribunal; or
2. One or both parties have had a previous marriage, which is invalid due to lack of canonical form. (*Please note: Canonical form only applies to members of the Catholic or the Orthodox churches.*)

224 This section deals with situations where one or both parties have had a previous marriage that is invalid due to lack of canonical form.

225 It may be a temptation to breathe a sigh of relief when it is discovered that a previous marriage is invalid because of lack of canonical form. However, there are still certain issues that need to be considered. Divorce is no less traumatic for Catholics or the Orthodox who had married outside their respective churches than it is for those who married according to their proper form. While the ecclesiastical issues may be different, the emotional issues are the same. In addition, there may be certain moral responsibilities that remain toward a former spouse or toward children. These are responsibilities that cannot be "annulled" by any decision of the Church.

Procedure

226 In dealing with couples preparing for marriage where one or both had previous unions that are invalid due to lack of canonical form, the following areas ought to be explored:

1. How long ago did the civil divorce occur?
2. Is the future spouse aware of what went on during the former marriage, and what factors entered into its breakdown? Was this information only from the future spouse, or has it come from other sources as well?
3. Are there any continuing obligations toward children of that marriage? How are these being met? These obligations are not limited to financial obligations. They include all aspects of parenting and of raising the children in the faith.

4. What will be done to cooperate in the religious upbringing of the children of a previous union?
5. How does the party who has not been married before feel about issues of child support or alimony? About the terms of the visitation rights?
6. Has the couple discussed how the presence of children from a previous marriage might affect any children they might have of their own marriage? For example, how will the exercise of visitation rights, the payment of child support/alimony, and the cooperation in the educational and religious upbringing affect future family life?
7. If a previous marriage involved physical, emotional, sexual, or substance abuse, how are those experiences affecting their present relationship?
8. How will the couple handle discipline and decision-making for stepchildren and biological children?
9. Did the person receive any counseling after the divorce? If not, are there areas of their present relationship that need further exploration?
10. What fears does the divorced party bring to the new marriage?
11. What fears does the party who has not experienced divorce bring to the new marriage?
12. Are there issues of anger toward a former spouse that need to be resolved, either by the divorced person or by that person's future spouse?
13. **If the former spouse and children are living in another country**, it is especially important to ask how they are being supported. Many times the civil divorce, especially if it is obtained here, does not adequately address these issues. The Church has a particular responsibility to see to it that people are not forced into poverty due to the neglect of a former spouse.

227 It is especially critical that the issue of children from a previous marriage is discussed thoroughly. Sometimes this gets into thorny issues, such as "I don't pay child support because she won't let me see my kids." Try to keep the court issues separate from the moral responsibilities. The courts can only decide court issues. Moral responsibilities exist beyond the limits imposed by the courts.

228 One further note: The Church states that parents have the responsibility of providing a Catholic education for their children. This applies to children born of any union, since it is a parental responsibility. Therefore, it is perfectly legitimate to ask the Catholic party who has been married before and who has children from that union how he or she is providing for the Catholic education of their children.

Preparation

229 The couple should be encouraged to take the *FOCCUS* premarital inventory and attend a PreCana II or other appropriate marriage preparation program in addition to the preparation you will do with them.

Paperwork

230 For the marriages of Catholics or the Orthodox that have taken place outside their respective

churches, the form entitled “Declaration of Nullity for Marriage attempted outside the Church” should be used. The instructions are printed on the form itself. These forms are available from the Diocese of Toledo Tribunal (see Appendix I). After they are filled out, the forms should be sent to the Diocese of Toledo Tribunal.

- 231 Non-Catholics who were married to a Catholic outside the Catholic Church (and where no dispensation from canonical form had been issued) can also use this form. However, they must be able to prove the Catholic baptism of their former spouse, either through a baptismal certificate or the affidavits of people who know for certain about the Catholic baptism. The same holds true for marriages involving the Orthodox that took place outside the Orthodox party’s church.

Marriage after the Death of a Spouse

- 232 When a widow or widower contemplates remarriage, all the issues of a first marriage complicate the decision, along with other issues faced by those remarrying after a declaration of nullity.

Procedure

- 233 Some of the more crucial questions are:

1. How long has it been since the bereavement? Has the widow or widower done the necessary grief work? Did the new relationship interrupt that work?
2. Are there children? Have they adequately mourned the death of the deceased parent?
3. What is the status of the prospective spouse? If widowed, the above questions also apply.
4. If the prospective spouse is divorced, is there a declaration of nullity?
5. If there are children, what are their attitudes? Has the divorced person taken time to mourn the loss of the marriage?
6. Will the new marriage require a geographical move? Have both partners considered the losses, physical, emotional, and spiritual, that moving will bring? Are both families prepared to accept those losses?
7. Do the prospective partners share the faith? If not, what issues will the difference raise?
8. Will one or both of the partners change employment because of the new marriage? Will there be a significant economic impact?
9. Are children from the new relationship a possibility? A probability? Are both partners open to having more children?
10. How will the couple handle discipline and decision-making for stepchildren and biological children?
11. How does the party who has not been married before feel about issues of child-rearing and support?
12. Were there substance abuse and/or domestic violence in either previous marriage?
13. What fears does each person have for his/her new life ahead?

Preparation

- 234 The procedure above states only a few of the concerns couples face when considering remarriage. These and many others make the need for attendance at specialized marriage preparation programs for remarriage essential. Use of the *FOCCUS* premarital inventory is highly recommended. (There are special adapted versions for previously married couples. Contact the Family Life Office). The couple that has children should be recommended to the PreCana II program, which deals with stepfamily situations. However, the couple with children who resist the idea of remarriage for their parent might be well advised to consider family counseling involving all parties prior to remarriage.
- 235 Not every problem that may surface during a remarriage can be foreseen. Remarriage has very different realities and adjustments than first-time marriages. However, that which can be foreseen should be addressed prior to rather than after remarriage.

Paperwork

- 236 No paperwork is required for this situation.

Marriage after a Declaration of Nullity from the Tribunal

- 237 If the person has gone through a judicial marriage nullity process (through the Tribunal), some of the issues will have been dealt with through the Tribunal process.
- 238 However, the Church is still concerned about the responsibilities, which one or both parties may have toward children of their previous marriage or toward their former spouse.

Procedure

- 239 Since not all the issues may have been explored through the marriage nullity process, it would be important to ask the couple to discuss the following questions:
1. How long ago did the civil divorce occur?
 2. Is the future spouse aware of what went on during the former marriage, and what factors entered into its breakdown? Was this information only from the future spouse, or has it come from other sources as well?
 3. Are there any continuing obligations toward children of that marriage? How are these being met? These obligations are not limited to financial obligations. They include all aspects of parenting and of raising the children in the faith.
 4. What will be done to cooperate in the religious upbringing of the children of a previous union?
 5. How does the party who has not been married before feel about issues of child support or alimony? About the terms of the visitation rights?
 6. Have they discussed how the presence of children from a previous marriage might affect any

children they might have of their own marriage? For example: How will the exercise of visitation rights, the payment of child support/alimony, the cooperation in the educational and religious upbringing affect future family life?

7. How will the couple handle discipline and decision-making for stepchildren and biological children?
8. If a previous marriage involved physical, emotional, sexual, or substance abuse, how are those experiences affecting their present relationship?
9. Did the person receive any counseling after the divorce? If not, are there areas of their present relationship that need further exploration?
10. What fears does the divorced party bring to the new marriage?
11. What fears does the party who has not experienced divorce bring to the new marriage?
12. Are there issues of anger toward a former spouse that need to be resolved, either by the divorced person or by that person's future spouse?
13. If the former spouse and children are living in another country, it is especially important to ask how they are being supported. Many times the civil divorce, especially if it is obtained here, does not adequately address these issues. The Church has a particular responsibility to see to it that people are not forced into poverty due to the neglect of a former spouse.

240 It is especially critical that the issue of children from a previous marriage is discussed thoroughly. Sometimes this gets into thorny issues, such as "I don't pay child support because she won't let me see my kids." Try to keep the court issues separate from the moral responsibilities. The courts can only decide court issues. Moral responsibilities exist beyond the limits imposed by the courts.

241 One further note: Church Law states that parents have the responsibility of providing a Catholic education for their children. This is not limited to children born of a valid marriage; it applies to children born of any union, since it is a parental responsibility. Therefore, it is perfectly legitimate to ask the Catholic party who has been married before and who has children from that union how he or she is providing for the Catholic education of their children, including such things as child support financially as well as morally.

Preparation

242 The couple should attend a Cana II; in addition to the preparation that pastoral minister provides them. Also, *FOCCUS* offers a special section for couples that have been married previously.

243 It may happen that the Tribunal has placed a **restriction** (sometimes called a **prohibition**, a **rider**, or a **vetitum**) on the person. This means that issues came to light during the Tribunal process, which would indicate that the person is at risk for entering into marriage. It could also mean that the person is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities toward the children, or that the person has demonstrated an understanding of marriage that is greatly at odds with the Church's teaching on marriage. This prohibition is stated in the final letter to the person as well as the decree from the Tribunal. It should also appear on the person's baptismal record.

244 If there is a **prohibition** attached to a decree of nullity, the person assisting the couple in marriage preparation must contact the Office of the Episcopal Vicar *no less than four months before the wedding*. In general, some sort of counseling is usually necessary in order for the prohibition to be lifted. This counseling may be either psychological or pastoral. The Tribunal never places prohibitions on people for trivial reasons, so the fact that a prohibition is attached to a decree of nullity should always be taken seriously.

Paperwork

245 Regardless of whether a dispensation is needed, the marriage papers, including the decree of nullity, should be sent to the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for a “*nihil obstat*.”

246 Since it is possible that decrees of nullity can be forged, please note that the Toledo Tribunal will emboss its seal, as will most other diocese Tribunals.

Children from a Previous (Non-Marital) Relationship

247 It is not unheard of today for people who have never been married before to have children from previous relationships. Regardless of any uncertainties with legal responsibilities, there are certainly moral ones. The Church cannot neglect to remind people of their moral responsibilities, especially at a time when they are taking on new ones.

Procedure

248 With this in mind, the following questions ought to be asked:

1. Is the future spouse aware of the responsibilities you have from your previous relationship?
2. How long ago did that relationship end?
3. What is the current relationship with the parent of the son or daughter?
4. Is the future spouse aware of what went on during the former relationship, and what factors entered into its breakdown? Was this information only from the future spouse, or has it come from other sources as well?
5. How are the obligations toward the former partner and children being met? These obligations are not limited to financial obligations. They include all aspects of parenting and of raising the children in the faith. They also include issues of justice toward the former partner.
6. What is being done to cooperate in the religious upbringing of the children of a previous relationship?
7. How does the other party feel about the person’s responsibilities toward the previous partner or children?
8. Have they discussed how the presence of children from a previous relationship might affect any children they might have of their own marriage? For example: How will the exercise of visitation rights, the payment of money to support the child or the former partner, the cooperation in the educational and religious upbringing affect future family life?

9. If a previous relationship involved physical, emotional, sexual, or substance abuse, how are those experiences affecting their present relationship?
10. Are there any issues of anger or resentment toward the mother/father of your child that need to be resolved, either by you or your spouse?
11. If the former partner and child are living in another country, it is especially important to ask how they are being supported. The Church has a particular responsibility to see to it that people are not forced into poverty due to the neglect of a former partner.

249 It is especially critical that the issue of children from a previous relationship is discussed thoroughly. Sometimes this gets into very emotional issues. It might seem that this is none of the Church's business, since the party is now seeking to start life anew. However, there are issues of justice present here that cannot be neglected. The Church has every right to ensure that justice is being done, and that previous responsibilities are being fulfilled before new ones begin.

250 One further note: The Church states that parents have the responsibility of providing a Catholic education for their children. This is not limited to children born of a valid marriage; it applies to children born of any type of relationship, since it is a *parental* responsibility. Therefore, it is perfectly legitimate to ask the Catholic party who has a child from a previous relationship how he or she is providing for the Catholic education of their children.

Preparation

251 Couples should attend a PreCana II, in addition to your own preparation with them.

Paperwork

252 Canon 1071 §1, 3° states that "a marriage of a person who is bound by natural obligations toward another party or toward children, arising from a prior union," is to receive the permission of the local ordinary. Marriage papers should be sent to the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for a "*nihil obstat*," with a cover letter explaining how these obligations are being met.

Canonical Impediments

253 There are a number of canonical impediments to marriage, some of which are of divine law (and hence are not subject to dispensation), and some of which can be dispensed. Appendix A contains a detailed list of "Individual Diriment Impediments."

Procedure

254 When an impediment is discovered, it will be necessary to explain to the couple that it is not possible to set a wedding date until the impediment is dispensed or otherwise ceases to exist. Please be aware that any indication on your part about a wedding date, no matter how tentatively you explain it ("pencil it in," "hold the date," etc.), can be misinterpreted by the couple to mean that their wedding will take place on that date. It may be difficult to inform a couple that they cannot set a date. Likewise, it may be difficult for the couple to accept. Nonetheless, it can save a

lot of future difficulties, even legal ones, by not providing a date for people who are not free to marry in the Church.

Preparation

- 255** While waiting for the dispensation or cessation of the impediment, the couple can still engage in the marriage preparation program which most suits their situation (see Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs, p.88) and/or participate in counseling as necessary.

Paperwork

- 256** Impediments which are of ecclesiastical law (and which only affect Catholics) can be dispensed. The Diocese can give most of these dispensations, although some are reserved to the Holy See (such as a dispensation from sacred orders or religious profession). Those dispensations, which can be granted through the Diocese of Toledo, are listed on the “Dispensations” form, which is available from the Diocese of Toledo Chancery. *Both the right and the left sides of the form should be filled out.* After the form has been filled out, it is sent with all the other marriage papers to the Diocese of Toledo Chancery. For dispensations that are reserved to the Holy See, please contact the Diocese of Toledo Tribunal for assistance.

Cohabitation

- 257** While cohabitation is not an impediment to marriage, it will require more intensive marriage preparation and perhaps an extended period of time for the preparation. Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, has stated:
- 258** The pastors and the ecclesial community should take care to become acquainted with such situations and their actual causes, case by case. They should make tactful and respectful contact with the couples concerned, and enlighten them patiently, correct them charitably and show them the witness of Christian family life, in such a way as to smooth the path for them to regularize their situation...
- 259** Thus it would hardly seem possible to turn such couples away and close the door to any possibility of regularizing their situation. Rather, the Church must reach out to such couples, treat them with understanding, and gradually help them to understand how their situation is a contradiction to Church teaching.
- 260** It is not possible to have a “one size fits all” policy with regard to cohabitation, since the Holy Father has urged that each situation be assessed individually. Therefore, pastors are urged to treat each cohabiting couple as their unique situation deserves. This is not an invitation to compromise Church teaching on the subject. It is simply a reminder that we must apply that teaching with equity (which is justice tempered by mercy).
- 261** In discussing the matter with couples, it is important for everyone to deal honestly with each other. The subject cannot simply be ignored, since this gives the impression that the Church condones cohabitation or at least is willing to tolerate it. It also prevents the couple from exploring their own relationship in light of the Church’s teaching, and reflecting on what their new relationship “in the

Lord” is going to be.

- 262** Marriage in the Lord is more than just a lifestyle; it is certainly more than just one lifestyle among many. It is a unique and permanent way of living, which indicates the couple’s relationship to the Christian community. While they are just living together, they are not that sign to the community of the faithful, fruitful, committed love of God in our midst. When they join themselves together in marriage, they become that sign. Therefore, they need to reflect even more upon the decision they are making to “marry in the Lord.”

Procedure

- 263** In discussing cohabitation with the couple, the following questions might be asked:
1. How long have they known each other?
 2. What were the reasons that led them to cohabit? (If these reasons include escape from a violent, abusive, or otherwise dysfunctional home environment, the effects of this home environment may have some affect on the person’s decision to enter into marriage, or their ability to do so. The person may wish to explore these issues with a counselor.)
 3. What have been their experiences of each other during the time they have lived together? In other words, how stable has the relationship been? Have there been any instances of infidelity, physical abuse, or substance abuse? Have there been times when they did not live together or wished they did not live together?
 4. How well do they understand that the way they are living is contrary to the Church’s teaching and practice?
 5. What is it that made them decide that living together was not sufficient and that they wanted to get married?
 6. What is it that made them want to marry “in the Lord,” rather than go through a civil ceremony?
 7. How will “being married” be different from “living together”?
 8. How are they going to mark that difference? (Living apart from each other until after the wedding? Together participating in or supporting a charitable organization? Any other ways that might mark the difference?)
 9. Is there any sense that being married will “fix up” a relationship that is going badly or “spice up” a relationship that has gone stale?
 10. Is there any pressure being exerted from family?
 11. Are there any immigration or naturalization considerations present in the decision to marry?
 12. Are there any fears that are driving their decision to marry?
 13. Are there any external factors that are driving their decision to marry (for example, a pregnancy, the need for life or health insurance, a job transfer, military deployment, etc.)?

Preparation

- 264 The Preparing Minister should be aware that many couples that are cohabiting have an extremely low tolerance for commitment and indissolubility, and the Church's teachings regarding these issues must be seriously underscored. The couple should attend Cana II in addition to the preparation that they receive with the pastoral minister.

Paperwork

- 265 There is no additional paperwork that needs to be submitted to the Diocese of Toledo Tribunal, unless a dispensation from an impediment is necessary.

Persons with Mental Illness

- 266 Mental illnesses (not to be confused with developmental disability) are brain disorders of a biological nature that can alter mood and/or rational thought processes. The most disabling of these illnesses include schizophrenia, bipolar (also called manic-depression), and major depression. However, because of recent discoveries of very effective medications, many of those who suffer from these illnesses can now have successful, productive, and healthy lives that include marriage, with only mild to moderate effects of their illness remaining.
- 267 On the other hand, other, usually less disabling illnesses, such as phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and anxiety attacks, anorexia, personality disorders, and post-traumatic disorder vary in their severity and can seriously disrupt married life.
- 268 Because of past experiences of stigma, persons with mental illness may be reluctant to provide necessary information when asked about their illness. They need to be reassured at the very beginning that mental illness in itself is not an impediment to marriage. It still presents, however, many extra issues that can be challenging in a marriage. It is important to reassure couples that the Church's only motive in asking is to be of support to them in their decision to marry. Failure to do so may likely result in their concealing their illness from the pastoral minister entirely.

Procedure

- 269 Since both marriage partners must be well informed about the illness, its symptoms and its effects, the following questions would be appropriate:
1. Are both partners well informed about the illness and its symptoms?
 2. Is either in denial about the illness or about its effects on married life?
 3. How severe or persistent are the symptoms? How well do these respond to medical treatment?
 4. Even with the best of medical treatments, some of these effects may remain: fatigue, reduced motivation, social withdrawal, low self-esteem, impulsiveness. Is the couple aware of any of these, and how can they be of help to each other when and if these symptoms occur?
 5. Do both partners understand that even when feeling perfectly well, medical treatment must be

adhered to strictly? What has been the history of compliance?

6. Have they worked out a plan of what to do if the symptoms cannot be controlled? Will he or she allow the partner to be part of medical consultations and decisions?
7. Are their expectations (job, future, marriage, children, etc.) realistic in keeping stress levels manageable?
8. Does the person ever use street drugs or alcohol? Do they understand that alcohol and street drugs, even in relatively small amounts, can alter the effectiveness of their medications (even to the point of making it impossible to control the symptoms of their illness)?
9. Because medical treatment for mental illness can be very costly, do they know specifically to what their total medical costs will amount? How will these medical costs impact their overall budget?
10. How often has this person changed jobs? Is the partner willing to be the main provider should there be an interruption in employment? Could they manage on one salary?
11. What are their views about God, faith, and the Church? Do they understand that this illness was not a curse or a punishment from God?

Preparation

- 270** In addition to discussing the above questions with the couple, the pastoral minister should advise the couple to acquaint themselves with local professional mental health resources.

Paperwork

- 271** On the pre-nuptial form, there is a question about mental illness. If one or both parties have been treated for such illnesses in the past, the pastoral minister should make note of the results of the above conversation. Unless a dispensation is needed, there is no need to send the papers to the Diocese of Toledo Tribunal.

Weddings Taking Place in Other Dioceses

- 272** In an increasing number of cases, couples are getting married outside of the Diocese of Toledo. Sometimes this is for practical reasons (their families live elsewhere and they wish to be married in the community where they were raised). At other times, it is because they wish to celebrate their marriage in a certain setting.
- 273** The importance of a community of faith needs to be explained to the couple. A wedding is not merely for the couple themselves. It is a statement to the faith community, and also a promise from that community. It is for this reason that the Church says that couples are to get married in either the parish of the bride or the parish of the groom. If they are going to get married elsewhere, their proper pastors need to give permission.
- 274** See Appendix I for sample letter of Suitability for Clerics/Letter of Delegation for Weddings. These are required for any priest/deacon celebrating a wedding outside of the parish they are

assigned.

Procedure

- 275** Marriage preparation would take place as usual, but it will be necessary to complete all the marriage papers as soon as possible. Couples should be made aware of the fact that requirements for marriage differ in other dioceses and other countries. It is the couple's responsibility to find out what will be required of them according to the civil law, diocesan regulations, and parish policies of the place where they are marrying. The Diocese of Toledo cannot demand that other dioceses conform to our policies; the couple must conform to theirs.
- 276** If the couple is getting married elsewhere in order to avoid a law in the State of Ohio (such as the law prohibiting the marriage of first cousins), they should check with a civil lawyer to see if there are any civil law consequences of their action.
- 277** If the couple plans to marry in a location where neither of their families lives, the following questions would be appropriate:
1. Who is going to be able to attend the wedding ceremony?
 2. Are they making reasonable requests of family members or friends to attend the wedding?
 3. What do they imagine will be the effect upon the members of their families who
 4. will not be able to attend?
 5. What do they imagine will be the effect upon them if not all of the family is able to
 6. be present? Try to get the couple to imagine, not just the setting of their wedding, but taking this most important step in their lives with only a few people present. (Some couples have expressed disappointment afterwards when they realized they were getting married in a church that was nearly empty.)
- 278** It would also be appropriate to discuss the couple's relationship with the Church and their membership in a parish, since they will be getting married far from that community.

Preparation

- 279** In addition to your own preparation with the couple, they should attend the marriage preparation program that best suits their situation (see Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs).

Paperwork

- 280** All the requirements for marriage papers in the diocese where the marriage is to take place must be met. The fact that such papers are not required in the Diocese of Toledo does not mean they are not required elsewhere. If the couple is unsure of what is being asked for, you can contact the Diocese of Toledo Chancery.

- 281 The marriage papers must be sent to the Diocese of Toledo Chancery. The Bishop of the Catholic party must grant any dispensations. The papers are then sent to the diocese where the marriage is to take place, which will review the papers and send them on to the parish where the marriage is going to take place.
- 282 *Please make copies of all the papers before you send them to the Diocese of Toledo Chancery.* Depending on the country where the marriage is taking place, it may be easier if the couple hand-carries the papers there when they go for their wedding.
- 283 At times, only one party is here; the other party either lives in another country or has returned there to make wedding preparations. In that case, you may only be filling out half of the pre-nuptial questionnaire, with the other half being filled out when the person arrives in the country where they are to be married. In that case, send the papers to the Diocese of Toledo Chancery for a “*nihil obstat*.” The papers will be returned to you so that the person can take them with them when they go for their wedding.

Convalidation (“Blessing the Marriage”) vs. Sanation

- 284 There’s no right word for this phenomenon. Canonically, it’s called convalidation; however, most couples will refer to it as “getting our marriage blessed by the Church.”
- 285 Most often, it will be encountered when a couple has entered into a civil union, or been married at another church, and the Catholic party wishes to get things right with the Church. In the Church’s Law, that earlier marriage may not be recognized; however, there is probably *some sort of commitment* which they made to one another, and some sort of moral responsibilities which they understand flow from that commitment. In order to rectify the situation, it is necessary to determine how much of a commitment, and to what object the parties have given their consent.
- 286 Since their status with the Church is problematic, the Pastor/Pastoral Leader will want to ascertain what steps are necessary in order to provide the couple with proper “Catholic” remediation. There are two possible avenues to pursue with the couple, the formal convalidation, or a retroactive validation of their original consent, wherever it may have been celebrated. These are two very different approaches, which require different pastoral treatment.
- 287 Marriage requires an act of consent, and it must be to marriage in the here and now. It can only be given once. In order to discover which of the two processes to employ, it is necessary to find out from the couple whether they plan to make a “new act of the will” with regard to the “blessing” they have come to receive. A couple of simple questions will suffice to know how they really feel about their original consent.

When you married at the _____, did you feel as if God were binding you to a permanent, faithful and family-oriented relationship? Was it a real marriage to which God now holds you accountable?

- 288 If the couple answers, “Well, yes, we got married,” then the Pastor/Preparing Minister ought to at least suspect that there would be no “new act of the will,” only a renewal of what has already been

exchanged. In this case, the retroactive validation, called a sanation, or *sanatio in radice*, would be the appropriate way to handle the Church's response. Since the couple believes themselves truly and genuinely married, they cannot give new consent to marriage. The sanation requires whatever preparatory steps the Preparing Minister feels adequate to assisting the couple in more fully understanding the relationship formed at consent, and an application to the Bishop on the appropriate form so that he can issue the Decree which, in effect, recognizes the same ceremony the couple recognizes as having begun their marriage. There is no ceremony involved since the couple are already married, and this may call for sensitivity in explaining what is happening and meeting the needs of the Catholic party for some kind of external manifestation of their renewed participation in the Church. It can be a challenging time for both the couple and the Assisting Minister since no "wedding" or wedding-like celebration can take place.

- 289** If the couple answers, "Well, no, we're only living together and need the marriage of the Church," then the answer is a formal ceremony to convalidate consent. This act must be to a marriage, which both parties feel/admit is not a genuine marriage. Where even one feels or believes that he or she is truly married, going through a ceremony to elicit consent would be a fraud, and that's invalid. However, having ascertained that the couple really feels "unmarried" and not merely unblest, or at odds with the Church's stand on marriage, all of the preparation steps required for marriage can and perhaps should come into play, with appropriate accommodation for the length of time the couple has been living together since their civil/non-Catholic religious ceremony.
- 290** *While regularization of marriage is a laudable goal, and there are moments when it can be suggested to a couple, please note that no one can force a couple to regularize what the Priest, Pastoral Leader, Deacon or an other Minister of the Church may feel ought to be regularized. Thus, if a couple comes with a child seeking baptism, and it is discovered that the couple were only civilly married, it could be suggested that they think about convalidation/sanation; however, the regularization of their marriage cannot be a deciding factor in whether that other sacrament is to take place since the use of force destroys their freedom to give consent. Baptizing a child can only be delayed or postponed, and then only where there is no "founded hope" that the child would be raised a Catholic.*
- 291** Remember, if even one of the parties believes that his or her original consent was to marriage as a permanent relationship, which could result in children and family, you cannot do a convalidation, there can be no "Catholic wedding." Where the convalidation is requested, and appropriate, the couple should be adequately prepared as if there had been no previous marriage.

Procedure

- 292** Just like with any marriage, the couple must have the proper capacity, knowledge, and intention for entering into marriage. They also must be giving their consent freely. The fact that they have been living together for a period of time does not necessarily mean that they understand what Christian marriage is or that they are freely choosing it. Once their marriage takes place in the Church, they will have a new relationship with the Christian community. It would be good to explore this aspect of their relationship further.
- 293** The other thing that happens in a convalidation is that the partners are bound to each other in a

different way. This, too, needs to be explored with the couple.

- 294 It will also be necessary to explain to the couple that this is their one, true marriage. The other exchange of consent established something like marriage, but it is this marriage in the Lord that creates a true marriage bond.
- 295 Some other areas you might want to explore are:
1. What were the events leading up to their marriage outside the Church?
 2. What contributed to their decision not to marry in the Church, but to marry elsewhere?
 3. How would they describe their marriage up to this point? Have there been any major arguments or break-ups? Were there any instances of infidelity? Were there any instances of physical abuse or substance abuse?
 4. If they have children, how would they describe themselves and how would they describe each other as parents?
 5. If they already have children, are they being raised in the Catholic faith?
 6. If they already have children, you will also need to explore issues regarding an intention against having more children. When couples convalidate their marriage, they must have the same intention as any other couple entering into marriage; that is, to enter into a faithful, fruitful, abiding relationship.
 7. Explore the issues of permanence, since this will be a commitment to a permanent relationship. Their marriage outside the Church was not necessarily a commitment to a permanent relationship, since the state gives both parties the right to end the marriage at any time.
 8. What made them decide to enter into marriage in the Church? Were there any external factors present in their decision, such as parental pressure, the birth of a child, problems in the relationship that they believe “God’s blessing” will cure, etc.?
 9. What do they think will be different about their relationship after their Church marriage?

Preparation

- 296 Couples who recently (up to six months) entered into a civil marriage should attend PreCana in addition to your own preparation. Couples who have been civilly married for a longer period of time (more than six months) may wish to attend a Marriage Encounter or a similar marriage enrichment program in order to prepare for the convalidation of their marriage.

Paperwork

- 297 Fill out paperwork as required for a regular wedding.

Marriage to a Member of another Christian Church

- 298 Marriages between a Catholic and a baptized Christian who is not in full communion with the

Catholic Church (e.g., Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, etc.) are called mixed marriages. Where two non-Catholics are both validly baptized, the Catholic Church considers such marriages to be sacramental. See Glossary: “Mixed Marriage.”

- 299** Marriages between Roman (Latin) Catholics and Eastern Catholics are not mixed marriages. See the next section “Marriage to a member of an Orthodox Church” for information about Roman Catholic-Eastern Catholic marriages.

Procedure

- 300** The difficulties of mixed marriage must not be underestimated. Differences about faith and the very notion of marriage but also different religious mentalities can become sources of tension in marriage, especially as regards the education of children. The temptation to religious indifference can then arise (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1634).
- 301** If possible, the Catholic minister should take steps to establish contacts with the minister of the other church or ecclesial community. In general, mutual consultation between Christian pastors for supporting such marriages can be a fruitful field of ecumenical collaboration.
- 302** Since for validity where one or both partners are Catholic, the marriage has to be contracted in the presence of the Ordinary, parish pastor, the priest, or deacon delegated by either of them (Canon 1108), the Catholic canonical form is to be observed also for mixed marriages (Canon 1127). However the Ordinary of the place for grave reasons, and without prejudice to the law of the Eastern Churches, can dispense the Catholic partner from the observance of the canonical form in individual cases. See the *Ecumenical Directory*, 153, 154 (the reasons to justify such a dispensation are listed), and 155. If a dispensation from the canonical form has been given, it is still required for validity that there be some form of public celebration (see Canon 1127, 2).
- 303** If a dispensation from the canonical form has been obtained and if invited to do so, a Catholic priest or deacon may attend or participate in the celebration of a mixed marriage at another Christian church by offering prayers, reading from Scripture, or giving a brief exhortation, but may not receive the vows of the bride and groom. Alternately, if the Catholic priest or deacon will be presiding, he may, upon the request of the couple, invite the minister of the non-Catholic party to participate in the marriage ceremony. In any case there may be only one ceremony in which the presiding person receives the marriage vows.
- 304** Mixed marriages ordinarily follow *The Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass*. The Eucharist is a symbol of unity, and celebrating a Christian marriage at Mass may make the celebration awkward for both parties by highlighting their differences in faith. If circumstances justify it and the non-Catholic party agrees to their having a Mass, *The Rite for Celebrating Marriage within Mass* may be used. However, it must be stressed that should there be a Mass, directives of The Ecumenical Directory (159/160) and the Code of Canon Law (Canon 844) concerning reception of the Eucharist are to be observed. Couples should consult with their priest about this delicate matter.

Preparation

- 305** Those assisting with marriage preparation should be sensitive to the uniqueness of each denomination; a Catholic-Lutheran couple faces a different set of issues than a Catholic-Pentecostal couple. The Family Life Office has a number of booklets that will assist in marriage preparation in a variety of situations (Catholic-Lutheran, Catholic-Methodist, etc.). Please call the Family Life Office for a complete listing.

Paperwork

- 306** Whether the obligatory Catholic canonical form is being followed, or if a dispensation has been duly requested and obtained, (Diocese of Toledo Pastoral Policy Handbook) the marriage papers should be filled out in the Catholic party's parish as if the marriage were taking place there. A dispensation from canonical form should be requested (*Diocese of Toledo Pastoral Policy Handbook*).
- 307** In all mixed marriages, permission must be granted by the parish priest or deacon for a mixed marriage. To obtain permission, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm in some way (verbally or in writing) that he or she will do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage are baptized and educated in the Catholic faith. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities; the non-Catholic partner may feel a similar obligation because of his/her own Christian commitment. No formal written or oral promise is required of the non-Catholic partner. In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family. It is important that during the marriage preparation, both partners together discuss the Catholic baptism and education of the children they will have, and, where possible, come to a decision on this question before marriage (*Ecumenical Directory* 150).

Marriage to a Member of an Orthodox Church

Eastern Christianity differs from Western Christianity in more than just ritual. The following are four questions with answers for you.

- 308** What's special about marrying an Orthodox Christian?

From the Catholic point of view, the Orthodox churches occupy an exceptional place. In fact, the *Decree on Ecumenism* (a document of the Second Vatican Council concerning our relations with other Christians) says that these churches are special because they have preserved the ancient traditions that came down to us from the Apostles. Most importantly, they “possess true sacraments, above all—by apostolic succession---the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closet intimacy” (*Decree on Ecumenism, no. 15*). The fact that we celebrate the same sacraments as the Orthodox churches puts them in a special category, closer to us than the ecclesial communities that sprang from the Protestant Reformation.

Still, some theological matters continue to divide us. Most importantly, Orthodox churches do not

accept Catholic teachings regarding the primacy and infallibility of the Pope. And while Catholics and Orthodoxy together believe that Christian marriage is a sacrament, we differ regarding the possibility of divorce and remarriage, as well as who is the minister of the sacrament. Roman Catholics believe the two people getting married are the ministers of the sacrament, while Orthodox and Eastern Catholics believe the minister is the priest.

In recent decades, growing closeness between our churches has been shown in various ways. Popes and heads of Orthodox churches have exchanged visits and signed common declarations and international theological dialogues have been established to work to overcome what still divides us. As early as 1971, Pope Paul VI spoke of the “almost perfect communion” that exists between Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

309 What churches are we talking about?

Three groups of churches fall into the Orthodox category. By far the largest is the communion of churches known as *Eastern Orthodox* or simply as the *Orthodox Church*. These are the churches of the Byzantine tradition---including the great Russian, Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Serbian Orthodox churches, and several others---that look to the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople as a point of unity. The next group is the family of six *Oriental Orthodox Churches*: the Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Malan Kara (or Indian) Orthodox churches. The third group is the *Assyrian Church of the East*, an ancient church centered in modern-day Iraq and Iran. The great majority of the churches of all three groups make provision for their faithful to marry Catholics. The exceptions are the Coptic, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Malan Kara (Indian) Oriental Orthodox Churches, which do not bless interchurch marriages under any circumstances.

310 What kind of preparation do we need to marry?

In keeping with the friendly relationship between our churches, a Catholic-Orthodox couple considering marriage should work closely with both of their pastors regarding appropriate marriage preparation courses. Each will also need to obtain the permission of his or her local bishop (or his delegate) to marry the other, and the Catholic will need a special dispensation from the Catholic bishop if the wedding is to take place before an Orthodoxy priest. During this process, the Catholic will be asked to state that he or she intends to remain a Catholic. The dispensation to marry in an Orthodox service is necessary only for the lawfulness of the marriage. If it takes place without the dispensation, the Catholic Church still considers the marriage to be valid if both parties were free to marry.

As a general rule, the Orthodox does not allow their faithful to be married in a non-Orthodox ceremony. For example, the dialogue between Catholics and Eastern Orthodox in the United States has recommended that all weddings between their faithful take place in an Eastern Orthodox ceremony, since this is the only way the Orthodox party can remain in good standing in his or her church. If the Orthodox party does not practice his or her faith a Catholic ceremony might be the better option.

311 What about the upbringing of children?

The couple should address this sensitive question before the wedding. In the course of preparing for marriage, each party is likely to be asked to promise in some way to baptize and raise any children in his or her own church. Both churches consider this to be a serious matter. In the United States, where Orthodox are small in number compared to Catholics, this question touches upon the future of Orthodox churches in our society.

The Catholic party should know that if---given the circumstances of the marriage---the children are brought up Orthodox; his or her relationship to the Catholic Church will not be jeopardized. Since Catholics and Orthodox share the same sacraments, the spiritual formation of children in authentic Christian doctrine and ways of Christian living would, for the most part, be similar in either church. In any case, since double membership is not possible, the children will need to receive the sacraments and be educated in one church or the other. That said, marriage also includes a special obligation for the couple to make every effort to help the children to know and appreciate the traditions and practices of the circles of both parents.

312 How can we live out our Christian faith together in a Catholic-Orthodox marriage?

When a Catholic and an Orthodox Christian are joined in matrimony, they will have many opportunities to illustrate, through their married life, the spiritual and theological closeness of our two churches. Under some circumstances this may include sharing in the Eucharist, but the two churches have different views on this question the Catholic Church offers to Orthodox Christians the Sacraments of penance, the Eucharist, and the Anointing of the Sick when they ask for them of their own free will and are properly disposed. But Orthodoxy pastors instruct their faithful not to receive Communion in a Catholic Church. Both churches have the conviction that only those united in the same faith can share the Eucharist. For the Orthodox, this implies that the Eucharist can be shared only with Orthodox. For Catholics, the level of unity in faith that already exists with the Orthodox allows such sharing to take place. Consequently, a couple's desire to share the Eucharist, just as the will share the Sacrament of Marriage, touches on different points of view and practices that are not easily harmonized.

Couples should place high priority on becoming familiar with each other's traditions, customs, and devotions. This can be as routine as saying grace before meals or sharing fasting practices. They may wish to attend services with one another while allowing each to participate fully in his or her own parish. The family can also attend many other kinds of services together, apart from the Eucharist, that do not highlight the exclusion of any member of the family. Vespers, Scripture celebrations and study, and seasonal services for Advent or Lent are all good examples. In some areas it may also be possible to join with the other Orthodox-Catholic couples to share experiences and support one another. Above, all, couples need to learn to pray together.

Resources

USCCB Publication No. 7-050 (2009) *When a Catholic Marries an Orthodox Christian*

Resources

- 313 United States Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (1998). *A Guide for Catholics Considering Marriage with an Orthodox Christian*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 314 United States Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (1998). *A Guide on Catholic-Orthodox Marriages for Catholic Clergy and Other Pastoral Ministers*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 315 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1995). *Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Interchurch Marriages and Other Pastoral Relationships*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Paperwork

- 316 In the case of Catholic-Orthodox marriages, marriage papers should be filled out in the Catholic party's parish as if the marriage were taking place there. Should it seem advisable that the marriage take place in the church of the Orthodox party, then a dispensation from canonical form should be requested. Once the marriage takes place, it is to be recorded in the marriage register of the Catholic parish where the Orthodox Church is located or in the marriage register of the Catholic party's parish.

Preparation

- 317 See Appendixes G & H for the recommended outlines to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs, p.88 for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory, p.90 has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, Natural Family Planning, p. 92 & 93 for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Marriage to a Member of a Non-Christian Religion

- 318 Marriages between a Catholic and a member of a non-Christian religion (e.g., Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Mormon) are often called "interreligious" or "interfaith" marriages. The canonical term "disparity of worship" refers to a marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person.
- 319 Interfaith marriages vary greatly, due to the great diversity in non-Christian religions. A few distinctions to keep in mind: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are called "Abrahamic religions" because they share belief in the same one God and claim Abraham as their spiritual father. These religions have a very different worldview than religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.
- 320 The Catholic Church does not encourage such marriages, and declares the difference of religion to be a diriment impediment. To be valid, a dispensation has to be obtained for such a marriage (see Canon 1086).

- 321 Note also that in cases where a baptism is not recognized (*such as Mormons & Unitarians*), the procedure for non-Christian marriages should be followed. In order for a baptism to be recognized by the Catholic Church, it must be Trinitarian.

Procedure

- 322 Consultation with religious leaders from both traditions is encouraged, not only to discuss the details of the wedding ceremony, but also to prepare for and continue support of the marriage.
- 323 For such a marriage, *The Rite for Marriage between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person* is to be used, except where dispensation from the canonical form has been obtained. (This ritual may be found in *The Rite of Marriage*.)
- 324 Double ceremonies are not allowed and the vows are not repeated. In other words, the Catholic Church does not permit two religious celebrations of the same marriage to express or renew matrimonial consent. However, cultural or ethnic ceremonies can be added to the marriage ceremony, so long as the vows are not repeated (Canon 1127, §3 prohibits double ceremonies for weddings and the sharing of the duty of eliciting the vows.).

Preparation

- 325 See Appendixes G & H, pages 169-177 for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs, p 88 for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory, p. 90 has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, Natural Family Planning, pages. 92-93 for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

- 326 A dispensation for disparity of worship is needed. A dispensation from canonical form is also required if the couple will be having someone other than a Catholic priest or deacon witness their vows. To obtain the dispensation, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm in some way (verbally or in writing) that he or she will promise to do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities; the non-Catholic partner may feel a similar obligation because of his/her own religious commitment. No formal written or oral promise is required of the non-Catholic partner. In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family.

a. Abrahamic Religion (Jewish or Muslim)

- 327** When dealing with a marriage between a Catholic and a person of an Abrahamic religion, i.e., Jewish or Muslim, ministers should be aware of the sensitive issues facing Catholic-Jewish and Catholic-Muslim couples. In general, the Jewish community discourages Jews from marrying non-Jews. Islam permits Muslim men to marry Christians and Jews, but does not permit Muslim women to marry non-Muslims. Extra pastoral care prior to and following the wedding is essential.

Procedure

- 328** *Jewish:* When the ceremony follows the Catholic form, a rabbi or a cantor can be invited to participate in the ceremony, but the Catholic priest or deacon officially witnesses the exchange of vows. Should a dispensation from the canonical form have been granted, a traditional Jewish celebration could take place at a synagogue or designated place.
- 329** *Muslim:* An imam or other Muslim could be invited to participate in the ceremony, but the Catholic priest or deacon officially witnesses the exchange of vows. Should a dispensation from the canonical form have been granted, an Islamic celebration could be planned. There is no traditional Islamic marriage rite other than the witnessing of the contract. Usually the marriage does not take place in a mosque.

Preparation

- 330** See Appendixes G & H, pages 169-177 for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, Marriage Preparation Programs, p. 88 for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory, p.90 has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, Natural Family Planning, pages 92-93 for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

- 331** A dispensation for disparity of worship is needed. A dispensation from canonical form is also required if the couple will be having someone other than a Catholic priest or deacon witness their vows. To obtain the dispensation, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm in some way (verbally or in writing) that he or she will promise to do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities; the non-Catholic partner may feel a similar obligation because of his/her own religious commitment. No formal written or oral promise is required of the non-Catholic partner. In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family.

b. Non-Abrahamic Religion (Buddhist, Hindu, Bahai, Sikh, etc.)

- 332 When dealing with a marriage between a Catholic and a person of a Non-Abrahamic religion, e.g., Buddhist, Hindu, Bahai, Sikh, etc., ministers should be aware of the often complex issues facing these couples and their families. The issues they face are due to not only more significant religious differences, but often also more marked cultural differences. Extra pastoral care prior to and following the wedding is essential.
- 333 Traditional customs should be encouraged and permitted except when they involve a creedal affirmation on the part of the Catholic, or participation in rites of worship, which by their very nature would indicate membership in that faith community or involve worship of deities other than the God of Abraham, the one God of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. While the Catholic party could certainly be passively present for these rites, an active participation in them in such a way as to indicate creedal affirmation would not be acceptable.
- 334 Thus, it is crucial that the pastoral minister 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-Abrahamic wedding ceremony.
- 335 For assistance, contact the Family Life Office (see Appendix B).

Preparation

- 336 See Appendixes C & K for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p.90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, p.92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

- 337 A dispensation for disparity of worship is needed. Should the couple desire to have someone other than a Catholic priest or deacon witness their vows, they have first to request also a dispensation from the canonical form for grave reasons. To obtain the dispensation, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm in some way (verbally or in writing) that he or she will promise to do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities; the non-Catholic partner may feel a similar obligation because of his/her own religious commitment. No formal written or oral promise is required of the non-Catholic partner. In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family.

c. Unrecognized Baptism

- 338 When a party does not have a recognized baptism, a dispensation for disparity of worship would apply. Keep in mind that not all who profess to be Christians are baptized. Marriages between a Catholic and an unbaptized person who claims to be Christian would also require a dispensation for disparity of worship.

Preparation

- 339 See Appendixes C and K for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp.92-93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

- 340 In all cases, a dispensation for disparity of worship is needed. A dispensation from canonical form is also required if the couple will be having someone other than a Catholic priest or deacon witness their vows. To obtain the dispensation, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm in some way (verbally or in writing) that he or she will promise to do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities; the non-Catholic partner may feel a similar obligation because of his/her own religious commitment. No formal written or oral promise is required of the non-Catholic partner. In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family.

Non-Practicing Catholics

- 341 It is not unusual for one or both partners of an engaged couple to approach a parish to be married in a Catholic Church yet not be practicing the Catholic faith. For our purposes, the term “non-practicing” refers to these individuals whose practice of the faith is not evident when they present themselves for marriage.
- 342 While a certain level of frustration by the pastoral minister may be understandable, the counsel of Pope John Paul II provides guidance when ministering to non-practicing Catholics who are engaged. “The faith of the person seeking marriage in the Church can exist in varying degrees. It is the primary duty of pastors to facilitate a rediscovery of this faith, nourishing it and bringing it to maturity” (*Familiaris consortio* 68).
- 343 While some evidence of faith is required for the reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony, the level of faith is not the question. Engaged couples must be accepted and instructed at their actual level. “As for wishing to lay down further criteria for admission to the ecclesial celebration of marriage, criteria that would concern the level of faith of those to be married, this would above all

involve grave risks” (*Familiaris consortio* 68).

Procedure

344 While no further paper work is required when working with non-practicing Catholics, it is likely that it will be necessary to spend more time discussing their faith practice. Also likely is the need to discuss their understanding of the meaning of marriage and what it involves for Catholics. It could be helpful to develop, with the couple, a plan that will meet their formational needs. Hopefully, this will increase their familiarity with and participation in the life of the Church. Some suggestions that could be a part of the plan include:

- Attending the weekend Eucharist;
- Participating in the Sacrament of Penance;
- Participating in an adult formation program;
- Meeting with a mentor couple from the parish;
- Joining a prayer/scripture group; and/or
- Participating in some parish service opportunities.

345 In conclusion, unless the couple places a grave obstacle before you, such as an explicit act of repudiating the faith, it is necessary to pastorally reach out to them and work with their implicit faith and openness. The time of preparation is a concrete opportunity for evangelization and further faith development.

346 Ch. II, p. 85 Pastoral Aid to Enhance Dialogue with an Engaged Couple contains a pastoral aid designed to enhance the thoughtful dialogue between the couple and the parish pastoral minister. It is hoped that through the use of the pastoral aid and the ensuing dialogue the couple will come to understand the short- and long-term effects of their religious participation on their marriage and family life.

Preparation

347 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

348 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Non-Registered Couples

- 349 Canon 1115 states that a marriage is to take place in a parish where either of the parties has domicile, quasi-domicile, or merely a month-long residence. A person acquires a pastor (and hence a right to pastoral care) by living in a place (or joining a parish). Merely moving in with the intention of permanent residency establishes a domicile. *The Code makes no distinction between living in a place and joining the parish; they are equivalent in the law.* It is canonically appropriate to urge those who are not living in the Parish's territory to approach the Parish in which they live.

Procedure

- 350 From this it would seem that it would not be possible to create parish policies that take away the rights a person has under the laws of the Church.
- 351 On the other hand, since marriage takes place within a community of faith, it would be reasonable for the parish to require some commitment on the part of the couple that wishes to be married in that community.
- 352 Each situation has to be handled separately and delicately. The presumption of the Church is that people have a natural right to marry. *Therefore, the Church is to provide a welcoming presence to couples, regardless of whether they are registered parishioners or not.*
- 353 For those who are not, they could perhaps be encouraged to register in the parish and to make a commitment to the faith community in which they are to celebrate their marriage. They might also be expected to attend various liturgical celebrations in preparation for their marriage, if the parish wishes to develop a "catechumenal model" for marriage preparation. They could be welcomed in the Church bulletin, and perhaps prayed for in the Prayer of the Faithful.
- 354 The directives of *The Rite of Marriage* itself should always be kept in mind: "Priests should first of all strengthen and nourish the faith of those about to be married."

Preparation

- 355 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

- 356 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Cross-Cultural/Interracial Marriages

- 357** Newly engaged couples encounter many challenges. Whether it is a young couple or a second marriage for one or both persons, psychological and cultural differences will inevitably play an important role in their future relationship. It is therefore crucial that marriage preparation assists the engaged to focus on these particular situations.
- 358** When individuals from different ethnic cultures enter the Sacrament of Matrimony, they may find married life even more complicated than might people of the same ethnic background. From a liturgical perspective, there might be differences in terms of the ecclesiastical issues and celebration of the traditional religious holidays.
- 359** Good communication is an integral part of every relationship; therefore marriage preparation programs should put substantial emphasis on communication and compatibility between the engaged. Couples from different ethnic or racial backgrounds may have a completely different understanding of the decision-making process or may represent completely opposite styles of communication. In some cultures, a highly emotive dialogue is a natural way of communicating, while other cultures prefer a calm and quiet approach. In some cultures, lack of emotional involvement in conversation from one of the parties could be perceived as a lack of respect or neglect of the other person and eventually could lead to more serious marital problems. For these reasons, it is important to recognize such differences in the early stages of the marriage preparation.
- 360** Compatibility in terms of marriage and family goals, vocational roles and interests, might influence the future of the marriage to a great extent. For example, in some societies women are expected to stay home and raise children, so professional careers for women are not anticipated. Although varying forms of sexism may be found in all cultures, the concept of marriage as a true partnership is a growing trend and an economic necessity in most industrial societies. There might also be cultural differences regarding expectations toward children, i.e., their roles in family structure and educational possibilities, as well as religious upbringing. These and other related issues must be considered before entering into an inter-cultural marriage.
- 361** Racism is a reality of the world and intrinsic to American culture. In 1979 the Catholic Bishops of the United States said in their landmark pastoral letter, “Brothers and Sisters to Us”:
- Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our Church...Racism is a sin; a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of races. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights. It mocks the words of Jesus: ‘Treat others the way you have them treat you.’ Indeed, racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation.
- 362** Interracial marriages fall under the category of “special circumstances” because of that reality and the social sin that permeates modern culture. Potential social and family difficulties place

interracial marriages in particular peril. We the Church “are called not only to a radical conversion of heart but a transformation of socially sinful structures as well.”

Procedure

363 Pastoral care from the ministers of the Church is even more critical for interracial marriages, which bear witness to God’s love that reaches beyond the human boundaries of race. Their love for one another calls the entire People of God to challenge sinful influences of racism and to work for the transformation of society.

364 Some questions to ask may include:

1. What is their ethnic or racial background, and how important is it to them?
2. What cultural/ religious traditions would they expect to practice in their new home? (What would their Christmas celebration be like?)
3. In what language would they and their children pray?
4. How would they resolve potential cultural clashes on religious matters?
5. In planning their wedding celebration, do they plan to include certain ethnic/cultural traditions or rituals?

Preparation

365 See Appendix L – Suggested Sacramental Approach to Marriage Preparation p. 198

Paperwork

366 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Immigration Issues

367 There are several situations that can occur:

- A person is marrying in order to remain in the United States;
- A couple wants to marry, but one of them is in the process of gaining residency here through their parents;
- A couple wants to marry, but they are not here legally.

368 It is important in all these situations to understand the laws of the United States and the consequences of violating these laws.

Procedure

369 Because of a potential clash with civil law, contact the Episcopal Vicar (see Appendix B).

Preparation

370 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

371 Follow through should be in accord with the direction of the Episcopal Vicar (see Appendix B).

Hispanic Marriage Preparation and Wedding Liturgy

Participation Aids in Other Languages

372 When a ritual text in a language other than English has been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for use in the dioceses of the United States and confirmed by the Apostolic See, that ritual text must be used. If no ritual text has been approved by the USCCB in a given language, then translations approved by other Conferences of Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See in languages other than English may be used in the celebration of the liturgy. This was issued by decree of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on April 2, 1964. The above guidelines apply equally to the publication of participation aids in Spanish and other languages for use in the dioceses of the United States of America.

373 Regarding the use of Spanish, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, at its November 2000 meeting, authorized that in the future, translations of Sacred Scripture in Spanish language liturgical books for the dioceses of the United States of America be taken from the translation employed by the Mexican Lectionary for Mass. A Leccionario for use in the dioceses of the United States of America is in preparation. Publishers should consult the Secretariat of Divine Worship concerning various approved liturgical translations in languages other than English.

Cultural Considerations

Cross-Cultural/Interracial Marriages

374 A few policies advise the priest or deacon to help couples identify cultural assumptions that may not be apparent to their partner. Rapid City and Chicago offer more background than most policies and include discussion questions.

Marriage preparation for couples not from the dominant U.S. culture

375 Marriage preparation policies remain the same but need to be adapted to the couple’s cultural background. When possible, programs should be offered in the native language of the couple and led by couples who share their racial or ethnic heritage. Many policies note that care should be taken when interpreting the various marriage preparation inventories in the light of the culture of the respondents. Ten dioceses said that they offer marriage preparation programs in Spanish and one diocese (Chicago) offers a program specifically for African Americans. Brownsville and Miami have their policies in English and Spanish. Cultural adaptations for the wedding itself are treated in Section 9, Wedding Liturgy.

Additional Symbolic Rituals

Unity Candle

376 Although lighting a “unity candle” is not part of the Rite of Marriage it has become very popular as an additional ritual. Most policies do not prohibit this custom but many suggest that it be done at the reception since the Rite of Marriage already has abundant symbols of unity. Cincinnati’s Celebrating Marriage booklet has a pastoral explanation for this. If the unity candle is used, the couple should light their individual candles from the paschal candle, the individual candles should not be extinguished, and the candle should not be placed on the altar. The Sioux City policy reinterprets the unity candle as the “Christ candle.” Liturgists continue to discuss the use and conflicting meanings of the unity candle.

Placing flowers before a statue of Mary

377 “Some couples may wish to dedicate their marriage to the Blessed Mother. Before the dismissal, the couple takes a flower or bouquet to the statue or altar of Mary and places it there. They remain there for a time of prayer and then return to their places.” (Sioux City) This custom reflects a personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and is not part of the Rite of Marriage. Most policies suggest that couples who have a particular Marian devotion make this gesture at the rehearsal or after the final blessing.

Lasso

378 A lasso is generally a double looped rosary that rests on the shoulders of the couple as a sign of the unity in the vows they have professed.

Exchange of Arras (coins)

379 The exchange of arras, or coins, in the Spanish-speaking community expresses mutual sharing. While this ritual is authorized for use in the liturgical books of other national episcopal conferences, it is not a part of the rite that is approved for use in the United States.

Previous Abortion

380 This is a very delicate and unfortunate area, which occurs with more and more frequency. There are some indicators that those who have had previous abortions are more at risk in terms of forming a stable marital relationship. There are also emotional factors in the person who underwent the abortion as well as the one who may have cooperated in the action that need to be dealt with honestly in order for the person to be ready to enter into a marital relationship.

Procedure

- 381** If the fact of a previous abortion comes up, please encourage the person to contact Project Rachel (see Appendix B).
- 382** Having had an abortion is not an impediment to marriage; but it does require special pastoral care. In most cases, the person may be reluctant to reveal this information to the pastoral minister. It might be something that can be discussed when meeting with the parties individually by simply asking a question such as, “Is there anything in your past that you think you need to keep hidden from your future spouse, or that you feel particularly ashamed of, or embarrassed by?”
- 383** You might also want to structure your discussion as follows: “As a couple going into a marriage, you should know that there are certain things that can interfere with the growth and development of your life together as a couple, with sexual intimacy and commitment. Sometimes unresolved emotions over events in your past can come back in unexpected ways and they may get in the way of your relationship’s development.
- 384** “We have found, in particular, that if one or both of you have had to cope with either sexual abuse or an abortion in your past, that these experiences can leave wounds in your life that can cause problems later on. There are things you can do to find some resolution and heal these wounds, and there are good resources and people who can help you through these experiences. We might suggest contacting a sexual abuse counselor, getting in touch with Project Rachel (see Appendix B), and participating in the Sacrament of Penance.
- 385** “One of you might have an issue about these experiences that the other might not know about. It is important to tell the other about it. Being open with your future spouse and talking about these experiences can be the first step in finding resolution and peace, so I would encourage you to do so.”
- 386** Then when the priest is speaking with the couple individually, the following questions could be asked:
- 387** For the woman: Have you ever been pregnant? If so, what was the outcome? Have you shared this with your fiancé? Are you aware that there is assistance available to help you cope with this experience?
- 388** For the man: Have you ever been responsible for getting a woman pregnant? If so, what was the outcome? Have you shared this with your fiancée? Are you aware that there is assistance available to help you cope with this experience?

Preparation

- 389** See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p.88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).
- 390** However, it is important to direct the couple to resources that would address the issue of abortion in particular, e.g., Project Rachel (see Appendix B). Pastoral counseling or a referral to psychotherapy may be appropriate.

Paperwork

- 391** No additional paperwork is necessary.

Health Concerns

- 392** One's ability to make a marriage commitment is not prohibited nor diminished for those persons who live with some debilitating disease or genetic anomaly (Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, ALS, etc.). While some of the demands of married life may be a bit more stressful for them *and for their partners*, if one has the mental capacity to make a solemn (i.e., covenant) commitment, physical disabilities are not a *de facto* impediment. In helping to prepare such couples for marriage, a pastoral minister ought to listen as much as talk. The origins of their relationship, the story of how this disability has figured into their love (or not), and their candid thoughts on how they foresee their future together will be valid grist for their pre-marriage discussions and reflection. If they seek recourse to local support groups or agencies related directly to a specific disease or disability, referrals by local healthcare facilities and disability offices are readily accessible.
- 393** If the disability is mental, then one must tactfully deal with discerning their mental capacity to make and sustain a marriage commitment. Marriage between those with permanent mental disability must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account mental and physical capacities, their family and support network, professional advice, etc. Be wary of societal, ethnic, or cultural bias creeping into the discussion. Procreation and the possibility of not wishing to conceive are special canonical concerns in such cases.
- 394** So too, in the case of any partner who has a serious sexually transmitted disease (e.g., herpes, syphilis, and gonorrhea, HIV/AIDS). There are questions concerning sexual intimacy and procreation, which need to be dealt with honestly, tactfully, and on a case-by-case basis. Again, be careful of oversimplified or presumptive moral, canonical, or pastoral responses. Whether through canonical exceptions, permanent abstinence, or some discussible moral interpretations of family planning techniques, these issues need not automatically preclude marriage for a given couple.

- 395 Remember that impotence is an impediment to a valid marriage, and impotence only means the physical inability to consummate the marriage.

Procedure

- 396 When a pastoral minister discovers that one or both persons have HIV/AIDS, additional resources and help should be offered. The Church must provide information and continuous support as they discern their decision to marry. It is essential that the couple explore the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual implications that HIV/AIDS will have on their relationship.
- 397 It would be very helpful to identify and list competent individuals to act as counselors and spiritual advisors for couples dealing with HIV/AIDS. These counselors and spiritual advisors must be well versed in HIV/AIDS ministry with a deep understanding of the Catholic Church's teachings, possess highly developed communication skills, and have a sincere regard for confidentiality.
- 398 After counseling, the couple will meet with the pastoral minister who began their marriage preparation. At this time the information the couple has gained from the process will be thoroughly discussed: the moral and practical issues involved, what they have learned, and their personal decision to proceed or not proceed with the marriage. Pastoral sensitivity and careful counseling are prerequisites throughout the entire process.

Preparation

- 399 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness). Pastoral counseling or a referral to psychotherapy may be appropriate.

Paperwork

- 400 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Marriage of Minors

- 401 Adolescence is a special time of maturity. It can also be a period of tension and change. In a special way, persons 18 years of age or younger need to focus on issues relating to their own identity and orientation toward the realities of married life.

Procedure

- 402 It is important not to downplay the young persons because of age or their request for marriage. They must be treated with respect and serious attention must be given to their intention and their affection for one another. However, due to the alarming failure rate of youthful marriages, the primary task of the pastoral minister is to challenge and raise significant issues about their relationship that may encourage the young couple to seriously consider their decision to marry. This challenge may lead to the young couple delaying, postponing, or thoroughly reconsidering entering marriage at this time.
- 403 If the couple persists, then they are to be directed through the normal marriage preparation process. More attention must be given to this couple beyond the usual marriage preparation to determine if they possess the physical, intellectual, and emotional capability to fulfill the responsibilities of marriage. This extra attention should include the following:
- The couple **MUST** be directed to see a counselor. Through the use of a “Release of Information” form, the counselor will be able to inform the pastoral minister of his/her judgment. If the counselor advises against the marriage, then dialogue with the couple, inviting them to address the issues before any marriage is celebrated.
- 404 **Parents or guardians should be contacted and asked whether they are in favor of the marriage and the reasons for their position. If one of the parents is against the marriage, consider that a red flag and proceed with caution. The State of Ohio requires all parents or legal guardians of a minor to give written approval on the application form, else the marriage may not take place.**

Preparation

- 405 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness). Pastoral counseling or a referral to psychotherapy may be appropriate.

Paperwork

- 406 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Pregnancy

- 407 Pregnancy places the motivation for marriage under great stress. Marrying under pressure may indicate that a couple is getting married for inappropriate reasons. It may indicate that they are marrying purely out of emotion instead of having a serious intention to commit. Pressures can also preclude serious preparation.

408 Keep in mind that no third person can mandate a wedding. This includes an infant whose presence is dictating action.

Procedure

409 There are many concerns that must be addressed when a premarital pregnancy occurs. In many cases, parents, society, and one or both of the individuals in the relationship exert pressure to proceed with marriage. In these instances, the pastoral minister must make every effort to relieve the sense of urgency by centering attention on the good of the couple and encouraging them to look at alternatives to marriage. Marriage is not an automatic solution for the difficulties arising from a premarital pregnancy.

410 If the couple had decided to marry and were engaged prior to the pregnancy, preparations for marriage may proceed under the following conditions: 1) the couple has completed the required programs for marriage preparation, i.e., a premarital inventory (see Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory), one of the diocesan or parish-based marriage preparation programs, and adequate pastoral counsel (see Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process); and 2) the pastoral minister determines that the couple is sufficiently prepared for marriage.

411 The age of the couple may raise additional difficulties. For couples involved with a premarital pregnancy, for example, the issues raised with a couple who are 17 years of age are different than for a couple who are in their mid-20s or older. If either party is not yet 19 years of age and if the couple had not made a decision to marry prior to the pregnancy, every effort should be made to discourage the marriage before the birth of the child. It is further recommended that, in the event that either party is not yet 19 years of age, a meeting is held with the parents of both parties. The purpose of this session is to gather further information that will help determine the readiness of the couple for marriage before they proceed with marriage preparation (see Ch II section 18).

412 Since the cases involving pregnancies are especially complex, the couple should be advised to undertake professional counseling. The reasons for the pregnancy should be discussed, as well as the seriousness of each individual's commitment to marriage. It is important that the couple carefully consider their own best interests and the best interest of the child, not only in the present but for the future as well. No matter the age of the couple, key questions for the marriage preparation ministers are:

1. Does the couple possess the minimal amount of maturity needed to validly consent to marriage?
2. Does the couple possess the emotional, intellectual, financial and spiritual levels of maturity to develop a marriage relationship?
3. Does the couple possess the necessary level of maturity to assume the responsibilities of parenthood?

413 Finally, pastoral ministers need to stress that there are positive and morally acceptable alternatives to marriage when a premarital pregnancy occurs. They need to help the couple make as free and

informed a choice as possible in resolving their difficulties. If marriage is not chosen, the pastoral minister must help both parties accept their moral responsibilities in caring for the child.

Preparation

- 414 It remains a Pastoral decision as to whether or not to waive any of the six-month preparation period. It is important to remember that the needs of the couple and the needs of the Sacrament must be upheld.
- 415 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness). Pastoral counseling or a referral to psychotherapy may be appropriate.

Paperwork

- 416 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Extended Separation Before or After the Wedding

- 417 There may be an insufficient opportunity for a couple to develop a mature relationship if there is an extended period of separation before or after the wedding. Good marriage preparation may not be possible and future adjustment to married life may be extremely difficult. It may be an excellent assignment for the Pastoral Council to look at ways and means to enrich the lives and relationships of those who must be separated before or after the wedding; improving communication skills, offering internet interface, etc. The Church must offer help to these and all couples so that they will learn how better to communicate with each other throughout their entire marriage (Canon 1064).

Procedure

- 418 Some couples requesting marriage in the Catholic Church are separated from their parish or from each other by long distances due to military placement, college attendance, employment, etc. Adequate preparation cannot be overlooked even in these cases. The preparation may be done through referral and follow-up.
- 419 Military chaplains, campus ministers, the parish where the couple now worships, and the local diocesan office of family ministry are resources to the home pastoral minister. Through collaboration, the necessary preparation can be provided without creating unnecessary difficulties for the couple. At the same time, it is critical that the pastoral minister who will witness the marriage remain a part of the couple's preparation. He should determine the specifics case by case. The couple should meet with their pastoral minister to establish rapport, document the preparation progress, and discuss the plans for the wedding liturgy. The Preparing Minister should also feel free to contact and dialogue with anyone else who is responsible for some part of the preparation.

(Phone numbers available in the Kennedy directory.) Refer to Ch. II, Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the prescribed ministerial contacts.

Preparation

- 420 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).
- 421 See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for descriptions of the various marriage preparation programs offered through the Diocese. All of the programs described in Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs are designed for the engaged couple's participation together. Special provisions may be necessary, e.g., coordinating the marriage preparation with a pastoral minister in the remote locale, and who will work individually with the person who is away.

Paperwork

- 422 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Older Couple

- 423 Age does not automatically mean readiness for marriage. Older couples have different marriage preparation needs. Some of the different elements to be addressed when older couples present themselves for marriage include a review of former marriages or alliances; compatibility with the fiancé/fiancée (i.e., significant age differences); the financial situation of each person; the attitudes of their children toward the future spouse; and health. Are there any significant changes in their life-style that are expected beyond those usually associated with marriage?

Procedure

- 424 Couples of any age can benefit from a *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory and the resultant communication (see Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory). A more mature married *FOCCUS* facilitator couple can be most helpful in facilitating the follow-up with an older couple that is planning to marry. Other alternatives include Sponsor Couples. See Ch. II, p. 88 Marriage Preparation Programs for brief explanations of these programs. Instruction with older couples may include the issues of aging parents, adult children, independent living experiences, financial responsibility, understanding of commitment, and relationship adjustment.
- 425 With older widowed persons, it is wrong to presume that since there was a long and "good" marriage previously, there is nothing more they can learn about marriage. The couple, as well as the pastoral minister, needs to remember that, although one or both may have been married before, they have had no experience being married to each other.

Preparation

- 426 See Ch. II, p. 87 Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process for the recommended outline to follow for optimum effective marriage preparation. This outline was designed for parishes with ample resources; not all parishes will be able to follow this exactly. Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory has information about the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory. See Ch. II, pp. 92 & 93 Natural Family Planning for information about Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness).

Paperwork

- 427 No additional paperwork is necessary.

Fulfillment of Requirements of Church Law

- 428 The initial discussion may reveal that certain requirements of Canon Law have not yet been fulfilled. It may be necessary to delay making further wedding arrangements and any formal marriage preparation until these requirements are satisfied.

Procedure

- 429 If any of the above special circumstances are present in a relationship (or if some reasonable question is raised concerning a couple's readiness to marry), further consultation and evaluation are required before a wedding date can be set.
- 430 Further consultation can be a positive opportunity for a couple so that they become more realistic in understanding their reasons for getting married. This process might also be used as a means for growth in preparing for their future life together.
- 431 Obviously, the postponement of a desired wedding date will be very disappointing for a couple. Particular sensitivity and understanding on the part of the parish minister are critical. An attempt to be as fair and understanding as possible must be made. Helping the couple comprehend why the marriage is being delayed, as well as aiding them in receiving further help, is important.
- 432 It is important for the pastoral minister to document the special circumstances and any concerns they have. This should be done in letter form, sealed for confidentiality, and kept in the couple's file.

Preparation

- 433 If arrangements have been delayed, no preparation is required. However, it may still be beneficial for the couple to do the *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory (see Ch. II, p. 90 *FOCCUS* Premarital Inventory).

Paperwork

434 See Process for Special Circumstances.

G. Process for Special Circumstances

- 435** The following process is to be used when the parish minister feels that the special circumstances could seriously impede a couple's ability to enter into a successful marriage. The process attempts to offer assistance to the couple as well as add objectivity and fairness. No wedding date should be set until the priest/deacon/pastoral associate is satisfied that the couple is ready for marriage and free to marry.
- 436** Upon consultation with a representative of the Diocese of Toledo Tribunal, the parish priest/deacon/pastoral associate can decide that:
- The special circumstance is 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 continue.
 - Additional information is needed. The parish pastoral minister will undertake a more in-depth assessment. No date for the wedding can be set until a positive decision has been made.
 - The special circumstance is of a serious nature. In such instances, the couple will be offered assistance to help them overcome the reason for the delay. No date for a wedding can be set until the circumstance has been removed and a positive decision has been made.
- 437** To ensure 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 local dean or Episcopal Vicar.

H: Pastoral Aid to Enhance Dialogue with an Engaged Couple

A Reflection for the Engaged

- 438 It is not unusual for young adults to critically evaluate the significance of the religious faith in which they were raised and to question its meaning. It is a normal part of maturing in one's faith life. This is a process that is not completed in an instant but unfolds over time. It is understandable that you may not have completed this process at this point in your life. However, because you have asked to be married in the Catholic faith, it is important that you consider what role a strong active faith life will play in your life in the years to come.
- 439 The early years of marriage are unique and crucial because during these years a couple develops patterns and habits that will continue throughout their marriage. Since many human beings are creatures of habit and established patterns, in all probability, what you are doing now is exactly what you will be doing 20 years from now. *For this reason it is imperative that the patterns and habits you want to be present in your marriage 20 years from now are fostered in these early years of marriage.* If you want to have a strong faith relationship in your life and in your family, then you must begin to lay the foundation now. This is the time to look ahead at what you want your relationship to be in the future, with God and with the Church.
- 440 Your relationship with the Lord is both personal and communal and implies an active relationship with a faith community. A faith community, such as your local parish, is important to you for many reasons.
- You will find it easier to live the values that are important to you when you worship with people who share the same values.
 - You will discover a partnership with the parish faith community in raising your children. It takes a Christian village, a Christian faith community, to raise a child in faith. But before a parent can understand what the community can offer, they must first be a part of that community.
 - Parents cannot give to their children what they do not possess. A parish faith community can assist parents to understand, clarify and deepen their faith.
- 441 With this in mind, we are inviting you to consider during this time of your marriage preparation not only your relationship with each other, but also your relationship with the Lord and the Church. You are being asked to wrestle with the attached reflective questions. These questions have been designed to assist you in seriously considering the role of faith in your own life and your life with each other so that you may discover that religion can be a source of strength in your marriage.

Pastoral Aid to Enhance Dialogue

- 442 “Thus a man and a woman, who by the marriage covenant of conjugal love ‘are no longer two, but one flesh’ (Mt. 19:6), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of

their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their one and attain to it with growing perfection day by day.” (*Vatican II, “The Church Today”* 48)

443 In a certain and real sense, your marriage is a time when you reflect on your life goals, as an individual and as a couple. In many ways it is a new beginning. Please reflect on the questions below, share your responses with one another and be prepared to share your discussions with the priest/deacon preparing you for marriage.

- What do you understand as the difference between “Marriage as a Sacrament/A Covenant Relationship” and “Marriage as a Legal Relationship”?
- What is your understanding of the relationship between an active practice of your faith and the stability of marriage and family life?
- As the quote at the top of the page indicates, in marriage spouses vow to be of “mutual help and service” to one another. How do you see yourself as contributing to the spiritual strength and development of your partner?
- What are the reasons that you are asking to celebrate your marriage in the Catholic Church?
- Do you have any concerns about exchanging your marriage vows in the Catholic Church?
- What are your plans for participation in a faith community after your marriage?
- How will you approach the baptism of your children? How do you plan to pass on your religious beliefs and values to your children?
- What can the Church do to assist you to grow in your faith life?
- What obstacles have kept you from being active in Church life?
- Do you pray or read the Scriptures together as a couple?
- What issues do you need to address right now so that the practice of your faith will have the positive influence on your marriage and life that you wish it to have?

I. Recommended Outline for Marriage Ministry Process

| Content Elements | Purpose | By Whom |
|------------------|---|---|
| I | Initial meeting at the parish Prenuptial Inquiry and necessary documentation Parish Guidelines given | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate |
| II | Administer <i>FOCCUS</i> | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate Trained facilitator/mentor-couple |
| III | Follow-up session to discuss the results of <i>FOCCUS</i> Go over the reflection questions (seen on previous page) | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate Trained facilitator/mentor-couple |
| IV | Participation in a marriage preparation program (PreCana, Parish-based Sponsor Couple Marriage Preparation Program, PreCana II) | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate or Trained facilitator/mentor-couple |
| V | Pastoral consultation with parish minister | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate or Mentor-couple |
| VI | Wedding rehearsal | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate, parish minister of music |
| VII | Wedding | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate, parish minister of music |
| VIII | Post-wedding follow-up in the first year of marriage | Priest/deacon/pastoral associate, mentor-couple |

J: Marriage Preparation Programs

PreCana

- 444 PreCana is usually a one-day program presented by a trained team. The team is comprised of married couples and, when available, a pastoral minister. PreCana employs the techniques of individual reflection, couple dialogue, and group discussion. Many parishes in our diocese refer to this as the Engaged Couple's Conference Day (ECC).

Cana II

- 445 Cana II is for couples in which one or both partners have been previously married and have children (either custodial or non-custodial) or in which one or both partners has a child (children) from a previous relationship. This program is designed to focus on and help foster growth within this, the newest of all relationships, while placing special emphasis on parenting in stepfamilies. Cana II utilizes similar dynamics as those found in a regular Cana.

Engaged Encounter Weekend

- 446 There is currently no Engaged Encounter Weekend in the Diocese of Toledo. Please contact the Family Life Office for schedules in other neighboring dioceses. This program, developed by the same people who facilitate Marriage Encounter, provides a more comprehensive, in-depth experience.

Parish Sponsor Couples Marriage Preparation Program

- 447 The Sponsor Couples Marriage Preparation Program is parish-based and conducted by one married couple with one engaged couple. It is designed for the engaged of that parish community. The Diocese trains married couples to conduct the discussion-oriented program over a period of at least three to five sessions with the engaged couple. We are using Father Robert A. Ruhnke C.S.S.R. resource manual entitled "For Better & For Ever" as our recommended program.

Programs for Couples Seeking Convalidation or Sanation

- 448 Special sensitivity should be extended to couples seeking convalidation or sanation. The final decision as to what would best meet the needs of these couples is left to the parish minister, depending on the circumstances.
- Couples who have been married civilly for less than six months may attend any of the programs that would best address their needs.
 - Couples married civilly for more than six months should attend a Marriage Encounter weekend or other marriage enrichment program.

Engaged Couple Conferences Materials

- 449 The materials available are listed in Appendix B Engaged Couples Training materials. Those most

commonly used in the Diocese of Toledo are the *Pre-Cana Packet*, *Perspectives on Marriage*, *A Decision to Love*, *A Ministry to Marriage*, and *Sacramental Communication in Marriage*.

- 450 The Diocese, through the Family Life Office, will provide leadership training for couples to serve as marriage preparation ministers for the engaged and mentors for the newly married.
- 451 The Diocese, through the Family Life Office, will provide ongoing education and formation opportunities for parish and diocesan marriage ministers.
- 452 The Diocese will provide facilitator training in the premarital inventory, *FOCCUS*, for those who minister to the engaged.
- 453 The Diocese, through the Family Life Office, with the necessary collaboration of other diocesan agencies, will make marriage preparation materials available in appropriate languages whenever possible.

K: FOCCUS Premarital Inventory

- 454** There are many useful instruments that have been and can be used to prepare young people for marriage, and every Preparing Minister may well have his or her favorite. However, after reviewing many of these, and having discussed them with the clergy, the Diocese of Toledo continues to recommend that all parishes make use of the instrument, *FOCCUS*.
- 455** Our studies indicate that this inventory provides perhaps the best overall opportunity for the couple to address the issues most pertinent to the Catholic theology and spirituality of marriage. As well, the Family Life Office provides training on this instrument on a periodic basis for both the Preparing Minister and parish Marriage Preparation Staff and will continue to serve as a central scoring site for the inventory.
- 456** It is our hope that by making this instrument a universally available resource that the movement of couples, staff, and clergy from parish to parish will allow them to provide the same high quality approach to working with couples wherever they might be across the diocese.
- 457** *FOCCUS*, an acronym for “*Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study*,” is an internationally-used instrument for marriage preparation. It is self-diagnostic and designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. *FOCCUS* was developed to reflect the values and ideals of marriage as sacred. The introduction from the facilitator’s notebook printed below will give you a better understanding of the instrument.
- 458** The Policy Manual of the Diocese of Toledo recommends *FOCCUS* as part of marriage preparation. (See Diocese of Toledo Pastoral Policy Handbook. Some parishes have staff and volunteers who are trained to facilitate *FOCCUS*. However, to make *FOCCUS* available to all parishes, the Family Life Office will assist in coordinating training for any parish requesting that service. Diocesan Family Life staff can score the inventories. Currently scoring for the inventories costs \$25 per couple. Send them to: Catholic Charities, Family Life Office, 1933 Spielbusch Ave., Toledo, OH 43604. Registered facilitators with the *FOCCUS* program may use the *FOCCUS* website www.foccusinc.com and pay a \$15.00 fee.
- 459** *FOCCUS* is a self-diagnostic inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It is not a test nor meant as a predictor of success or failure in marriage. It is a tool to help couples name and work through issues before marriage.
- 460** *FOCCUS* (Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study) provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. The results of the inventory point to issues or areas that may need to be addressed.
- 461** *FOCCUS* is designed to be used at three levels. The first level occurs when the individuals read and respond to the *FOCCUS* statements and when the couple subsequently discusses what they think and feel about the topics. This first level discussion is done before they receive the report of results. Preliminary thinking and sorting occurs during this time. Couples need a minimum of

several days for this kind of personal discussion before they work with the report of their *FOCCUS* results. Time spent at this first level prepares the couple for the more problematic areas to be discussed at the second level; it often cuts down the processing time needed later with the facilitator.

- 462** The *second level* of use for *FOCCUS* occurs with the help of a facilitator. Using the couple report, the facilitator works with the couple to look at patterns in their responses, discuss issues, and problem-solve. Most of this Facilitator Manual is a support to the work at the second level of *FOCCUS* use.
- 463** The *third level* of *FOCCUS* use involves referrals of two kinds. The first kind of referral is not needed by every couple and is for specialized assistance. The second referral is to educational or skills training programs which build on the awareness couples have after completing the first two levels of *FOCCUS* use. These educational and training programs are recommended for all.
- 464** The *FOCCUS* content covers the range of elements necessary for a successful marriage. Additional content for special needs is included for dual career, interfaith, and cohabiting couples.
- 465** *FOCCUS* reflects the values and ideals of marriage as sacred. Questions dealing with spirituality, religion, and values are worded differently in each of the four editions: General, Alternate, Christian Non-Denominational and Catholic.
- 466** *FOCCUS* is user-friendly for both engaged couples and for those helping to prepare them for marriage. *FOCCUS* is an inventory that does not require a highly trained professional to administer it, and it has minimal risk for being misused.¹⁸

¹⁸ Reprint from: *FOCCUS – Faciliator Notebook*. Family Life Office, Archdiocese of Omaha, NE.

L: Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness)

“Love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love...does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person.”

Pope John Paul II (*Familiaris consortio* 14)

- 467 Recommendation:** Although many pastors may believe that NFP techniques should be taught to couple during pre-marriage preparation, it is highly recommended that prior to the wedding NFP be discussed in a more generalized way to begin a process of the couple opening themselves to the discussion of children and the many obligations they bring. A much more focused presentation of the methodologies of NFP would then be administered as part of marriage enrichment in the early years of marriage, bringing the couple back to the church for what is an extremely important aspect of the marital partnership just when so many young couples are open to beginning a family and would therefore be far more receptive to ‘hearing’ the rather intimate details of the NFP techniques, in a position to actually undertake those techniques, and to give serious thought to both children and the NFP methodology.
- 468** Parenthood is an awesome and joyful vocation. Yet bringing children into the world and into a relationship is never an easy decision because of the tremendous responsibilities that being a parent brings. How couples respond to and communicate about their own procreative powers is an extremely important element of their marriage. Thanks to all the research that has been done, with the modern methods of Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness) (NFP), couples now have the ability to understand and better communicate what it fully means to have the power to create life. Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness) is unique among the methods of family planning because it enables its users to work with the body rather than against it. Fertility is viewed as a reality to live, not a problem to be solved.
- 469** Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness) is an umbrella term for certain methods used to achieve, postpone, or avoid pregnancies. These methods are based on scientific research and are based on observations of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman’s menstrual cycle. Couples using NFP to postpone a pregnancy abstain from intercourse during the fertile phase of the woman’s cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid or achieve a pregnancy. NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of a child. By respecting the love-giving and life-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.
- 470** There are different methods of NFP, but the most modern and common methods are the Billings Ovulation and the Sympto-Thermal. The Billings Ovulation Method uses a technique of Natural Fertility Awareness, based on the woman’s understanding of the cervical mucus changes. With this knowledge, the couple is able to identify the days of infertility, possible fertility, and maximum fertility. With the Sympto-Thermal Method, couples are instructed to recognize the signs to cross check. These signs include the changes in basal body temperature, cervical mucus, and the cervix.

When couples are taught by competent teachers, understand the methods, and are motivated to follow them, NFP is up to 99% successful in spacing or limiting births.

- 471** NFP programs vary, offering classes and/or personalized instruction. The Diocese of Toledo, through the Family Life Office, can assist in making referrals to couples that are certified to present this training.
- 472** The above might provide an ample overview when preparing an engaged couple for marriage. Such a ‘soft approach’ would reduce the potential for resentment many young couples would feel given that so many are already sexually intimate and may well have chosen to avoid family planning by using other alternatives. A more subtle exposure to NFP where the methodology has not been part of remote (high school CCD or religion class content) preparation might be for the Preparing Minister to go over the above information to whet the curiosity and then invite the couple to “enhance your new marriage right out of the starting block by coming to one of our NFP training sessions.” A schedule covering the next three or four months could be handed out and a potential further connection can occur to reinvite the couple after a suitable period of time, perhaps surrounded by some prayer and celebration and even food and drink. The training schedule in our diocese can be found on www.toledodiocese.org

Building Better Marriages through Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness)

- 473** Natural Family Planning allows couples to integrate their fertility with their family planning intention and to remain faithful to God’s design for human sexuality. It also respects God’s design of the marital act to be fully human, permanent, faithful, exclusive, and fruitful.
- 474** Benefits of using NFP: ¹⁹
- Can be used to achieve, postpone, and avoid a pregnancy.
 - Gives couples better understanding and appreciation of fertility.
 - Safe, reliable, and healthy.
 - Increases intimacy.
 - Increases communication.
 - Couples share family planning responsibility.
 - Causes no harm nor has any side effects.
 - Couples that are married by a justice of peace: 50% of marriages end in divorce.
 - Couples married by the Church: 33% of marriages end in divorce.
 - Couples married by the Church and attend Church together: 2% end in divorce.
 - Couples using NFP: 2-5% ends in divorce.
 - Couples married by the Church, pray together, and use NFP - .001 – 1% ends in divorce.

¹⁹ Statistical information from *Mercedes Arzu Wilson*, “The Practice of Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness) Vs. the Use of Artificial Birth Control: Family, Sexual and Moral Issues,” *Catholic Social Science Review*, Vol VII, Nov. 2002.

CHAPTER III: CELEBRATION

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

The Rite of Marriage

A. Our Catholic Heritage

- 475 Through its liturgical rites, the Church celebrates what it believes. It is our participation in the dying and rising of Jesus. As a community, we do this in the liturgy by proclaiming the Gospel and by celebrating the sacrificial presence of Christ in the Eucharist (see Chapter 1 of John Paul II, *On the Eucharist*). We do this in our lives by works of justice, mercy, and reconciliation, as well as taking on a commitment to be conformed to Christ.
- 476 Therefore, the way that we celebrate weddings has a great deal to do with what we believe about marriage. When we gather together for a wedding, we gather with a couple who wants to make their commitment public before God and the Church, and we rejoice in their promise as they become ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony to one another and to the Church.
- 477 At the same time, the Church believes that the love of God is made visible in a special way through this particular couple that exchanges marital consent. Therefore, the wedding celebration reflects both the universal and the particular. Moreover, these two must be held in balance so that the ceremony is neither an anonymous ritual nor so individualized that the meaning of the day for the Church is lost. Weddings are both the celebrations of the Church and celebrations of the couple. It is necessary to maintain a healthy tension between the two.
- 478 The Church's ministers should know the principles of Catholic liturgy. However, couples that ask the Church to celebrate their marriage may not have that same knowledge. Even if they are regular churchgoers, the actual planning of a liturgy is more complicated than just attending a liturgy. For those who are not regular churchgoers, even the most basic liturgical principles might need to be explained. In either case, those who are working with couples preparing for marriage should have an understanding attitude toward the couple's knowledge of liturgy. This can be a time for education and formation.

B. Responsibilities of the Diocese

- 479 **Goal 1: To assist those who witness marriages in the Church to utilize *The Rite of Marriage* with all its options, so that a more meaningful celebration of marriage might occur.**
- 480 Guideline: Provide training for parish ministers on *The Rite of Marriage* so that they are familiar with the various liturgical options therein (see Glossary: "Rite of Marriage, The"), including

principles of appropriate music.

- 481 Discussion: The Diocese will, from time to time, utilize appropriate methods of communication (publications, pamphlets, the Diocesan website, etc.) to educate those who preside at wedding liturgies, those who plan the liturgies, and the couples themselves about the liturgical meaning of the celebration, including the place of music within *The Rite of Marriage*.
- 482 The Diocese provides a list of resources (included in Appendix B) that people involved in ministry to the vocation of marriage can go to for more information about the liturgy of marriage.
- 483 Should deaneries or collaborative groups of parishes identify a need for additional training of Preparing Ministers, Sponsor Couples, etc., the Diocese will provide such assistance as it can.
- 484 **Goal 2: To encourage engaged couples who will marry in the Church to utilize *The Rite of Marriage* and to consider appropriate options, so that a more meaningful celebration of marriage might occur.**
- 485 Guideline: Provide voluntary workshops for engaged couples on *The Rite of Marriage* so that they are familiar with the various liturgical options in *The Rite of Marriage*, including the selection of scripture readings and principles of appropriate music.
- 486 Discussion: The Diocese will offer periodic workshops for engaged couples to gain an understanding of *The Rite of Marriage*. Experts on Catholic liturgy will familiarize the couples with the various options. Stressing the role of the marrying couple as ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony, the workshops will provide instructions on selecting scripture readings, music, and the order of the liturgy.
- 487 Planning a meaningful wedding liturgy is an important part of the couple's marriage preparation. Information about these workshops will be publicized and made available to parishes.

C. Responsibilities of the Parish

- 488 **Goal: To assist couples preparing for marriage to understand the wedding liturgy and to use the options that are available for a prayerful and joyful celebration of their marriage.**
- 489 Guideline: Commit to basic liturgical formation of engaged couples, understanding that many of them have limited knowledge of planning a liturgy. Make clear to the couple the different rites: marriage during Mass, marriage outside of Mass, and marriage with unbaptized (See Glossary: "Rite of Marriage, The"). This will allow the engaged to better understand what they will be celebrating when they marry in the Church.
- 490 Discussion: The parish could offer this assistance individually if there are a small number of weddings each year. However, many parishes would benefit from having various meetings scheduled throughout the year that couples are expected to attend as part of their marriage preparation. Given the reconfiguration of the parishes in the diocese, parishes should collaborate with each other, even at the deanery level, to provide high quality programs to minister to all

engaged and newly married couples throughout the diocese. People and programs can be enriched by working together.

- 491** The content of these programs would vary, based upon the type of parish and to the extent of which parishes collaborate with others. For some, it could be the presentation of liturgical principles and the meaning of the wedding liturgy. For others, it could take on the form of a discussion of the Scriptures used at weddings and their meaning in the lives of the couples.
- 492** It would be important to include the pastoral musician in any of these meetings. This could be a separate meeting in which musical principles are discussed and various options presented; or, if the parish does not have a pastoral musician, it could simply be the discussion of the principles of pastoral music.
- 493** Attention should be paid in particular to the community dimension of marriage. Most of what the couple has learned about their wedding day from secular media stresses individualism. By celebrating their marriage with the Christian community, the couple is asking the community to rejoice in their commitment to each other, but also promising to be a sign to that community of God's own love. In whatever way possible, the parish should attempt to introduce couples to parish life and make the parish aware of the couples who are committing themselves in marriage. This could be through other celebrations leading up to marriage, such as periodic prayers of blessing for couples at the Sunday Eucharist, by asking them to stand before the community as an indication of their intentions and to receive the community's blessing and support. It could be the inclusion of couples preparing for marriage in the Prayers of the Faithful or in the parish bulletin. It could also include a "mentoring program" with married couples from the parish.
- 494** Each parish should have clearly articulated policies for the celebrations of weddings. These should include policies regarding:
1. visiting musicians
 2. basic information about the parish
 3. policies regarding photographers and videographers
 4. policies regarding florists and an environment the couple might want to create with respect to the liturgical season that is being celebrated
 5. fees to the church and when they are to be paid
 6. donations which can be given to local charities, etc.
- 495** Good policies, however, are always written positively, not only reflecting a desire to make the liturgy memorable, but also reminding couples of basic liturgical principles.
- 496** Parish policies should be in printed form and, when possible, in the appropriate language such as Spanish for all parishioners to understand. The form should be given to the engaged couple, since frequently there is a long period of time between when the policy is first explained and when the wedding liturgy takes place.

- 497 Where it is appropriate, parishes should encourage the inclusion of ethnic customs in wedding liturgies. Since the Diocese is becoming an increasingly immigrant Church, we must recognize that many of these customs are held in the highest esteem by the Christian faithful, sometimes being seen as of equal importance to the exchange of consent. Without diminishing the importance of the exchange of consent, these customs should be included as much as possible. Wedding rehearsals can be particular times of evangelization, since many times those in the wedding party have not been involved in Church activities for a while. Those who are responsible for wedding rehearsals should familiarize themselves with *The Rite of Marriage* so they know the various options that are available to couples (See Glossary: “*The Rite of Marriage*”). These options can be “teaching tools” that allow those gathered for the rehearsal to think about what the Church means by marriage. Rehearsals can also be a time for prayer, and an opportunity for those gathered for the rehearsal to express their prayerful wishes for the couple, giving thanks for the ways that each of them has already manifested God’s love.
- 498 Those who preside at weddings should follow *The Rite of Marriage*, particularly with regard to the procession, the opening rites, and the exchange of consent. There are many aids to assist couples in planning their marriage liturgy, such as *Together for Life, For Better and For Ever, Faithful to Each Other Forever, A Decision to Love*, and *Perspectives on Marriage*. These resources provide options and thoughtful reflections which can be a great assistance even to the preparing minister in enhancing the ceremony.

D. Responsibilities of the Engaged Couple

- 499 **Goal: To have a fruitful celebration of their marriage in the Lord that reflects their own love, and also proclaims and dignifies the Church’s teaching about marriage and demonstrates their willingness to become the living signs of God’s love.**
- 500 Guideline: Participate in liturgical preparation for their wedding as part of their overall marriage preparation.
- 501 Discussion: Parishes may wish to develop their own set of guidelines and regulations which can be given to couples at the onset of preparation regarding photos, videos, programs, decorations, the use of rice, etc. so that every Sponsor Couple and every preparing minister, priest, deacon or pastoral associate, can both know and catechize each couple fairly, equitably, and prayerfully. In order to maintain a prayerful focus in a sacramental wedding, the presider is encouraged to ask the attending congregation to refrain from taking pictures or videos during the liturgy. Couples are expected to take part in the liturgical planning for the wedding ceremony. This includes such things as selecting the readings and prayers from *The Rite of Marriage*. It could also include providing liturgical ministers for the ceremony, although these should be people who are properly trained and commissioned for that role. Since this is a parish event, however, the parish could consider providing its own ministers for the day, to emphasize that not only is this the couple’s ceremony, but one in which the community participates and rejoices.
- 502 Everyone loves little children, however very young children can become confused and upset when away from their parents, particularly in a crowd. Even older children can be great scene stealers,

taking the focus away from the sacrament which is being celebrated. It is understandable that a couple often has pressure to involve many members of their family, but the couple needs to be encouraged to make good decisions about who to include in their ceremony.

- 503** Even though pets can be part of family life, including pets in *The Rite of Marriage*, which is sacred, is inappropriate, with the only exception being to assist those with impaired vision, i.e., Seeing Eye dogs. Family pets may not take part in the celebrations.
- 504** **Goal: To recognize their new role as members of the faith community and witness their role of service to the community.**
- 505** Guideline: Make their role in the marriage ceremony a model of service and hospitality. They should be a welcoming presence to the wedding guests. Individuals participating at the wedding Mass or ceremony may be invited to undertake appropriate liturgical roles provided they have had some experience doing such a role. In the case of distributing Holy Communion, however, non-ordained ministers (including the bride and groom) are to be adequately trained and catechized, have received the prescribed delegation of the diocesan bishop and been commissioned within the approved rite of commissioning extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
- 506** Discussion: Though modern practice would have us think that the marriage ceremony focuses on the bride for the most part and secondarily the groom, the marriage ceremony is actually a time of service by the bride and groom together to each other and the wedding guests. Their gift of themselves to each other marks the beginning of their sacramental relationship that will be lifelong. Their gift of themselves as a couple at the wedding symbolizes to their guests their new sacramental role in the community—to be a living witness to God’s presence.

E. Liturgical Resources

- 507** The ritual books of the Church include many appropriate blessings and prayers which can be used by the parish on a regular basis to assist in the remote preparation of people for marriage. Among these are anniversary blessings (*Book of Blessings*, pgs. 20-36) and blessings for engaged couples (*Book of Blessings*, pgs. 59-64).
- 508** Below, we provide examples developed by the Archdiocese of Chicago as part of their Marriage Enrichment program. In addition, examples of prayers of the faithful appropriate for keeping marriage and family an active part of parish life are listed as well. These, too, were developed by the Archdiocese of Chicago. Parish liturgists should be encouraged when writing prayers of the faithful to regularly include marriage and family issues which reflect the needs of the local parish and universal Church. Also, you will find the latest copy of the “Wedding Music Guidelines” for the Diocese of Toledo.

Anniversary Blessing of a Married Couple

509 Renewal of Marriage Promises

Celebrant: (Name) _____ and (Name) _____,
remember the day of your marriage and the joy with which you, in God's presence,
promised your lives and your love to each other. Today, again in God's presence,
affirm the promise you made on that day.

Husband: Gracious God, I took (Name) _____ to be my wife and promised
with your grace and blessing to be her loving husband.

Congregation: May God bless you and keep you.

Wife: Gracious God, I took (Name) _____ to be my husband and promised
with your grace and blessing to be his loving wife.

Congregation: May God bless you and keep you.

Couple: We thank you, loving God, for your blessing upon our marriage and for sustaining
us with your faithful love through our good times and our challenges. Let us, as
our life together continues, support each other, respect each other, and cherish each
other. Keep us grateful for your many blessings. Let us remain always mindful of
the promises we made in your presence and grant us the grace to keep them every
day for as long as we live.

Celebrant: May God grant you continued joy in your marriage, peace in your home, and love
in your hearts. May God comfort you when you are sad and uphold you in
prosperity. May you know His loving presence all the days of your lives. May God
bless you and keep you and let His face shine upon you, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

510 Prayer of the Engaged

God our Father, in your own good care and wisdom, we have come to know each other. We have come to discover something of the mystery of each other. Pour out your blessings on _____, whom I want to love for the rest of my life: blessings for safety, for strength, for joy.

Help us, as we form a family together, to find a new way to love the families who have loved and nourished us until now. In these hectic weeks and afterwards, help us laugh when small plans don't work out, and make us willing to support each other in real problems.

Let us stay always secure in one another, secure in you, and secure in prayer. Grace our relationship with the gift of your Holy Spirit, so that, day by day, our affection may grow into self-sacrifice, our passion into deep human caring, and our warm feeling into lasting commitment. Bring to fulfillment the wonder of your ways that you have begun to reveal to us. We pray this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

511 Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

These optional prayers could be used on a periodic basis as written, or as modified to fit the local parish.

1. For newly married couples... that their love for each other will grow stronger as they learn to live, work, serve and pray together.
2. For couples who are expecting a child... that they will find joy and fulfillment in sharing their lives and their love.
3. For couples experiencing infertility... that they may find peace and hope.
4. For couples who are anticipating adoption... that they may be patient and hopeful as they await the fulfillment of their dream.
5. For couples who are struggling in their marriage... that they may work and pray to resolve their differences.
6. For couples who are parenting children with special needs... that they may have patience and appreciation for the gifts this child brings.
7. For couples who are sending children to school for the first time... that they may rejoice in this opportunity for growth.
8. For couples who have children going away from home for the first time... that they may let go with grace and trust God.
9. For couples who face an "empty nest"... that they may appreciate the gifts of this new stage in their life together.

10. For couples who find themselves parenting their grandchildren... that they may have courage and strength.
11. For couples who are celebrating wedding anniversaries... that they will look back with joyful nostalgia and look forward with joyful hope.
12. For couples who face the debilitating or terminal illness of one of the partners... that the faith and love they have built will sustain them.
13. For all married couples... that they will remember always why they chose each other and put God and each other above all else.
14. For couples who have made every attempt to save their marriage and have not succeeded... that they may part without forgetting that each of them is a child of God and is loved.
15. For couples whose marriages have ended... that each may have the wisdom to deal with each other respectfully and to refrain from using the children against each other.
16. For couples who are caring for aging parents... that they may have courage, fortitude, and patience and that they may remember to honor each other as they honor the elderly.

Wedding Music Guidelines for the Diocese of Toledo

- 512** The Diocese of Toledo Wedding Music Guidelines are printed in booklet format. You can receive a copy by contacting the Diocesan Director of Liturgical Music. His office is located in the Catholic Center and his phone number is 419-244-6711 ext.506.

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Marriage as a Sacrament

- 513** It is the faith of the Church that when two Christians marry something distinctive takes place. The man and woman who commit themselves to one another celebrate a sacrament. Their marriage is the revealing of God's love for us in a very powerful way. The love of man and woman is made holy in the sacrament of marriage and becomes the mirror of God's everlasting love for the world.
- 514** Thus, the celebration of Christian marriage is not just the "couple's day." It is the day of the Church. The People of God gather to witness the exchange of vows, and to express their support, joy and faith through prayers, acclamations and song. The gathered assembly once again hears through the bride and groom everything that God has to say to the world. As they say to one another: "I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life," we formally call to mind the very covenant that God has made with us. We remember that no matter what, God will never forget about us; nor will God ever abandon us. The words they speak to one another are the words that God speaks to us each day of our lives.
- 515** As Catholic Christians we have never been shy about our conviction that material things put us in touch with our God. We use bread, water, wine, oil, incense and fire to remind us of the intense and irrevocable presence of God through Christ to the world.
- 516** It is our conviction that in the human flesh of Jesus, God has forever bound himself to the world. Therefore, human flesh has been sanctified...made holy. Our own flesh is the presence of God to the world.
- 517** May every marriage ceremony be a reflection of the Source of love that has brought them to this day. May it be a reminder of God's love for their family and friends who have gathered to witness with joy and prayer their commitment to one another in Christ.

Principles of Planning the Ceremony

- 518** Since the wedding liturgy is a celebration of a sacrament, the music must reflect that sacramental nature. The same general principles of planning worship and deciding on music are employed as at other liturgies.
- 519** The music should be chosen with the utmost care and consideration for the sacredness of the liturgy. It needs to be expressive of Christian faith and values. Music which only celebrates the human secular values of love is not appropriate in church. The assembly gathered for the wedding should be drawn into active participation in this sacred ritual through prayer and song in order to share fully in the sacramental encounter with Christ the Lord.
- 520** Sometimes the only music familiar to the couple consists of songs heard at other weddings; such music may not necessarily be suited to the celebration of the sacrament. Certainly, secular love songs have no place in a sacramental celebration. Sung texts should reflect not only the love of a man and a woman but also the love of God for the couple and for all people. The pastoral musician will make every effort to offer a wide range of possibilities to the couple, particularly in the choice

of music to be sung by the assembly.

521 As with Sunday Worship, planning for a wedding liturgy should begin with reflection on the Scripture readings to be used for the occasion. This done, the parish musician can help the couple select music to enhance the meaning of the chosen scriptures and the entire celebration.

522 Particular decisions about choice and placement of wedding music should grow out of the three judgments proposed in *Music In Catholic Worship*, and explained further in *Liturgical Music Today*.

523 *Liturgical Judgments:*

- Is the music's text, form, placement and style congruent with the nature of the liturgy?
- What parts are preferred for singing and who sings them?

524 *Musical Judgments:*

- Is the music technically, aesthetically, and expressively good, irrespective of musical style?
- Is the composition of good quality, and will it also sound good with the resources available?
- Do not confuse good and bad music with one style against another. Many good pieces of music exist in chant, polyphony, choral hymns, responsorial songs and contemporary compositions.

525 *Pastoral Judgments:*

- Will the words and music help this assembly to pray?
- Will your choice of music have the same feeling of prayerfulness within the assembly as you have originally intended?²⁰

Use of Music Within the Wedding Liturgy

Prelude Music

526 The purpose of music at this time, as in any liturgical function, is to help draw the assembly into an attitude of prayer in order to experience more fully the sacred nature of the sacrament to be celebrated. Instrumental and vocal music would best serve in this capacity.

The Processional

527 This serves to gather the entire assembly together as one for the beginning of the rite. Music used

²⁰ *Liturgical Music Today* (USCC, Washington, DC, 1982) n. 29.

at this time is not simply marching music for the wedding party, but music which accompanies the gathering of the worshiping community. Organ, organ and brass, a congregational hymn, or a combination instrumental piece followed by a hymn sung by the assembly is appropriate here.

The Responsorial Psalm

- 528** The Responsorial Psalm is the sung response to the proclamation of the first reading. This is to be done by a cantor singing the psalm verses with the assembly joining in the singing of the response. It is important, too, that the selections be from the psalms. This is not an appropriate time for a vocal solo in its entirety, which would take away from the assembly something that is rightfully theirs. The Responsorial Psalm at a wedding is no different than that at any other liturgical celebration.

Gospel Acclamation

- 529** This acclamation announces the proclamation of the Gospel and is always to be sung or omitted if not sung. It is introduced by a cantor and repeated by the assembly. Participation can be fostered by the use of a familiar refrain. The acclamation should be appropriate to the season. (N.B. The alleluia is never sung during the Lenten season.)

Rite of Marriage

- 530** *The Rite of Marriage* consists of the statement of intent and the consent of the couple and the exchange of rings. Music is not to be a part of this rite; however, a short hymn or acclamation sung by the assembly affirming the couple would be appropriate at the conclusion of the rite.

Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts

- 531** This part of the liturgy is short and of secondary importance in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It is recommended that instrumental music be used to accompany the procession and should not extend beyond the action of preparation.

Eucharistic Acclamations

- 532** These three acclamations (Holy, Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation and Great Amen) are always to be sung by the entire assembly. The music selected should be familiar enough to the assembly so that they feel comfortable singing.

The Lord's Prayer

- 533** The Lord's Prayer belongs to the assembly and is the common prayer of all Christian churches. It is appropriate, then, that the prayer be recited or sung by all present. If it is sung, a familiar melody, such as the Gregorian Chant tune, should be chosen so that all present may join in the prayer.

The Sign of Peace

- 534** If there is to be music during the Sign of Peace it should be instrumental. The time for this action should not be extended so that the assembly can be attentive to the Breaking of the Bread and the singing/reciting of the Lamb of God.

Lamb of God

- 535** This litany which accompanies the Breaking of the Bread may be sung or recited by the entire assembly.

Communion Procession

- 536** Communion is the “coming together as one” to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Music at this point helps unify the assembly while also serving to accompany the procession. The assembly joins in singing the refrain of a familiar hymn while the cantor sings the verses. An instrumental or vocal solo could be an option at this time, so long as it is in keeping with the procession, or the sacrament, the scripture, or the liturgical season.

Hymn After Communion

- 537** A hymn of praise or thanksgiving may be sung after Communion by the entire assembly, especially if a hymn had not been sung by them during Communion. A period of silent reflection is suggested.

Recessional

- 538** As all are leaving the church, instrumental music best expresses the joy and festivity of the occasion.

Other Practices

- 539** The practice of lighting a “wedding candle” is not an official part of the Marriage Rite. Likewise the presentation of a floral bouquet to the Blessed Virgin Mary is not an official part of the Marriage Rite.

Cultural Awareness

- 540** Our society is a multicultural one. The Church is called to express this cultural diversity in many ways. This cultural expression is not merely external. It is in fact a reflection of the soul, the spirituality of a people.
- 541** This is a very important concept to keep in mind when preparing a marriage celebration. The goal of the ceremony, like that of any good liturgy, is to incorporate cultural expressions of spirituality in such a way that the gathered community can understand them without much explanation, and

thus be able to participate fully and actively.

- 542** The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples. In order that the mystery of Christ be "made known to all the nations . . . to bring about the obedience of faith," it must be proclaimed, celebrated, and lived in all cultures in such a way that they themselves are not abolished by it, but redeemed and fulfilled: It is with and through their own human culture, assumed and transfigured by Christ, that the multitude of God's children has access to the Father, in order to glorify him in the one Spirit.
- 543** "In the liturgy, above all that of the sacraments, there is an immutable part, a part that is divinely instituted and of which the Church is the guardian, and parts that can be changed, which the Church has the power and on occasion also the duty to adapt to the cultures of recently evangelized peoples."
- 544** "Liturgical diversity can be a source of enrichment, but it can also provoke tensions, mutual misunderstandings, and even schisms. In this matter it is clear that diversity must not damage unity. It must express only fidelity to the common faith, to the sacramental signs that the Church has received from Christ, and to hierarchical communion. Cultural adaptation also requires a conversion of heart and even, where necessary, a breaking with ancestral customs incompatible with the Catholic faith."

In Brief

- 545** It is fitting that liturgical celebration tends to express itself in the culture of the people where the Church finds herself, though without being submissive to it. Moreover, the liturgy itself generates cultures and shapes them.
- 546** The diverse liturgical traditions or rites, legitimately recognized, manifest the catholicity of the Church, because they signify and communicate the same mystery of Christ.
- 547** The criterion that assures unity amid the diversity of liturgical traditions is fidelity to apostolic Tradition, i.e., the communion in the faith and the sacraments received from the apostles, a communion that is both signified and guaranteed by apostolic succession.

548 Order of Service for the Rite of Catholic Marriage Within Mass

Order of Service for
Rite of Catholic Marriage Within Mass

Prelude Music

Entrance Rite

Processional and /or Gathering Hymn
Greeting, Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading
Responsorial Psalm
New Testament Reading
Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)
Gospel
Homily

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of vows
Blessing and Exchange of rings
(Optional acclamation)
General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar/Presentation of the Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer and Acclamations

Lord's Prayer
Nuptial Blessing
Sign of Peace
Lamb of God
Communion
Prayer after Communion
Final Blessing
Recessional

549 Order of Service for the Rite of Catholic Marriage Outside of Mass

Order of Service
Rite of Catholic Marriage Outside of Mass

Prelude

Entrance Rite

Processional and/or Gathering Hymn
Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading
Responsorial Psalm
New Testament Reading
Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)
Gospel
Homily

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of vows
Blessing and exchange of rings
(Optional Acclamation)
General Intercessions
Nuptial Blessing
(Our Father)
Final Blessing
Recessional

Use of Parish and Guest Musicians

- 550** Each parish should have a clear policy concerning the role of parish musicians for weddings. It is common professional courtesy to offer incumbent musicians a “right of first refusal.” In other words, they are given the first opportunity to provide music for weddings in the parish. Engaged couples should be strongly encouraged to employ musicians from the parish where they will be married. These musicians have the benefit of knowing what does and does not work in their own community. They also are comfortable with the instruments of the church, the sound system and acoustical environment. Parish musicians are at ease with the practice and style of the parish priests and deacons who preside at weddings. Couples should also consider that most parish musicians depend on wedding fees to supplement their salaries.
- 551** Guest musicians for weddings should have appropriate musical training, experience, and understanding of the liturgy and marriage rite. An interview with the parish music director will determine whether the guest musician meets these criteria.
- 552** If guest musicians are subsequently chosen to provide music it is wise policy to include parish musicians in the music planning process for the reasons stated above. A fair compensation should be made to the parish musician for any consultation with the engaged couple, time spent welcoming and orienting guest musicians, and any other incidental tasks they may perform in preparation for the wedding. Typically, an amount equal to the musician’s regular stipend is offered, although a parish may choose to set a different amount agreed upon by the musician and pastor.
- 553** Parish musicians should be contacted as soon as the wedding date has been set and before any decisions concerning music are made. Early consultation allows ample preparation time for all concerned.

Use of Recorded Music

- 554** The liturgy is a series of signs expressed by living human beings. In the marriage rite, two living persons exchange vows and symbols, indicating that they are becoming one new life together in Christ. The music used in the marriage should also be live. Recordings are not to be used to replace the assembly, the choir, the organist or other instrumentalists or singers.²¹

Weddings During Lent

- 555** The celebration of the Marriage Rite is discouraged during the Lenten season. A wedding is a festive occasion, and Lent, by its very nature, does not allow for that festivity to be developed to its fullest. If, for pastoral reasons, a wedding does take place during Lent, the music should be in keeping with the nature of the season. The word “Alleluia” should not be included anywhere in the liturgy.

²¹ *Liturgical Music Today* (USCC: Washington, DC) n. 60.

Worship Aids and Copyrights

556 In recent years many couples have decided to have a worship aid printed to be used at their ceremony. If properly prepared, a worship aid encourages active participation in the spoken and sung prayers of the service and helps those who are unfamiliar with the Catholic Liturgy to understand its basic structure. A worship aid also provides a thoughtful remembrance of the occasion.

557 Be mindful of the following points, when putting the worship aid together:

1. Avoid printing too much, as the worship aid then becomes unreadable. Print major headings in bold or decorative type so they stand out. A smaller print may be used for the elements of each rite under the major headings. Do not print the texts of prayers, readings, or vows. These should be listened to, not read by the assembly.
2. To encourage everyone to sing, print both the words and the music of hymns, refrains, and acclamations. An invitation might also be put at the very beginning of the worship aid asking the assembly to join in the sung and spoken prayer of the wedding ceremony.
3. Any time music and/or words to hymns are printed, copyright permission from the copyright owner needs to be secured. Publishers whose hymns are most commonly used are:

GIA Publications, Inc.
7404 South Mason Ave.
Chicago, IL 60638
1-800-442-1358
www.giamusic.com

New Dawn Music
P.O. Box 13248
Portland, OR 97213-0248
1-800-243-3296
www.ocp.org

(New Dawn gives copyright permission for hymns copyrighted or published by OCP Publications; New Dawn Music; TEAM publications; St. Thomas More Group, England; St. Meinrad Archabbey; Willow Music, Australia; Ediciones MUSICAL PAX, Ediciones Paulinas and Editorial Apostolado de la Prensa, Madrid, Spain; and Ediciones Musica-Liturgia y Oracion, Pamplona, Spain.)

World Library Publications
3825 N. Willow Road
Schiller Park, IL 60176-9936
1-800-566-6150
www.wlpmusic.com

4. The list of ministers, such as members of the wedding party, readers, musicians, and family, is printed on the last page. The service is to be printed first, since this is the most important part. Avoid printing the names of any ministers within the order of the service.
5. It is recommended that the music director or some other knowledgeable person proofread the program before it is taken to the printers. This will help avoid any mistakes.²²

Fees

- 558** Parishes are responsible for establishing musicians' fees. Planning the wedding liturgy with the bride and groom enables the parish Music Director/Organist to maintain the quality inherent in all the other parish liturgies.
- 559** When parish policy permits guest musicians to be the principal musician/organist for weddings, the parish Director/organist should be compensated.
- 560** These suggested fees, varying due to the musician's experience and training, are based on the AGO (American Guild of Organists, Toledo Chapter) guidelines.
- 561** Wedding Liturgy
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Organist | \$100 - \$200 |
| Cantor / Vocalist | \$ 75 - \$150 |
| Instrumentalist | \$100 - \$200 |
| Rehearsal time (per hour) | \$ 25 - \$ 50 |
- 562** Responsibilities and compensation should be made clear to all concerned. (Pastor, Deacon, Liturgy Planner, Music Director, Bride and Groom)

Parish Guidelines

- 563** Parishes may wish to state policies covering other issues in addition to music.

²² Austin Fleming, *Parish Weddings* (LTP: Chicago, 1987) 44.

Wedding Music Planning Guide

564 Wedding Plan With Mass

Bride _____ Phone _____
Groom _____ Phone _____
Date and Time of Wedding _____

Presider _____ Musicians _____
Cantor _____

Prelude:

Music _____

Processional/Gathering Hymn: _____

Liturgy of the Word:

1st Reading _____
Responsorial Psalm _____
2nd Reading _____
Alleluia _____
Gospel _____

Homily _____
Rite of Marriage _____
Exchange of vows _____
Blessing and exchange of rings _____
(Optional Acclamation) _____
General Intercessions _____

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts _____
Holy, Holy, Holy _____
Memorial Acclamation _____
Great Amen _____
The Lord's Prayer _____

Nuptial Blessing

Lamb of God _____
Communion Hymn _____
Hymn of Praise after Communion (Optional) _____
Prayer after Communion _____
Final Blessing _____
Recessional _____

565 Wedding Rite Without Mass

Bride _____ Phone _____

Groom _____ Phone _____

Date and Time of Wedding _____

Presider _____ Musicians _____

Cantor _____

Prelude:

Music _____

Entrance Rite

Processional/Gathering Hymn _____

Liturgy of the Word:

1st Reading _____

Responsorial Psalm _____

2nd Reading _____

Alleluia _____

Gospel _____

Homily

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of vows

Blessing and exchange of rings

(Optional Acclamation) _____

General Intercessions

Nuptial Blessing

(Our Father)

Final Blessing

Recessional _____

Wedding Repertoire

Processional or Gathering Hymn

- 566** (This song could replace an instrumental procession as the wedding party enters the church or be sung immediately following. These songs are typically found in most hymnals.)

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
God in the Planning (GIA)
God, Who Created Hearts to Love (OCP)
Hear Us Now, O God and Father (Lutheran Book of Worship)

Communion Songs

- 567** (While any Eucharistic hymn is appropriate, these songs are particularly suited to the occasion of a wedding.)

Gift of Finest Wheat Westendorf/Kreutz
God Is Love David Haas
Love One Another James Chepponis
May Love Be Ours, Lord Michael Joncas
Take and Eat Michael Joncas

568 *Responsorial Psalms for the Wedding Rite*

Psalm 33: The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

From the Gelineau Psalter GIA
From Psalms for the Church Year, Vol. 2 by Marty Haugen

Psalm 34: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

From the collection Psalms by Robert Kreutz OCP
From Psalms for the Church Year, Vol. 1 by David Haas/Marty Haugen GIA

Psalm 103: The Lord is kind and merciful.

From When Love Is Found, David Haas/Jeanne Cotter GIA
From Psalms for the Church Year, Vol. 1 by David Haas/Marty Haugen GIA

Psalm 112: Happy are those who do what the Lord commands.

From WORSHIP 3rd edition #190 (Gelineau/Carroll) GIA

Psalm 128: Happy are those who fear the Lord.

A Wedding Psalm by Daniel Laginya GIA
From Psalms for the Church Year, Vol. 2 by Marty Haugen GIA

Psalm 145: The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures
 by Joseph Barry Smith GIA
 From Psalms for the Church Year, Vol. 1 by David Haas/Marty Haugen GIA

Psalm 148: Let all praise the name of the Lord.
 From WORSHIP 3rd edition #192 (Gelineau/Proulx) GIA

569 The following psalm and wedding music collections have settings of responsorial psalms in a variety of styles. Consult the publisher's catalogs or web-site for further information.

Gelineau, Joseph Gelineau/Grail Psalter GIA
 Guimont, Michel Lectionary Psalms GIA
 Haas/Cotter When Love is Found GIA
 Various composers Singing the Psalms (multi-volume series) OCP
 Various composers United As One, Vol. 2 OCP
 Various composers Psalms for the Cantor (multi-volume series) WLP

Keyboard Music

570 Organ

| COMPOSER | TITLE | DIFFICULTY | PUBLISHER |
|----------------------------------|--|------------|---|
| Biggs, E. Power, ed | Treasury of Shorter Organ Classics | E-M | Merrymount |
| Burkhardt, Michael | Hymn to Joy | M | MorningStar |
| Callahan, Charles | Wedding Music for Manuals | E | Concordia |
| Cornell, Garry | Procesion Alegre | M | Celebrations Unlimited |
| Hopson, Hal | Processional in C | | |
| Johnson, David N. | Wedding Music | E-M | Augsburg-Fortress Vol. 1 – Prelude Music |
| | Vol. 2 - Processionals & Recessionals | | |
| | Vol. 3 | | |
| | Vol. 4 | | |
| | Vol. 5 – Manuals only | | |
| | <i>(These volumes also contain optional parts for C and B-flat instruments)</i> | | |
| Johnson, David N. | Trumpet Tune in D major | M | Augsburg-Fortress |
| Lemmens, Jacques | Fanfare | D | various |
| Manz, Paul | God of Grace | M | MorningStar |
| | <i>from Five Hymn Improvisations for Weddings or General Use</i> | | |
| Pachelbel, Johann | Canon in D | | |
| <i>S. Drummond Wolff, editor</i> | | M-D | Concordia |
| <i>Hal Hopson, editor</i> | | M | Hope |
| Warner, Richard | Organ Music for Weddings | E-M | G. Schirmer |
| Young, Gordon | Baroque Suite | E-M | Flammer |
| | Prelude in Classic Style | M | Flammer |
| Mitchel-Wallace, Sue | The Classical Wedding | E-M | Hope |
| Head, John | | | |
| Various composers | Wedding Music, Part 1 | M | Concordia |
| | <i>Processionals and Recessionals for Church Weddings, Anniversaries and Other Festive Occasions</i> | | |

571 *Piano/Keyboard*

| COMPOSER | TITLE | DIFFICULTY | PUBLISHER |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Callahan, Charles | Keyboard Favorites, Vol. 1 | E | MorningStar |
| Carter, John | Folk Hymns for Piano | E-M | Hope |
| Cotter, Jeanne | After the Rain | M | GIA |
| Keil, Kevin | Reflecting God's Love | E | ?? |
| Kogut, Malcolm | Piano Reflections Vol. II and III | M | GIA |

572 *Organ and trumpet or other instruments*

| COMPOSER | TITLE | DIFFICULTY | PUBLISHER |
|--|---|------------|-------------------|
| Bach, J.S. (E. Power Biggs, ed.) | Now Thank We All Our God | E | Presser |
| Holstein, Jane | Classic Solos for Flute and Keyboard | E-M | Hope |
| Johnson, David N. | Wedding Music Vol. 1 – Prelude Music Vol. 2 - Processionals & Recessionals Vol. 3 Vol. 4 Vol. 5 – Manuals only | E-M | Augsburg-Fortress |
| Krebs, J.L. (E. Power Biggs, ed.) | Eight Chorale Preludes for Organ with trumpet or oboe | M-D | Presser |
| Mitchell-Wallace, Sue (and John Head) | The Classical Wedding | E-M | Hope |
| | Timeless Music for Weddings and Special Occasions | | Hope |
| Moore, Bob | Five Liturgical Preludes for flute, violin or oboe | M | GIA |
| Tucker, Dale, ed. | Let Trumpets Sound | M | H.W. Gray |
| Wolff, S Drummond | Baroque Music for Solo Instrument and Keyboard Set 1 & 2, for C and B-flat instruments | E-M | Morning Star |

573 *Vocal Solos*

| COMPOSER | TITLE | PUBLISHER |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Bach, J.S./Silhavy, arr. | May the Grace of Christ Our Savior (<i>Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring</i>) | GIA |
| Beck, John Ness | If You Love Me | Beckenhorst |
| Bell, John | God in the Planning | GIA |
| Bunjes, Paul, ed. | Wedding Blessings <i>A Collection of Vocal Solos</i> | Concordia |
| Haan, Raymond | The Unity Candle Song | GIA |
| Haas, David | When Love Is Found (<i>collection</i>) | GIA |
| Carroll, J. Robert | Lord May Their Lives Love is the Sunlight (Gaelic tune: BUNESSAN) | GIA GIA |
| Copeland, Roger | Bridal Prayer | Hope |
| Hallquist, Gary | Song of Ruth | Hope |
| Hopson, Hal | The Gift of Love When Love Is Found | Hope Hope |
| Miller, Aaron | Bow Down Your Ear | Augsburg-Fortress |
| Peeters, Flor | Wedding Song | ?? |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Roff, Joseph | Bless, O Lord, These Rings | GIA |
| | One in Heart and One in Mind | GIA |
| Verdi, Ralph | Wedding Song | GIA |
| Various composers | United As One, Vol. 1 and 2 (<i>collection</i>) | OCP |

(Vol. 2 contains wedding verses for the "Celtic Alleluia" as well as several settings of wedding responsorial psalms.)

In addition to the solo selections listed, there are hymns and songs found in most hymnals that work well as vocal solos.

CHAPTER IV: CONTINUING EDUCATION

The pastoral care of the regularly established family signifies, in practice, the commitment of all the members of the local ecclesial community to helping the couple to discover and live their new vocation and mission.

Pope John Paul II (*Familiaris consortio* 69)

A. Our Catholic Heritage

- 574 The *Code of Canon Law* requires pastors and their faith communities to provide assistance to all married couples so that the matrimonial state is maintained in a Christian spirit and makes progress towards perfection (Canon 1063). The canon suggests three areas for formation of Catholic people toward marriage, remote, proximate and immediate. In the remote sense, the Church understands all of life as a time to prepare for the adult role one is to play, and perhaps no vocational calling is more vital to society and life than is marriage and the family. Remote preparation ought to reflect the life-long learning approach so that it begins early in life and continues throughout, offering the finest in both catechesis and modeling so that children will be exposed to wholesome and vital images of the married life in the community in which they are formed, be it the family or the parish. Proximate preparation speaks to that time in young person's life when socialization skills are being turned toward the development and enrichment of cross gender friendships and is the gateway to the larger project of dating and courting. This period, which begins in adolescence and extends through the time when most young people will marry, suggests an intensive focus on the underlying dynamics of growing in faith, knowledge and the capacity for normal human relationships which will guide young people toward a deeper commitment to others which enables them to grasp the insights of the permanent, faithful and creative aspects of marriage. Immediate preparation, which has formed much of the "meat" of this document, is that time when a young couple, having embarked on the exciting project of "getting married," comes alive to the powerful reality of the sacrament, the community, the family which is formed at the liturgical ceremony of marriage. Each of these times and seasons demands of the Church its faithful attention and energy so that her children might be readied to accept not only the love of another, but the wonderfully awesome obligations of love and service to partner, children and community which that consent occasions.
- 575 Therefore, the ministry of the Church must extend beyond marriage preparation and planning the wedding liturgy. Pastors and their staffs are to take practical steps, appropriate for their parish, to ensure the parish supports married couples as they seek to live out the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- 576 At every level of the Church's ministry to families, married couples should be encouraged to pray together and to make family prayer a feature in their home life. While each married couple bears ultimate responsibility to care for the marriage they have created, diocesan and parish support of their vocation can be of great assistance to them. The Diocesan Schools and Youth Office sponsors a particularly good intergenerational program, *Generations of Faith*, which seeks to provide just such preparation.

B. Responsibilities of the Diocese

- 577 Goal: To provide support to parish staff members to assist married couples to live out their vocation.**
- 578** Guideline: Empower and encourage parish priests and deacons, and other staff and volunteers to become familiar with various direct and indirect ways of supporting married couples of the parish.
- 579** Discussion: Just as there are many different married couples in each parish, there are many different ways the Diocese and the local parish can provide support for married couples. Each parish needs to decide which means would be most effective for their situation, respecting the cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity that is a reality in most parishes. Most likely, employing a variety of strategies to support the married couples of the parish will prove most effective.
- 580** The Diocese will provide rituals/blessings to assist parishes to celebrate significant wedding anniversaries. The Diocese will also sponsor the annual 25th/50th Wedding Anniversary Mass for Jubilarian couples of every parish.
- 581** The Diocese can provide consultation, resources, and creative planning to individual parishes as they develop specific strategies to empower the married couples of the parish.

C. Responsibilities of the Parish

- 582 Goal: To assist married couples of the parish as they live out their vocation of marriage.**
- 583** Guideline: Commit to developing a formalized strategy to assist the married couples to live out their vocation.
- 584** Discussion: Many couples are unsure of the steps and unaware of the available resources that would help them strengthen their marriage. Therefore a multifaceted strategy that includes regular, ongoing opportunities for marriage education and skills building should be a part of each parish's mission. Offering resources and educational opportunities on a regular basis, in a variety of ways, will assist married couples to sustain their lifelong sacramental marriage.
- Parish priests and deacons should preach about the sanctity of marriage several times throughout the year when the readings are deemed appropriate.
 - Prayers for marriage and family should be included during the Prayers of the Faithful (see Ch. III, Prayers of the Faithful).
 - Marriage enrichment opportunities should be offered throughout the year. These offerings could be done in collaboration with other local parishes or on a deanery basis. The Family Life Office is developing an ongoing Marriage Enrichment Ministry which is hoped to be implemented in 2010.
 - Married couples, celebrating significant anniversaries, could renew their vows and/or be blessed at weekend liturgies as a sign of the importance of lifelong marriage.

- Pro-marriage resources, such as Marriage magazine, Marriage Partnership magazine, and “Marriage Moments” perpetual calendar, etc., could be made available to married couples.
- A listing of local area Christian, pro-marriage marriage counselors could be listed in the weekly bulletin.
- Publicity about Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille, and other reputable marriage enrichment programs should be listed in the weekly bulletin.
- A lending library that includes books, videos and magazines on faith development, conflict management, parenting, communication skills, spirituality of marriage, Natural Family Planning (Fertility Awareness), family of origin, etc., could be developed.
- The formation of marriage community through support groups, mentoring programs, and special celebrations could be strongly encouraged.

585 Goal: To encourage parishioners, along with the pastor and pastoral ministers, to become involved in preparing engaged couples for marriage, in celebrating marriage, and in providing opportunities for the ongoing support of married couples.

586 Guideline: Recognize marriage as a vocation for the Church. Nurture the vocations of those who have entered married life. This can be done by inviting experienced married couples to mentor the engaged and newly married. Married couples should be invited to take part in the parish’s marriage preparation process as PreCana presenters or mentor couples. Another way to nurture marriage is by encouraging the development of ongoing marriage support groups.

587 Discussion: Marriage is a lifelong process of becoming that begins at birth and continues throughout life. The parish can be a resource for marriage enrichment and education for couples as they “become married.” Parish leaders should nurture opportunities for mentoring, spiritual “companioning,” and encouraging.

588 Inviting married couples to serve as marriage preparation ministers calls upon them to serve the Church in specific ways through their marriage. Having an ongoing outreach of married couples ministering to other married couples fosters a like-to-like ministry and a mutually supportive community of marriage. Diocesan resources are available to assist parishes and deaneries in doing this.

D. Responsibilities of the Married Couple

589 Goal: To have a marriage relationship that is continuously strengthened and deepened as each couple lives faithful lives of mutual love and support.

590 Guideline: Take steps to strengthen and deepen the marriage relationship.

591 Discussion: There is a difference between getting married and becoming married. Getting married is a pivotal event for a couple. It is the beginning of a new life, the culmination of a budding relationship. It is a profound profession of faith that publicly reveals love that is meant to last forever. Getting married is an achievement, an arrival, and a threshold to a promise.

- 592 Becoming married is another proposition. In their book, *Becoming Married*, Herbert Anderson and Robert Cotton Fite say, “We may fall in love or into marriage but we do not fall into becoming married. That requires self-conscious intent.”
- 593 In some ways it starts long before a couple even know each other. Perceptions of marriage that are shaped by the marriages around them, from birth to the present, are part of that “becoming.” Cultural influences, ethnic, regional, generational, and from their families of origin, inform (or misinform) them about marriage.
- 594 Becoming married also includes discerning the call from within to discover one’s vocation in life. It is discerning a life of faithful commitment. This is very important. Prayerful discernment about one’s vocation—responding to God’s call—leads to a life with passion and meaning. Marriages that are born of this kind of discernment are most promising because they are shaped by faith.
- 595 Becoming married takes a turn toward the particular when one man and one woman choose each other. Their prayerful discernment continues through the engagement period. The wedding becomes more of a crescendo than an achievement.
- 596 Their becoming continues well into the marriage. As they traverse the stages of life they continue to learn how to be committed to each other. At each stage there is new becoming—as new parents, with adolescent children, as empty nesters, through illness, in retirement, even when a spouse dies.
- 597 Essentially, becoming married is a journey that begins as a response to God’s call—a life of vocation, and extends throughout life. It is a journey of experiences of transformation and conversion.
- 598 The journey also includes taking the initiative to seek new learning. Yet, marriage education is an issue that is easily overlooked by couples who have numerous demands confronting them everyday. However, because marriage is a primary relationship, the couple must try to reserve the time and take the necessary steps to keep the marriage relationship alive and growing.
- 599 Couples should take it upon themselves to seek out education opportunities. These opportunities could include programs and resources offered by their local parish as well as participation in Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille, couples’ retreats, and other marriage enrichment/education programs.
- 600 Couples should also take the opportunity to connect with other married couples for Christian fellowship and mutual support. Programs for ongoing support and mentoring offered at the parish can be excellent resources. Married couples should use them.
- 601 **Goal: To seek outside help if difficulties arise in the marriage.**
- 602 **Guideline:** There is concern for problems that arise in the marriage. It is advised to ask for outside help to get a better perspective on the difficulties. Parishes should make it clear to couples that problems are normal and that the parish offers resources to help. Such reminders may invite the

couple to seek help early on instead of waiting until it is too late.

- 603** Discussion: Rarely does a couple, on their wedding day, expect to have any difficulties in their marriage. It is a time of joy, promise, and anticipation of a life together, forever.
- 604** Current research shows that marriages often get into trouble in the first few years and couples have little knowledge of what to do about it. They may be embarrassed or ashamed as they struggle to make it work. Too many times the resolution becomes separation and divorce.
- 605** There are many fine books, programs, and strategies to help a couple grow into their marriage. It takes some extra work on their part, but it gives them the opportunity to regain and renew their commitment to the marriage.
- 606** The person who helped prepare the couple for marriage knows quite a bit about them and is the logical place to start for any help or discussion the couple may like to have about any difficulties they are having. Contact that minister for resources when needed. A periodic message in the bulletin may assist in letting couples who are experiencing trouble to reconnect with their Sponsor Couple, or may introduce them to another married couple that would be willing to help.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

- 607** We live in a time when, according to census data, more than half of all marriages fail. Being raised by one parent is commonplace among children, and few are unaffected by the dissolution of a marriage. “No-fault” divorce has become an easy option for marriages stuck in disillusionment. Rarely do we hear or read good news about marriage in the secular media.
- 608** Yet, there is good news about Christian marriage when seen clearly with eyes of faith. Instituted by Christ, and a conduit of grace from God, Christian marriage embodies all the hopes of our Catholic faith. Marriage is a conversion journey that shapes married people and calls each into communion with another and with God. The journey has a “Paschal Mystery” character that joins the married couple with God.
- 609** Sacred Heart Sister Kathleen Hughes:

What is the conversion journey that marriage celebrates? To which facet of the paschal mystery do couples that decide to have their marriage solemnized by the church join themselves? Why are we even using the language of “conversion” and “paschal mystery” for an experience as joyous, as beautiful and tender as falling in love and getting married?

Simply stated, we use language about conversion and paschal mystery because loving and dying are synonymous. Every loving is a dying—a dying to my own time, comfort, convenience, wants, needs, concerns, interests. Every loving is a dying to self-interest and self-aggrandizement in an act of generosity and self-giving. Every loving is a dying to egoism, a dying to “I” in order that two “I’s” become a “we.” Every loving implies acceptance of the other, single-heartedness, mutuality and giving and taking without keeping score—and all of it happens not just when one or the other feels like it but daily, and for all the days of ordinary time as well as in the high holy seasons of a marriage.

We use language about conversion and paschal mystery in speaking about the reality of married love—and about mutual and lasting fidelity as a witness to God’s steadfast love—because these realities need to be spoken to a starry-eyed couple caught up in the easy springtime of relationship, where life abounds and death in its many guises seems remote...A wedding does not make a marriage. A wedding simply makes a marriage possible.

Some of the dimensions of the paschal mystery that a couple faces are spelled out explicitly both in the promises and in the exchange of consent that are part of the ceremony. There are three questions asked of a couple at the beginning of the celebration, questions about freedom and faithfulness and children (RM, 44), and each of them is really an invitation to a kind of personal death for the sake of new life: “Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?” The couple is invited to state before all present that they choose freely to bind themselves to each other without reserve. “Will you love and honor each other for the rest of your lives?” In pledging faithfulness, the couple accepts the death involved in choosing one person and the foreclosure of all other choices. “Will you accept children lovingly from God?” Couples are asked to make a public promise that the world they

share is radically open to others lest the death of the ego that becomes “we” simply becomes the closed world of “ego squared.”

The vows of consent also spell out a rhythm of dying and rising: better and worse, sickness and health, poverty and riches (45). The exchange of consent names some of the ways in which the paschal mystery will touch the lives of this couple, and the metaphors of health and prosperity and their loss are just that, metaphors for the rhythm of our days, of dishes and work schedules and children to be fed and cars that need servicing and the thousand details of life, large and small, that constitute the keeping of these promises—to say nothing of the crises, the moments of grief and loss, grave illness, financial woes, that form larger challenges to promise keeping.

But how is any of this possible? Keeping promises is the way by which the old self is changed into something light and generous and good and for the other. One couple said, “I think we found a lot of our identity in the whole paschal mystery, in death and rising and that kind of rhythm of life. That’s why we chose to have our marriage at a Eucharist. It’s where we have found our deepest identity.”²³

- 610** The care and support of one another, children, parents, families, friends, and the community of the Church are vital for engaged and married couples. This concern is particularly necessary to enable the engaged to assess their readiness and prepare for marriage, and to support and encourage married persons to live in the hope that is promised in their union. This support is manifested in the sharing of experiences, gifts, and wisdom that will nourish the dreams and crystallize the realities of their love.
- 611** Participation in this care and support for engaged and married couples presents a great challenge for the Church. It is also an opportunity for building relationships, offering a sensitive presentation of the Church’s vision of marriage, participating in the joyful celebration of weddings, and deepening a continued bond with couples throughout their married life.
- 612** Every person who is married, considering marriage, preparing for marriage, or struggling to stay married should have the encouragement, care, and support of the faith community. Every person who is part of the Body of Christ is a source for this. The local Church, to accomplish this, provides direction in the form of these *Guidelines for Pastoral Outreach to Christian Marriage*.
- 613** As was stated in the mission statement of this manual, marriage is communal, and it takes a community to make it work. It is in the community that a man and a woman choose each other; it is in the community that they live out their purpose as sacrament; and it is in the community, with God’s grace, that they are sustained, encouraged, and protected.
- 614** As Paschal Mystery and “the most fundamental sacrament of adult vocation,” Christian marriage serves the couple, their family, and the entire community. The purpose of this document is to help us meet the challenge to lift up, preserve, and protect marriage, and seize the wonderful opportunities to evangelize the world through the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- 615** By addressing marriage at all stages of life – *Formation, Preparation, Celebration, and*

²³ Kathleen Hughes, *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament* (LTP: Chicago, 1999). Used with permission.

Continuing Education – this document is intended as a pastoral tool for all who interface with marriage, “from cradle to grave.” May this intentional outreach aid the Church in being a blessing to marriage, and marriage as a blessing to the Church.

APPENDIX A: DIRIMENT IMPEDIMENTS

A-1 Canon 11 states: “Merely ecclesiastical laws bind those

- baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it, and
- who enjoy the sufficient use of reason, and,
- unless the law expressly provides otherwise, have completed seven years of age.”

This means that some of the impediments do not bind non-Catholics. However, non-Catholics and even the non-baptized may be bound by “merely ecclesiastical laws” when they are marrying a Catholic.

A-2 **Canon 1083 (Lack of age)**

§1. A man before he has completed his sixteenth year of age, and likewise a woman before she has completed her fourteenth year of age, cannot enter a valid marriage.

§2. It is within the power of the conference of bishops to establish an older age for the licit celebration of marriage.

A-3 **Canon 1084 (Impotence)**

§1. Antecedent and perpetual impotence to have intercourse, whether on the part of the man or of the woman, which is either absolute or relative, of its very nature invalidates marriage.

§2. If the impediment of impotence is doubtful, either by reason of a doubt of law or a doubt of fact, a marriage is neither to be impeded nor is it to be declared null as long as the doubt exists.

Canon 14: “When there is a doubt of law, laws do not bind, even if they be nullifying or disqualifying ones. When there is a doubt of fact, however, ordinaries can dispense from them. In the latter case, if it is a question of a reserved dispensation, the ordinaries can dispense so long as the dispensation is usually granted by the authority to whom it is reserved.”

The British commentary explains: “Doubt of law arises when there is a positive and an objective doubt as to whether the law exists, as to what precisely it means, as to whom it intends to oblige, as to whether it may have been superseded, etc...Doubt of fact—which assumes that the law itself is not doubtful, but certain—arises when there is a positive and an objective doubt as to whether a given fact or set of facts falls within the compass or scope clearly envisaged by the law...”

§3. Sterility neither prohibits nor invalidates marriage, with due regard for the prescription of Canon 1098.

Canon 1098 states: “A person contracts invalidly who enters marriage deceived by fraud, perpetrated to obtain consent, concerning some quality of the other party which of its very

nature can seriously disturb the partnership of conjugal life.”

A-4 Canon 1085 (Prior bond or ligamen)

§1. A person who is held to the bond of a prior marriage, even if it has not been consummated, invalidly attempts marriage.

§2. Even if the prior marriage is invalid or dissolved for any reason whatsoever, it is not on that account permitted to contract another before the nullity or the dissolution of the prior marriage has been legitimately and certainly established.

The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal
Petition for a Declaration of Nullity of Consent Due to an Existing Previous Valid Marriage
(c. 1085, §1 - *ligamen*)

God’s justice has been brought to light. The Law and the prophets both bear witness to it: it is God’s way of righting wrong, effective through faith in Christ for all who have such faith - all, without distinction.
Rom. 3, 21-22.

The Procurator/Advocate should assist in the completion of this form and remit it directly to:
Toledo Diocesan Tribunal
1933 Spielbusch Ave.
Toledo, Ohio 43604

I, _____
first name middle name last name (including maiden name if female)

a Catholic, non-Catholic, residing at _____
address

_____, petition for a declaration of the
city state zip

nullity of my marital consent exchanged with _____
first name middle name last name (including maiden if female)

a Catholic, non-Catholic, currently residing at _____
address

_____, contracted on _____
city state zip date

at _____
city county state

before a Catholic priest/deacon religious minister civil official rabbi other

The civil divorce dissolution was obtained from _____
city

_____ on _____
county state month day year

I contend that my marital consent was null and void from the beginning because of my former spouse’s existing previous marriage with _____.

In support of this claim, I submit the following authentic documents:

- a **recent** baptismal certificate with all notations for each party who is Catholic;
- a copy of the *Application for Marriage License* with the attached *Certificate of Marriage*;
- a civil divorce/dissolution of that marriage together with any separation agreement;

- a copy of the *Application for Marriage License* with the attached *Certificate of Marriage* for my former spouse's previous marriage; and
- a civil divorce or dissolution decree of that marriage.

The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal is generously funded in part by the people of the nineteen county Diocese of Toledo through their gifts and donations to the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA). Those gifts assist in paying salaries and health insurance, utilities and other costs associated with operating any business. It is the expectation of the Tribunal and Diocese that those using this specialized service will contribute to that part of the general costs which are not met by the ACA. Please review the Financial Covenant below and return it with your Petition for the Declaration of Freedom.

I, _____, understand that the Tribunal asks my assistance in meeting its costs for the adjudication of my petition for a declaration of freedom to marry due to the previous valid marriage of my former spouse. I understand that the customary assistance for this petition is \$100. I enclose \$ _____ with my petition and agree to submit the remainder.

 Petitioner's signature (use current full name)

 Date

Procurator/Advocate name (print legibly) _____

Procurator Signature _____

Address _____

Parish _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

A-6 Canon 1086 (Disparity of worship)

§1. Marriage between two persons, one of whom is baptized in the Catholic Church or has been received into it and has not left it by means of a formal act, and the other of whom is non-baptized, is invalid.

§2. This impediment is not to be dispensed unless the conditions mentioned in Canon 1125 and 1126 are fulfilled.

Canon 1125: “The local ordinary can grant this permission if there is a just and reasonable cause; he is not to grant it unless the following conditions have been fulfilled: (1) the Catholic party declares that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of falling away from the faith and makes a sincere promise to do all in his or her power to have all the children baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church; (2) the other party is to be informed at an appropriate time of these promises which the Catholic party has to make, so that it is clear that the other party is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party; (3) both parties are to be instructed on the essential ends and properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either party.”

Canon 1126: “The conference of bishops is to establish the way in which these declarations and promises, which are always required, are to be made, what proof of them there should be in the external forum and how they are to be brought to the attention of the non-Catholic party.

§3. If at the time the marriage was contracted one party was commonly considered to be baptized or the person’s baptism was doubted, the validity of the marriage is to be presumed in accord with the norm of Canon 1060 until it is proven with certainty that one party was baptized and the other was not.

Canon 1060: “Marriage enjoys the favor of the law; consequently, when a doubt exists the validity of the marriage is to be upheld until the contrary is proven.”

A-7 Canon 1087 (Sacred orders)

Persons who are in holy orders invalidly attempt marriage.

A-8 Canon 1088 (Religious profession)

Persons who are bound by a public perpetual vow of chastity in a religious institute invalidly attempt marriage.

A-9 Canon 1089 (Abduction)

No marriage can exist between a man and a woman abducted or at least detained for the purpose of contracting marriage with her, unless the woman of her own accord chooses marriage after she has been separated from her abductor and established in a place where she is safe and free.

A-10 Canon 1090 (Crime)

§1. A person, who for the purpose of entering marriage with a certain person has brought about the death of that person's spouse or one's own spouse, invalidly attempts such a marriage.

§2. They also invalidly attempt marriage between themselves who have brought about the death of the spouse of one of them through mutual physical or moral cooperation.

Note: The impediment of crime has been greatly simplified in the 1983 Code. Most of the categories from the previous code have been removed, so that this impediment rarely occurs.

A-11 Canon 1091 (Consanguinity)

§1. In the direct line of consanguinity, marriage is invalid between all ancestors and descendants, whether they are related legitimately or naturally.

Canon 108: "§1. Consanguinity is calculated through lines and degrees. §2. In the direct line, there are as many degrees as there are generations of persons, not counting the common ancestor. §3. In the collateral line, there are as many degrees as there are persons in both lines together, not counting the common ancestor."

§2. In the collateral line of consanguinity, marriage is invalid up to and including the fourth degree. (Note: The concept of consanguinity and affinity have been greatly simplified in the present Code. The most common designation of "consanguinity in the fourth degree in the collateral line" is "first cousins." This impediment, in the collateral line, can be dispensed.

However, the Diocese will not issue a dispensation for a marriage, which is taking place contrary to civil law. In the State of Ohio, first cousins may not marry ever, and second cousins may not marry unless they are of a certain age. Therefore, the Diocese will not issue a dispensation for first cousins to marry. This only applies to marriages for which a civil marriage license must be obtained. It does not apply to convalidations where a civil marriage has already taken place.

A-12 Canon 1092 (Affinity)

Affinity in the direct line in any degree whatsoever invalidates matrimony.

Canon 109: "§1. Affinity arises from a valid marriage, even if not consummated, and exists between a man and the blood relatives of the woman and between the woman and blood relatives of the man. §2. It is so calculated that those who are blood relatives of the man are related in the same line and degree by affinity to the woman, and vice versa."

A-13 Canon 1093 (Public propriety)

The impediment of public propriety arises from an invalid marriage after common life has been established or from notorious or public concubinage; it invalidates marriage in the first degree of the direct line between the man and the blood relatives of the woman, and vice-versa.

A-14 Canon 1094 (Legal adoption)

They cannot validly contract marriage between themselves who are related in the direct line or in the second degree of the collateral line through a legal relationship arising from adoption.

Canon 110: “Children who have been adopted according to the norm of civil law are considered as being the children of the person or persons who have adopted them.”

The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal

Petition for a Decree of Absence of Form (c. 1108)

After meeting with the Petitioner, the Advocate should submit this Petition, with all requested supporting documents, to:

Diocesan Tribunal
1933 Spielbusch Ave.
Toledo, Ohio 43604

I, _____, was a
first name middle name maiden name if applicable current last name

Catholic, non-Catholic _____ when I married
denomination

_____, who was
first name middle name maiden name if applicable current last name

Catholic, non-Catholic _____, at _____,
denomination city

_____ County, _____, on _____.
state complete date

The ceremony was officiated at by a priest/deacon religious minister civil magistrate

We obtained a decree of divorce dissolution at _____, in
city

_____ County, _____, on _____.
state complete date

Please check all appropriate boxes:

On the date of the marriage, at least one of us was Catholic Yes No

Permission from Catholic Church authorities was obtained Yes No

A Catholic ceremony was held at a later date Yes No

Before the wedding, the Catholic party joined another church* Yes No

Please list the complete/full name of all children brought to the union and the complete date of birth or adoption of each:

Alimony and child support agreements are:

My current mailing address is _____
number and street
_____, _____, _____
city state zip/postal code

My phone number in case I need to be contacted is _____.

I am currently registered at/attending _____ parish which is located at
_____, _____, _____
city state zip/postal code

My former spouse's current name is _____
first name middle name maiden name if applicable last name

His/her address is _____
number and street
_____, _____, _____
city state zip/postal code

I understand that the ordinary expenses involved in filing this petition are \$50 and agree to make full payment. I have enclosed \$ _____ with this petition.

Petitioner's signature date

This Petition *cannot be processed* unless the following documents have been included with the submission: a recent copy of the baptismal certificate(s) of all Catholic parties with notations, a copy of the civil Application for Marriage License with attached Certificate of Marriage, a copy of the civil divorce/dissolution judgment decree with appropriate Separation Agreement(s)

Advocate Name _____

Advocate Signature _____

Advocate Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Phone number where Advocate can be reached if Petition lacks necessary materials _____

*A baptized Catholic remains a Catholic unless he/she has by a formal act placed before an official of the Catholic Church a formal statement withdrawing from the Church.
(c.1086, §1)

The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal

Petition for the Pauline Privilege (cc. 1141-1150)

If a Christian has an unbaptized wife, and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her; and a woman who has an unbaptized husband willing to live with her must not divorce her husband. For the unbaptized husband now belongs to God through his Christian wife, and the unbaptized wife through her husband. If on the other hand, the unbaptized partner wishes for a separation, let him have it. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is under no compulsion. I Cor 7: 12-14a, 15-16.

The Pauline Privilege is the dissolution of a presumed valid natural but non-sacramental bond in favor of a sacramental marriage, or to preserve the faith of the Catholic party in a non-sacramental marriage. Its use dates to the Apostolic Era and requires a formal statement by one in authority that the requirements have all been met (since there is a civil marriage license which the Church would presume had led to a valid marriage) The following criteria must be met for the use of this privilege.

1. The two parties were certainly unbaptized at the time of the wedding and the Respondent remains unbaptized at this point;
2. It is clear that the possibility of reconciliation does not exist; and
3. There is conversion (Christian baptism) on the part of the Petitioner.

The separation of the spouses or even the civil decree terminating the civil requirements of marriage does not dissolve the natural bond; rather valid consent to a new marriage in the Catholic Church accomplishes the dissolution.

Conversion to Catholicism is not required; rather conversion to Christianity suffices for the use of the privilege.

In order to determine the potential for applying for the privilege, any of the following must apply:

1. A Catholic seeks to marry a convert to Catholicism, who was formerly non-baptized and married to a non-baptized person;
2. A Catholic seeks to marry a convert to another Christian church who was formerly non-baptized and married to a non-baptized person;
3. A convert to Catholicism who was formerly non-baptized and married to a non-baptized person seeks to marry a baptized non-Catholic or non-baptized person. In this case, the dissolution is granted in virtue of c. 1147, which is concerned with mixed marriages. Permission, if it is a mixed marriage, and a dispensation for the impediment, if it is a disparity of cult (to a non-baptized) marriage is required. In either case, all the requirements for a mixed marriage enumerated in cc. 1124-1129, must be met.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE STAGES INVOLVED IN A PAULINE PRIVILEGE OF THE FAITH CASE:

1. Submission of the Petition for the Pauline Privilege and required documentation;
2. Questionnaire sent to the Petitioner via the Procurator/Advocate;
3. Collection of the deposition of the Respondent (if deemed necessary) and the testimony of witnesses regarding the non-baptism of the parties. The non-baptism of both parties must be verified;
4. Review of the evidence by the Tribunal;
5. The Decree granting the Pauline Privilege is issued authorizing the Petitioner's baptism and declaring that after his/her baptism, the party is free to contract marriage within the Roman Catholic Church.

Petition for Pauline Privilege of the Faith

Advocate: Remit this form and all supporting documents to:

The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal
1933 Spielbusch Ave.
Toledo, Ohio 43604

date: _____

I, _____, residing at _____
first, middle, maiden last name street

_____, petition for the use of the Pauline Privilege.
city, state and zip

I married _____, now residing at _____
first, middle, maiden, last name street

_____, in the presence of a minister priest
city, state and zip

rabbi civil magistrate other, at _____
city and state

on _____.
date

II. We separated finally at _____ on _____
city and state date

and never lived together as man and wife afterward.

III. The Respondent (my former spouse) remains unbaptized at this point in time.

IV. In support of the above, I submit the following documentation:

- A certified copy of the civil Application for Marriage License with the attached Certificate of Marriage
- A certified copy of the civil Divorce/Dissolution decree with the accompanying Separation Agreement
- A recent Catholic Baptismal Certificate, with all notations, for the party whom the
Petitioner wishes to marry
- A recent Catholic Baptismal Certificate with all notations for the Petitioner, if baptized. If baptized in a
non-Catholic denomination, a record of Trinitarian baptism must also be submitted.
- This petition form, signed by both the Petitioner and his/her Advocate/Procurator.

V. I enclose a deposit of \$_____ for the expenses incurred by the Toledo Diocesan Tribunal in excess
of the funding provided by the ACA (Annual Catholic Appeal), which has been fixed at \$100.

Advocate signature

Petitioner signature

You may find it simplifies getting the correct forms by taking this Petition along with you to the courthouse

APPENDIX B: MARRIAGE & FAMILY RESOURCES

B-1 Diocesan Agencies and Contacts

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Catholic Charities 1933 Spielbusch Ave. Toledo, OH 43604 419-244-6711 800-926-8277 www.toledodiocese.org | Diocese of Toledo Tribunal 1933 Spielbusch Ave. Toledo, OH 43604 419-244-6711 800-926-8277 www.toledodiocese.org | Episcopal Vicar 1933 Spielbusch Ave. Toledo, OH 43604 419-244-6711 800-926-8277 www.toledodiocese.org |
|---|---|--|

Project Rachel Help Line
Toledo phone #419-260-5811
Outside Toledo phone # 800-926-8277
projectrachel@toledodiocese.org

B-2 Books

Anderson, Kevin, Ph.D., *The 7 Spiritual Practices of Marriage*, (2005) CLB Press, Ohio

Baker, J. Robert, Gibley, Joni, and Gibley Kevin Charles (1994). *A Marriage Sourcebook*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

Bouley, Allen, O.S.B, ed. (1992). *Catholic Rites Today*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

Bowman, Thea, FSPA, Ph.D. (1985). *Families: Black and Catholic/Catholic and Black*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Godek, Gregory J. P. (1995). *1001 Ways To Be Romantic*. Casablanca Press.

Gottman, John (1994). *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail...And How You Can Make Yours Last*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Gottman, John and Silver, Nan (1999). *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Healy, Dr. James (1999). *Living Together and Christian Commitment: A Reflection for Engaged Couples Who Are Living Together*. Joliet, Illinois: Rooted In Love Publications.

Hogan, Richard M. and LeVoir, John (1992). *Covenant of Love: Pope John Paul II on Sexuality, Marriage, and Family in the Modern World*. Ft. Collins, CO: Ignatius Press.

John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, 22 November 1981, in AAS 75 (1981), pp. 81-191. English translation in *Origins*, 28/29 (1981-1982) 24 December 1981, pp. 437-468. This text is available in most Catholic bookstores.

John Paul II, Letter to Families, *Gratissimam sane*, 2 February 1994, in AAS 86 (1994), pp. 868-925. English translation in *Origins*, 23 (1993-1994), 3 March 1994, pp. 637-659. This text is available in most Catholic bookstores.

John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1997.

J.S. Wallerstein and J.B. Kelly, *Surviving the Breakup: How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce*, New York, Basic Books, 1980. The text goes into a lot of detail on how divorce conditions future relationships and it could be useful for doing second marriage preps.

Kehrwald, Leif, *Perspectives on Marriage*, Chicago, Ill., ACTA Publications, 1998.

Markman, Howard J., Stanley, Scott M., and Blumberg, Susan L. (2001). *Fighting For Your Marriage: Positive Steps for Preventing Divorce and Preserving a Lasting Love*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Midgley, John and Susan, *A Decision to Love*, Mystic, CT., Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Faithful to Each Other Forever-A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation*, Washington, D.C., 1988.

National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (1999). *Sharing the Sacred Story with Families*. Dayton: NACFLM.

Notarius, Clifford and Markman, Howard (1993). *We Can Work It Out, Making Sense of Marital Conflict*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (1993). *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*.

Rolheiser, Ronald (1999). *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*. New York: Doubleday.

Ruhnke, Robert, *For Better and For Ever*, San Antonio, TX, 2000.

Sheen, Fulton J. (1996). *Three To Get Married*. New York: Scepter Publications.

Smalley, Gary and Trent, John (1999). *Language of Love: A Powerful Way To Maximize Insight, Intimacy, and Understanding*. Pomona, CA: Focus on the Family Pub.

Stanley, Scott (1998). *The Heart of Commitment: Cultivating Lifelong Devotion in Marriage*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Steinhauser, William P., Boyce-Steinhauser, Laurie A., and Hannigan, Francis P. (2000). *A Marriage in the Lord*. Chicago: Cana Conference.

Steinhauser, William P., Boyce-Steinhauser, Laurie A., and Hannigan, Francis P. (2001). *A Ministry to Marriage*. Chicago: Cana Conference.

Thomas, David (1989). *Written on Scrolls; Inscribed on Hearts*, Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press.

United States Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (1998). *A Guide for Catholics Considering Marriage with an Orthodox Christian*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

United States Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (1998). *A Guide on Catholic-Orthodox Marriages for Catholic Clergy and Other Pastoral Ministers*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

United States Bishops' Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices (1989). *Faithful to Each Other Forever: A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1994). *Follow the Way of Love*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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B-3 Periodicals

Marriage: A monthly magazine that helps enrich, enhance and enliven marriage. 955 Lake Drive, St. Paul Minnesota 55120; (800) MARRIAGE; www.marriagemagazine.org.

Marriage Partnership: A quarterly magazine that offers realistic help for making marriages work. 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188; mp@marriagepartnership.com; www.marriagepartnership.com.

Foundations Newsletter: A bi-monthly publication for newly married couples. P.O. Box 1632 Portland, Maine 04101-1632; (800) 775-4757; fax: (207) 773-2162; sbeirne@maine.rr.com; www.foundationsnewsletter.com.

At Home with Our Faith: U.S. Catholic's family spirituality newsletter, which provides parents with ideas and resources to help pass on a living faith. Mary Lynn Hendrickson, Editor, 205 West Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606-5033; Phone: (312) 236-7782; Fax: (312) 236-8207; e-mail: editor@homefaith.com; www.homefaith.com.

B-4 Audio-Visual Resources

Light Her Fire and Light His Fire: Two six-cassette audio series with lots of great ideas to help rekindle the spark in any marriage. A great way to put fun, romance and communication in your relationship.

Our Catholic Wedding: A 30-minute video on *The Catholic Rite of Marriage*. Engaged couples and anyone who prepares the wedding liturgy can use this video to understand the rite of marriage in a fuller way. © 2001 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622-1101; (800) 933-1800; fax (800) 933-7084; orders@ltp.org; www.ltp.org .

To Last a Lifetime: Examines the contemporary challenge of building and maintaining a strong marriage—particularly in a society with a high rate of divorce—through the experiences of four couples in Catholic marriage preparation, mentoring, and mending programs. The video includes a discussion guide and was produced by the U.S. Bishops' Catholic Communication Campaign in cooperation with State of the Art, Inc., and the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; 3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194; (202) 541-3000; www.usccb.org .

When the Cake Is Gone: How to Get Married and Stay Engaged: A one-hour audio CD by Dr. James Healy. Rooted In Love Publications, 1511 Jones Street, Joliet, Illinois 60435-6711; (815) 741-5188; www.rootedinlove.org .

B-5 Internet Resources

Arusi Retreat for Christian Marriages: Marriage Enrichment through Community/Community Enrichment through Marriage. Lyke To Lyke Consultants, P.O. Box 652, Matteson, Illinois 60443-0652; www.lyke2lyke.com ; Arusi.Retreat@lyke2lyke.com ; (708) 481-4361, fax (508) 256-0217.

At Home with Our Faith: U.S. Catholic's site offers current reporting, commentary, and discussion about living as a Catholic today. Homefaith.com, sponsored by the family spirituality newsletter At Home with Our Faith, provides parents with ideas and resources to help pass on a living faith. Mary Lynn Hendrickson, Editor, 205 West Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606-5033; Phone: (312) 236-7782; Fax: (312) 236-8207; e-mail: editor@homefaith.com ; www.homefaith.com .

Catholic Family Network: Online resources for families. www.catholicfamilies.net .

Chicagoland Marriage Resource Center: a major clearing house for all types of marriage education programs; troubled marriage outreach, premarital education and preparation, and enrichment and lifetime support for married couples. Designed to provide what a couple needs to prepare for marriage, enrich and sustain marriage, and repair a tenuous marriage, this is the resource warehouse for the Midwest. www.chicagolandmarriage.org

Christian Family Movement: Families banding together to promote Catholic values. (847) 255-4909; www.cfm.org .

Family, Marriage, and "De Facto" Unions: Discusses the Catholic understandings of family and marriage in light of the growing number of de facto (non-marital) unions. From the Pontifical Council for the Family. www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_20001109_defactounions_en.html-- .

First Years and Forever eNewsletter: For newly married couples. Sponsored by the Family Life Office. (312) 751-8351; canaconference@archchicago.org; www.familyministries.org/FirstYearsForever/archive.htm .

Follow the Way of Love: A Pastoral Message of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to Families On the Occasion of the United Nations 1994 International Year of the Family. www.usccb.org/laity/follow.htm .

Marriage Alive International: Marriage and family enrichment resource organization. (423) 691-8505; www.marriagealive.com .

On the Family (Familiaris consortio): Pope John Paul II addresses the role of the family in society as a believing and evangelizing community in dialogue with God. www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jpii_exh_19811122_familiarisconsortio_en.html-- .

On the Regulation of Birth (Humanae vitae): Pope Paul's landmark encyclical addresses doctrinal principles and pastoral directives on the safeguarding of human life in today's world. Includes teaching on the consequences of artificial methods of birth control. www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_pvi_enc_25071968_humanaevitae_en.html--

Retrouvaille: A program to help couples heal and renew their own marriage relationship. (800) 470-2230; www.retrouvaille.org.

Smart Marriages: The Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, L.L.C.: An interest group whose members are convinced that family breakdown can be reduced through education and information. www.smartmarriages.com .

Worldwide Marriage Encounter: A program for marriage enrichment. (800) 442-3554; www.wwme.org .

B-6 Programs

Arusi Retreat for Christian Marriages: Marriage Enrichment through Community/Community Enrichment through Marriage. Lyke To Lyke Consultants, P.O. Box 652, Matteson, Illinois 60443-0652; (708) 481-4361; www.lyke2lyke.com ; Arusi.Retreat@lyke2lyke.com .

Christian Family Movement: Families banding together to promote Catholic values. (847) 255-4909; www.cfm.org .

First Years and Forever Continuing Education Workshops: For couples in their first year of marriage. Sponsored by the Family Life Office. (312) 751-8351; cana@archchicago.org; www.familyministries.org/FirstYearsForever/mcew.htm .

Marriage Alive International: Marriage and family enrichment resource organization. (423) 691-8505; www.marriagealive.com .

National Marriage Encounter: A Judeo/Christian based ministry and support organization for married couples. (800) 828-3351; www.marriageencounter.org .

Recovery Marriage Encounter: Weekend designed to support the person or couple recovering from addiction. Contact Jim and Colleen H. at (847) 695-4855 or Jacob and Barbara C. at (847) 639-4192.

Retrouvaille: A program to help couples heal and renew their own marriage relationship. (800) 470-2230; www.retrouvaille.org.

The Third Option: A non-denominational on-going support group with educational components. www.thethirdoption.com

Worldwide Marriage Encounter: A program for marriage enrichment. (800) 442-3554; www.wwme.org.

B-7 Engaged Couples Training Materials

Pre-Cana Packet: ACTA Publications, 5559 W. Howard St., Skokie, IL 60077, Phone # 800-397-2282 www.actapublications.com This contains 8 booklets and a two-pocket folder to hold the material.

Sacramental Communication in Marriage: Kevin Anderson, Ph.D., 5155 Albon Rd., B.O. Box 74, Monclova, OH 43542, Phone # 419-861-2269.

A Ministry to Marriage: Family Ministries Office, Archdiocese of Chicago, 155 East Superior, Chicago, IL 60611, Phone # 312-751-8340.

Perspectives on Marriage: Revised by Leif Kehrwald, ACTA Publications, 5559 W. Howard St., Skokie, IL 60077, Phone # 800-397-2282, www.actapublications.com

A Decision to Love: John M.V. Midgley and Susan Vollmer Midgley; Twenty-Third Publications/Bayard, 185 Willow St., P.O. Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355, Phone # 800-321-0411.

A Marriage in the Lord: William P. Steinhauser, D.Min., Francis P. Hannigan, M.A.; the Cana Conference, Archdiocese of Chicago, 155 East Superior, Chicago, Ill 60611, Phone # 312-751-8340.

Faithful to Each Other Forever – A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage preparation: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., Washington, D.C.; Publication No. 252-7.

Evenings for the Engaged: A six-week program highlighting Matrimony as a vocation to love: Jim and Paula Dahl and Father Chuck Gallagher, S.J., Father Joseph M. Champlin; William H. Sadlier, Inc., 7 Pine St., New York, New York 10005, Phone # 800-221-5175.

Day by Day – A Five-session Program of Preparation for Christian Marriage: John J. Colligan and Kathleen A. Colligan; Paulist Press, 997 Macarthur Boulevard, Mahwah, New Jersey 07430

UNITAS – preparing for Sacramental Marriage based on the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults: Joann Heaney-Hunterm Ph.D., Louis H. Primavera, Ph.D.; A Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company, 370 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017

Today and All the Days of your Life –a combination of a manual along with a video or DVD which is in an 8 part series: Archdiocese of St. Louis and Liguori Publications; Liguori Publications, One Liguori Dr., Liguori, Missouri 63057; Phone # 800-325-9521.

Sacramental Communication in Marriage – Skills for building a strong marriage day by day: Kevin Anderson, Ph.D.; 4155 Albon Rd., P.O. Box 74, Monclova, OH 43542; Phone #419-861-2269.

Before “I Do” – Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage: Anthony Garascia; Ave Maria Press, Inc, P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556; Phone # 800-282-1865; www.avemariapress.com

Preparing for Marriage—This is a 16 session workbook: Thaddeus V. Pijacki; The center for learning, P.O. Box 910, Villa Maria, PA 16155; Phone # 800-767-9090

B-8 References

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Chicago: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

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Living Without Fear

3. Find healthy ways to resolve differences.

Many couples don't know how to solve differences. They recycle them. They argue until they're worn out or until the other person gives in. Then the issue that didn't get resolved keeps coming up over and over again, even during arguments about completely unrelated issues.

Using issues from the past as ammunition in later arguments is a warning sign of unhealthy conflict resolution. Studies indicate that the single greatest predictor of marital breakdown is the inability of couples to resolve differences, to make a decision that both parties can live with, and that really answers the problem.

4. Learn creative ways to deal with stress.

People often carry into adulthood a small repertoire of ways to handle stress. The problem is that different stressors demand different responses. Thinking a problem out might work on a puzzling situation, but can become obsessive and stress-producing when the problem doesn't have a logical solution. Broadening the number of ways to handle stress can do a lot to lower tension in marriage. Some of these can be learned on their own; others, like biofeedback, can be learned from a professional.

5. Build a network of support.

Literally hundreds of studies in medicine and psychology have shown that support from family and friends can make even severe stress more manageable and can make people much better able to withstand setbacks in life. It is not coincidental that, in abusive marriages, one common form of

abuse is to socially isolate a spouse from her family and friends. A person who has support from others is a stronger person, less likely to be intimidated by a spouse.

6. Pray together as a couple.

Studies have shown that couples praying together is more strongly correlated to satisfaction in marriage than any other factor. Prayer does not necessarily cause marriages to be stronger. But praying together does indicate a relationship where sharing common hopes, mutuality, and common support is a priority. Such relationships are viewed by couples as more satisfying for both of them.

7. Build communication skills.

Programs like Marriage Encounter and Retrouvaille are based on the power of effective communication as the foundation of successful marriage. The effectiveness of these programs over the years attests to the truth of this belief. Before problems become insurmountable, attending a couples' communication program can do a lot to strengthen a marriage.

Both within a marriage and with the help of programs – some sponsored by the Church and others your parish can recommend – there are ways to make good marriages even stronger.

You don't have to wait until problems arise to make it happen, because if there is one thing that experience has shown, it is that the healthiest couples are those who don't assume a marriage is strong. They work at it.

Preventing Domestic Violence & Building Stronger Relationships For Engaged & Newly Married Couples

For additional copies contact:
Family Life Office
Catholic Charities
(419) 244-6711, Ext. 409

August, 2009

When people think of joyful events, weddings are near the top of nearly everyone's list. Wedding vows remind us of our hopes and expectations about how life should be.

There is a harsher reality, however, that often lies just beyond those vows, the reality of domestic violence.

The American Medical Association estimates that between 3 and 4 million women in the United States are battered each year by their husbands or partners. These figures cut across all age, racial, economic, and educational groups.

The Catholic Church strongly condemns abusive behavior toward women in all its forms and encourages women who are at risk to act to ensure their own safety and the safety of their children.

Recognizing the seriousness of the problem of spousal abuse is important for all married couples, but in a particular way for young couples. *Newly married couples are at special risk of violence in the relationship for several reasons.*

First, the pressures on the newly married are often more severe than couples anticipate and can easily outstrip their ability to handle the accompanying stress.

In addition, for many couples the "honeymoon" stage of the relationship creates a false sense of security, a sense of invulnerability the "problems are what happens to other people, not to us".

Then, when problems arise – as they inevitably do – the sense of failure or of things feeling out of control is even more intense.

Second, the engagement and early married stages of a relationship contain the risk of violence because of a couple's lack of experience with each other, especially regarding their mutual expectations.

Spousal abuse is not only about violence; it is about control. Abusive men need to control their partners and will resort to fear and intimidation to get it.

During the engagement, couples may minimize or deny the existence of controlling attitudes and behavior, thinking these are just isolated incidents or hoping it will go away. It is often only after the wedding that these tendencies are seen for what they are.

This is why newly married couples should be alert to those expectations that make the woman subordinate to the man, or that allow him to make decisions that are rightfully hers as well. Women should be particularly concerned about their partner's reaction when he isn't getting his way and resorts to intimidation or violence to get it.

Third, the early married stage of marriage is susceptible to violence because the relationship itself changes, especially around the time of the birth of a child. Incidents of domestic violence often reach a peak during pregnancy or after a birth, as the wife is no longer able to devote all her time and energy to an over-demanding spouse.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Engagement and early marriage, of course, is not only a time to address the potential for spousal abuse. It is particularly valuable for couples in healthy marriages to build stronger relationships. Most of this they can do together in the home; some can best be done in formal programs or with experts.

Here are seven things that couples in healthy relationships do.

1. *Discuss mutual expectations in the marriage.*

These expectations change over time and need to be updated regularly. Does the other person know what you expect him/her to do? Do you agree with what you are expected to do? How are differences in expectations handled? Does one person always get his/her way? What constitutes unacceptable behavior in the relationship?

2. *Learn what healthy marriages look like.*

Couples often assume that they know what healthy marriages look like...and often they are wrong. Firsthand experience of marriage is mostly limited to those of their parents, family members, and a few close friends. Their assumptions about marriage are colored by these experiences.

When abusive behavior is part of those relationships, couples can assume this is normal. Learning more about the elements of a healthy marriage can help couples to be more aware of their own strengths and achievements as well as more sensitive to potential problems.

You are not alone.

“At first I felt relieved, my *problem* had been taken care of, but then I became depressed. I couldn’t sleep or eat. I felt out of control.”

“I didn’t think it was any big deal. Three years later I can still hear the sound of the suction machine.”

“Neither of us knew what to do. I suggested an abortion and she agreed. Now that I’m married and have a baby, I can’t help thinking about her and the decision we made.”

There is hope and healing.

Confidential help is available to anyone who is suffering from the grief of abortion. There are people with whom you can talk in confidence about your experience. We have professionally trained clergy and lay counselors ready to help you find peace and healing. If you feel ready to talk with someone who understands the pain you feel, we invite you to call our confidential help line.

**Project Rachel Help Line
419-260-5811**

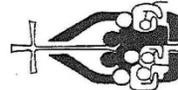
projectrachel@toledodiocese.org

Sponsored by:

Catholic Charities
Diocese of Toledo
419-244-6711, ext. 409

or

1-800-926-8277 (outside Toledo but within Ohio)



Do you have a hidden hurt?

For I

will

restore

health

to you,

and your

wounds

I will heal

says the Lord.

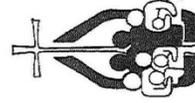
Jeremiah 30:17



Project

Rachel

Offering Confidential Help



Catholic Charities
Diocese of Toledo

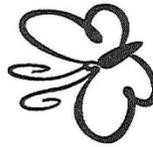
**For more confidential information call the Project Rachel Help Line
419-260-5811**

or e-mail us at
projectrachel@toledodiocese.org

Revised 1/11/10

Project Rachel

Project Rachel is a post-abortion reconciliation program. Named for the Old Testament figure who wept inconsolably over the loss of her child, Project Rachel offers confidential help to anyone suffering from the grief of abortion - the mother or father of the unborn child, grandparents, close friends, and medical personnel involved in abortion.



“Rachel mourns her children; she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more.”

Jeremiah 31:15

Are You Experiencing Post-Abortion Stress?

- Anniversary Syndrome -- stress, depression, sickness, and/or anxiety around the date of the abortion or the month of the would-be birth
- Covering one's guilt, e.g., super mom, compulsive volunteer, or over-achieving career woman
- Loss of confidence in decision making
- Feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, and despair
- Diminished interest in daily activities, inability to concentrate, and depression
- Substance abuse and eating disorders
- Dreams, flashbacks and nightmares about the abortion
- Fear of emotional and sexual intimacy
- Avoidance of contact with infants or children
- Marital difficulties, promiscuity, and divorce
- Fear of God and acceptance of bad luck as punishment
- Anxiety and preoccupation with death or suicide



A Loving, Healing Church

For many people, the pain of abortion is intensified by a sense of alienation from God. Some people also feel isolated from their Church community.

If you are in this position, we want you to know that the Church understands and cares. Ours is a loving and healing church, reaching out to you in concern and compassion.



“Thus says the Lord:

Cease your cries of mourning.

Wipe the tears from your eyes.

The sorrow you have shown shall have its reward. There is hope for your future.”

Jeremiah 31:16-17

APPENDIX C: MARRIAGE MINISTRY TRAINING PROGRAM

- C-1** This training program is designed for the development of marriage ministers who serve the parish based marriage preparation programs, and all who prepare the engaged couples to marry in the Diocese of Toledo.
- C-2** The program is designed to (1) provide marriage preparation ministers with a strong knowledge base for effective ministry; (2) help foster the ministerial identities of those who minister to the engaged; and (3) strengthen marriage preparation in the Diocese of Toledo.
- C-3** As a result of this training program, the Church in Toledo has well-prepared and effective marriage ministers. The engaged are served by well-informed ministers who understand broad aspects of marriage ministry in the Church.
- C-4** Marriage preparation ministers are to complete an in-service training at their respective parish addressing the key topics presented to the engaged couples. These topics include the following – Communication in Marriage, Family of Origin, Financial Concerns in Marriage, Intimacy in Marriage, and Married Spirituality. There are a number of other topics that are addressed under one of the above topics. The Diocese of Toledo allows each parish to select from a list of publications, which one will be most effective for the engaged couples in that parish. A list of such publications can be found in Appendix B Engaged Couples Training Materials.
- C-5** The training can be provided by members of an existing parish Engaged Couples Ministry Team or by someone from the Toledo Diocese Family Life Office.
- C-6** We also will train couples to become members of a Parish Sponsor Couples Ministry Team. This is where a married couple meets with an engaged couple to present and dialogue with the engaged couple on the topics previously mentioned. We are currently using the material “For Better and For Ever” prepared by Father Robert Ruhnke C.S.S.R. for this training.

APPENDIX D: *GAUDIUM ET SPES*: FOSTERING THE NOBILITY OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY (EXCERPTS)

47. The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. Hence Christians and all men who hold this community in high esteem sincerely rejoice in the various ways by which men today find help in fostering this community of love and perfecting its life, and by which parents are assisted in their lofty calling. Those who rejoice in such aids look for additional benefits from them and labor to bring them about.

Yet the excellence of this institution is not everywhere reflected with equal brilliance, since polygamy, the plague of divorce, so-called free love and other disfigurements have an obscuring effect. In addition, married love is too often profaned by excessive self-love, the worship of pleasure and illicit practices against human generation. Moreover, serious disturbances are caused in families by modern economic conditions, by influences at once social and psychological, and by the demands of civil society. Finally, in certain parts of the world problems resulting from population growth are generating concern.

All these situations have produced anxiety of consciences. Yet, the power and strength of the institution of marriage and family can also be seen in the fact that time and again, despite the difficulties produced, the profound changes in modern society reveal the true character of this institution in one way or another.

Therefore, by presenting certain key points of Church doctrine in a clearer light, this sacred synod wishes to offer guidance and support to those Christians and other men who are trying to preserve the holiness and to foster the natural dignity of the married state and its superlative value.

48. The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. Hence by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their off-springs as well as of society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone. For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes.²⁴ All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole. By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown. Thus a man and a woman, who by their compact of conjugal love “are no longer two, but one

²⁴ St. Augustine, *De bono coniugii*: PL 40, 375-376 and 394; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Suppl. Quaest. 49, art. 3 ad I; *Decretum pro Armenis*: Denz. 702 (1327); Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti connubii*: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 543-545; Denz. 2227-2238 (3703-3714).

flesh” (Matt.19:6), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on the spouses and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them.²⁵

Christ the Lord abundantly blessed this many-faceted love, welling up as it does from the fountain of divine love and structured as it is on the model of His union with His Church. For as God of old made Himself present²⁶ to His people through a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Savior of men and the Spouse²⁷ of the Church comes into the lives of married Christians through the Sacrament of Matrimony. He abides with them thereafter so that just as He loved the Church and handed Himself over on her behalf,²⁸ the spouses may love each other with perpetual fidelity through mutual self-bestowal.

Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ’s redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and may aid and strengthen them in sublime office of being a father or a mother.²⁹ For this reason Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state.³⁰ By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God.

As a result, with their parents leading the way by example and family Prayer, children and indeed everyone gathered around the family hearth will find a readier path to human maturity, salvation and holiness. Graced with the dignity and office of fatherhood and motherhood, parents will energetically acquit themselves of a duty which devolves primarily on them, namely education and especially religious education.

As living members of the family, children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy. For they will respond to the kindness of their parents with sentiments of gratitude, with love and trust. They will stand by them as children should when hardships overtake their parents and old age brings its loneliness. Widowhood, accepted bravely as a continuation of the marriage vocation, should be esteemed by all.³¹ Families too will share their spiritual riches generously with other families. Thus the Christian family, which springs from marriage as a reflection of the loving covenant uniting Christ with the Church,³² and as a participation in that covenant, will manifest to all men Christ’s living presence in the world, and the genuine nature of the Church. This the family will do by the mutual love of the spouses, by their generous fruitfulness, their solidarity and faithfulness, and by the loving way in which all members of the family assist one another.

²⁵ See Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti connubii*: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 546-7, Denz. 2231 (3706).

²⁶ See Hos. 2; Jer. 3:6-13; Ezek. 16 and 23; Is. 54.

²⁷ See Mt. 9:15; Mk. 2:19-20; Lk. 5:34-35; Jn. 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Apoc. 19:7-8; 21:2 and 9.

²⁸ See Eph. 5:25.

²⁹ See Vatican Council II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen gentium*, 11-12, 34-36, 41.

³⁰ See Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti connubii*: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 583.

³¹ See 1 Tim. 5:3.

³² See Eph. 5:32.

49. The biblical Word of God several times urges the betrothed and the married to nourish and develop their wedlock by pure conjugal love and undivided affection.³³ Many men of our own age also highly regard true love between husband and wife as it manifests itself in a variety of ways depending on the worthy customs of various peoples and times.

This love is an eminently human one since it is directed from one person to another through an affection of the will; it involves the good of the whole person, and therefore can enrich the expressions of body and mind with a unique dignity, ennobling these expressions as special ingredients and signs of the friendship distinctive of marriage. This love God has judged worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting and exalting gifts of grace and of charity. Such love, merging the human with the divine, leads the spouses to a free and mutual gift of themselves, a gift providing itself by gentle affection and by deed, such love pervades the whole of their lives:³⁴ indeed by its busy generosity it grows better and grows greater. Therefore it far excels mere erotic inclination, which, selfishly pursued, soon enough fades wretchedly away.

This love is uniquely expressed and perfected through the appropriate enterprise of matrimony. The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and a ready will. Sealed by mutual faithfulness and be allowed above all by Christ's sacrament, this love remains steadfastly true in body and in mind, in bright days or dark. It will never be profaned by adultery or divorce. Firmly established by the Lord, the unity of marriage will radiate from the equal personal dignity of wife and husband, a dignity acknowledged by mutual and total love. The constant fulfillment of the duties of this Christian vocation demands notable virtue. For this reason, strengthened by grace for holiness of life, the couple will painstakingly cultivate and pray for steadiness of love, large-heartedness and the spirit of sacrifice.

Authentic conjugal love will be more highly prized, and wholesome public opinion created about it if Christian couples give outstanding witness to faithfulness and harmony in their love, and to their concern for educating their children also, if they do their part in bringing about the needed cultural, psychological and social renewal on behalf of marriage and the family. Especially in the heart of their own families, young people should be aptly and seasonably instructed in the dignity, duty and work of married love. Trained thus in the cultivation of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to enter a marriage of their own after an honorable courtship.

50. Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents. The God Himself Who said, "it is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18) and "Who made man from the beginning male and female" (Matt. 19:4), wishing to share with man a certain special participation in His own creative work, blessed male and female, saying: "Increase and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). Hence, while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice of conjugal love, and the whole meaning of the family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and the Savior. Who through them will enlarge and enrich His own family day by day.

Parents should regard as their proper mission the task of transmitting human life and educating those to whom it has been transmitted. They should realize that they are thereby cooperators with the love of God

³³ See Gen. 2:22-24; Prov. 5:18-20; 31:10-31; Tob. 8:4-8; Cant. 1:1-3; 2:16; 7:8-11; 1 Cor. 7:3-6; Eph. 5:25-33.

³⁴ See Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti connubii*: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 547 and 548; Denz. 2232 (3707).

the Creator, and are, so to speak, the interpreters of that love. Thus they will fulfill their task with human and Christian responsibility, and, with docile reverence toward God, will make decisions by common counsel and effort. Let them thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of their children, those already born and those which the future may bring. For this accounting they need to reckon with both the material and the spiritual conditions of the times as well as of their state in life. Finally, they should consult the interests of the family group, of temporal society, and of the Church herself. The parents themselves and no one else should ultimately make this judgment in the sight of God. But in their manner of acting, spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily, but must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the divine law itself, and should be submissive toward the Church's teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel. That divine law reveals and protects the integral meaning of conjugal love, and impels it toward a truly human fulfillment. Thus, trusting in divine Providence and refining the spirit of sacrifice,³⁵ married Christians glorify the Creator and strive toward fulfillment in Christ when with a generous human and Christian sense of responsibility they acquit themselves of the duty to procreate. Among the couples who fulfill their God-given task in this way, those merit special mention who with a gallant heart and with wise and common deliberation, undertake to bring up suitably even a relatively large family.³⁶

Marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation; rather, its very nature as an unbreakable compact between persons, and the welfare of the children, both demand that the mutual love of the spouses be embodied in a rightly ordered manner, that it grow and ripen. Therefore, marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life, and maintains its value and indissolubility, even when despite the often intense desire of the couple, offspring are lacking.

51. This council realizes that certain modern conditions often keep couples from arranging their married lives harmoniously, and that they find themselves in circumstances where at least temporarily the size of their families should not be increased. As a result, the faithful exercise of love and the full intimacy of their lives is hard to maintain. But where the intimacy of married life is broken off, its faithfulness can sometimes be imperiled and its quality of fruitfulness ruined, for then the upbringing of the children and the courage to accept new ones are both endangered.

To these problems there are those who presume to offer dishonorable solutions indeed; they do not recoil even from the taking of life. But the Church issues the reminder that a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to authentic conjugal love.

For God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life in a manner which is worthy of man. Therefore from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes. The sexual characteristics of man and the human faculty of reproduction wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life. Hence the acts themselves which are proper to conjugal love and which are exercised in accord with genuine human dignity must be honored with great reverence. Hence when there is question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspects of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives, but must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and

³⁵ See 1 Cor. 7:5.

³⁶ See Pius XII, Allocution, *Tra le visite*, 20 Jan. 1958: AAS 50 (1958), p. 91.

human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practiced. Relying on these principles, sons of the Church may not undertake methods of birth control which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law.³⁷

All should be persuaded that human life and the task of transmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence they cannot be measured or perceived only in terms of it, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men.

52. The family is a kind of school of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the painstaking cooperation of parents in the education of their children. The active presence of the father is highly beneficial to their formation. The children, especially the younger among them, need the care of their mother at home. This domestic role of hers must be safely preserved, though the legitimate social progress of women should not be underrated on that account.

Children should be so educated that as adults they can follow their vocation, including a religious one, with a mature sense of responsibility and can choose their state of life; if they marry, they can thereby establish their family in favorable moral, social and economic conditions. Parents or guardians should by prudent advice provide guidance to their young with respect to founding a family, and the young ought to listen gladly. At the same time no pressure, direct or indirect, should be put on the young to make them enter marriage or choose a specific partner.

Thus the family, in which the various generations come together and help one another grow wiser and harmonize personal rights with the other requirements of social life, is the foundation of society. All those, therefore, who exercise influence over communities and social groups should work efficiently for the welfare of marriage and the family. Public authority should regard it as a sacred duty to recognize, protect and promote their authentic nature, to shield public morality and to favor the prosperity of home life. The right of parents to beget and educate their children in the bosom of the family must be safeguarded. Children too who unhappily lack the blessing of a family should be protected by prudent legislation and various undertakings and assisted by the help they need.

Christians, redeeming the present time³⁸ and distinguishing eternal realities from their changing expressions, should actively promote the values of marriage and the family, both by the examples of their own lives and by cooperation with other men of good will. Thus when difficulties arise, Christians will provide, on behalf of family life, those necessities and helps which are suitably modern. To this end, the Christian instincts of the faithful, the upright moral consciences of men, and the wisdom and experience of persons versed in the sacred sciences will have much to contribute.

³⁷ See Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti connubii*: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 559-561; Denz. 2239-2241 (3716-3718); Pius XII, Allocution to the Congress of Italian Midwives, 29 Oct. 1951: AAS 43 (1951), pp. 835-54, Paul VI, Allocution to the Cardinals, 23 June 1964: AAS 56 (1964), pp. 581-9. [By order of Pope Paul VI, a special commission was appointed to study the question of the regulation of births. When it had completed its report, Pope Paul VI issued the encyclical letter "On the Regulation of Births," *Humanae vitae*, 25 July 1968, text in Vatican Collection vol. 2, pp. 397-416. See also "Declaration on Procured Abortion," *Questio de abortu*, op. cit., pp. 441-53, "The Christian Family in the Modern World," *Familiaris consortio*, 22 Nov. 1981, op. cit. pp. 815-898. Ed.]

³⁸ See Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5.

Those too who are skilled in other sciences, notably the medical, biological, social and psychological, can considerably advance the welfare of marriage and the family along with peace of conscience if by pooling their efforts they labor to explain more thoroughly the various conditions favoring a proper regulation of births.

It devolves on priests duly trained about family matters to nurture the vocation of spouses by a variety of pastoral means, by preaching God's word, by liturgical worship, and by other spiritual aids to conjugal and family life; to sustain them sympathetically and patiently in difficulties, and to make them courageous through love, so that families which are truly illustrious can be formed.

Various organizations, especially family associations, should try by their programs of instruction and action to strengthen young people and spouses themselves, particularly those recently wed, and to train them for family, social and apostolic life.

Finally, let the spouses themselves, made to the image of the living God and enjoying the authentic dignity of persons, be joined to one another³⁹ in equal affection, harmony of mind and the work of mutual sanctification. Thus, following Christ who is the principle of life,⁴⁰ by the sacrifices and joys of their vocation and through their faithful love, married people can become witnesses of the mystery of love which the Lord revealed to the world by His dying and His rising up to life again.⁴¹

³⁹ See *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*: PL 78, 262.

⁴⁰ See Rom. 5:15 and 18; 6:5-11 Gal. 2:20.

⁴¹ See Eph. 5:25-27.

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

-A-

Abortion: Deliberate termination of pregnancy by killing the unborn child. Such direct abortion, willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life.

Absolution: An essential element of the Sacrament of Penance in which the priest, by the power entrusted to the Church by Christ, pardons sin(s) of the penitent.

Administrator (Parish): A priest who is appointed in a temporary capacity to perform the duties of a pastor in a parish.

Adultery: Marital infidelity, or sexual relations between two partners, at least one of whom is married to another party. The sixth commandment and the New Testament forbid adultery absolutely.

Affinity: The relationship of one party to the blood relatives of his/her spouse.

Annulment: A declaration that a marriage, which at first appeared to be valid, was really canonically defective from the beginning.

-B-

Baptism: The first of the seven sacraments, and the “door” which gives access to the other sacraments. Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ, who died for our sins and rose for our justification. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist constitute the “sacraments of initiation” by which a believer receives the remission of original and personal sin, begins a new life in Christ and the Holy Spirit, and is incorporated into the Church, the body of Christ. The rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water, or pouring water on the head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Blessing: A blessing or benediction is a prayer invoking God’s power and care upon some person, place, thing, or undertaking. The prayer of benediction acknowledges God as the source of all blessing. Some blessings confer a permanent status: consecration of persons to God, or setting things apart for liturgical usage.

Body of Christ: (1) The human body which the Son of God assumed through his conception in the womb of Mary and which is now glorified in heaven; (2) This same body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ are sacramentally present in Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine; (3) The Church is called the mystical Body of Christ because of the intimate communion which Jesus shares with his disciples; the metaphor of a body, whose head is Christ and whose members are the faithful, provides an image which keeps in focus both unity and the diversity of Church.

-C-

Canon Law: The rules (canons or laws) which provide the norms for good order in the visible society of the Church. Those canon laws that apply universally are contained in the Codes of Canon Law. The most recent Code of Canon Law was promulgated in 1983 for the Latin (Western) Church, and in 1991 for the Eastern Church (The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches).

Canonical form: The requirement that a Catholic be married in the presence of a properly delegated Catholic priest or deacon and two witnesses.

Catechesis: An education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of the Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ. Those who perform the ministry of catechesis in the Church are called “catechists.”

Catechism: A popular summary or compendium of Catholic doctrine about faith and morals and designed for use in catechesis.

Catechumenal model: A method of marriage preparation that resembles in its structure the sacramental preparation used in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in which persons (catechumens) are prepared to become members of the Church.

Chastity: The moral virtue which, under the cardinal virtue of temperance, provides for the successful integration of sexuality within the person leading to the inner unity of the bodily and spiritual being. Chastity is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Christian faithful: Those incorporated in Christ through baptism, constituted as the people of God, sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal office. The term, “lay faithful” refers to the laity, all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church.

Civil law: The body of laws of a secular government.

Collateral: The blood relationships between persons outside the direct line, such as siblings, cousins, aunts, etc.

Conference of bishops: A permanent institution consisting of the grouping of the bishops of a given nation or territory whereby, according to the norm of law, they jointly exercise pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful of their territory.

Consanguinity: The blood relationship between people.

Consent: The action indicating the free choice or decision of one party to enter into marriage.

Consummated: A marriage in which the partners have willingly and mutually performed the act of intercourse.

Convalidation: An act of making valid the marriage consent that has been previously exchanged invalidly.

Conversion: A radical reorientation of the whole life away from sin and evil, and toward God. This change of heart or conversion is a central element of Christ’s preaching, of the Church’s ministry of evangelization, and the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Covenant: A solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being involving mutual commitment or guarantees. The Bible refers to God’s covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses as leaders of the chosen people, Israel.

Creation: The act by which the eternal God gave a beginning to all that exists outside of himself. Creation also refers to the created universe or totality of what exists, as often expressed by the formula “the heavens and the earth.”

Credal affirmation: The traditional wedding ceremonies in some other religions include rites which in effect would constitute joining another religion (*communicatio in sacris*). For a Catholic to participate in such rites would be considered a credal affirmation. 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.

-D-

Diocese: A portion of the people of God that is entrusted for pastoral care to a bishop with cooperation of the priests.

Diriment: Causing to become wholly void; nullifying, an impediment to a valid marriage. Canon 1073 states, "A diriment impediment renders a person incapable of validly contracting a marriage."

Disparity of worship: Marriages between a Catholic and an unbaptized person (e.g., Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Mormon) are often called "interfaith" marriages. The canonical term is disparity of worship. In all cases as such, a dispensation is needed. A dispensation from canonical form is also required if the couple will be having someone other than a Catholic priest or deacon witness their vows. To obtain the dispensation, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm in some way (verbally or in writing) that he or she will promise to do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities; the non-Catholic partner may feel a like obligation because of his/her own religious commitment. No formal written or oral promise is required of the non-Catholic partner. In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family.

Dispensation: The relaxation of an ecclesiastical law in a particular case by the competent authority.

Divorce: The claim that the indissoluble marriage bond validly entered into between a man and a woman is broken. A civil dissolution of the marriage contract (divorce) does not free persons from a valid marriage before God; remarriage would not be morally licit.

Domicile: The place where a person lives for an indefinite time. In law it is acquired by residence within the territory of a certain parish or at least of a diocese, which is joined either with the intention of remaining there permanently unless called away or when the person has actually lived there for five complete years.

-E-

Ecclesiastic/Ecclesiastical: Pertaining to or of the Church (Greek/Latin: ecclesia). Hence ecclesiastical government is Church government; an ecclesiastical province is a grouping of Church jurisdictions or dioceses; an ecclesiastic is a Church official.

Ecclesiastical law: As opposed to divine law from God, those laws that are the creation of the appropriate Church authority.

Ecumenism: Promotion of the restoration of unity among all Christians, the unity which is a gift of Christ and to which the Church is called by the Holy Spirit. For the Catholic Church, the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council provides a charter for ecumenical efforts, and the Directory on Ecumenism (1993) gives important practical orientations.

Eucharist: The ritual, sacramental action of thanksgiving to God which constitutes the principal Christian liturgical celebration of and communion in the paschal mystery of Christ. The liturgical action called the

Eucharist is also traditionally known as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is one of the seven sacraments of the Church; the Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life.

Evangelization: The proclamation of Christ and his Gospel (Greek: evangelion) by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of Christ's command.

Excommunication: A severe ecclesiastical penalty, resulting from grave crimes against the Catholic religion, imposed by ecclesiastical authority or incurred as a direct result of the commission of an offense. Excommunication excludes the offender from taking part in the Eucharist or other sacraments and from the exercise of any ecclesiastical office, ministry, or function.

-F-

Faith: Both a gift of God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response, and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed. It is this revelation of God which the Church proposes for our belief, and which we profess in the Creed, celebrate in the sacraments, live by right conduct that fulfills the twofold commandment of charity (as specified in the Ten Commandments), and respond to our prayer of faith. Faith is both a theological virtue given by God as grace, and an obligation which flows from the first commandment of God.

Fornication: Sexual intercourse between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. Fornication is a serious violation of the sixth commandment of God.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit: The perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the "first fruits" of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church identifies 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity, and generosity.

-G-

Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Permanent dispositions that make us docile to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The traditional list of seven gifts of the Spirit is derived from Isaiah 11:1-3: Wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fortitude, and fear of the Lord.

Gospel: The "good news" of God's mercy and love revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is this Gospel or good news that the Apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the entire world. The Gospel is handed on in the apostolic tradition of the Church as the source of all-saving truth and moral discipline. The four Gospels are the books written by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which have for their central object Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his life, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance.

Grace: The free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children. As sanctifying grace, God shares his divine life and friendship with us in a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that enables the soul to live with God, to act by his love. As actual grace, God gives us the help to conform our lives to his will. Sacramental grace and special graces (charisms, the grace of one's state of life) are gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation.

-H-

Homosexuality: Sexual attraction or orientation toward persons of the same sex and/or sexual acts between persons of the same sex. Homosexual acts are morally wrong because they violate God’s purpose for human sexual activity.

Human person: The human individual, made in the image of God; not some thing but some one, a unity of spirit and matter, soul and body, capable of knowledge, self-possession, and freedom, who can enter into communion with other persons—and with God. The human person needs to live in society, which is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them.

-I-

Impediment: An obstacle that makes a person ineligible for performing an act or receiving a sacrament, e.g., Holy Orders or Matrimony.

Indissolubility: An essential property of marriage indicating that the bond of marriage may never be dissolved or ended.

-L-

Laity: The faithful who, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, are made part of the people of God, the Church. The laity participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. Laity are distinguished from clergy (who have received Holy Orders) and those in consecrated life.

Law: An ordinance of reason for the common good, made by that person who has care for the community, and promulgated to that community (Thomas Aquinas).

Life: Both God’s gift of created human life and His divine life given to us as sanctifying grace. Beyond its ordinary meaning of human life, Jesus used “life” to signify a share in his own divine Trinitarian existence, which becomes possible for those who respond to his invitation to turn away from sin and open their hearts to God’s abiding love. Eternal life signifies that this gift will last forever in the blessedness of heaven. This gift of God begins with the “life” of faith and “new life” of Baptism, is communicated in sanctifying grace, and reaches perfection in the communion of life and love with the Holy Trinity in heaven.

Ligamen: A prior bond of marriage (Canon 1085).

Liturgy: In its original meaning, a “public work” or service done in the name of or on behalf of the people. Through the liturgy, Christ our high Priest continues his work of our redemption through the Church’s celebration of the Paschal mystery by which he accomplished our salvation.

Local ordinary: All those who are mentioned under the category of “ordinary” except superiors of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. See Ordinary.

-M-

Marriage: A covenant or partnership of life between a man and woman, which is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children. When validly contracted between

two baptized people, marriage is a sacrament.

Matrimony: See Marriage.

Mercy: The loving kindness, compassion, or forbearance shown to one who offends (e.g., The mercy of God to us sinners).

Ministry: The service or work of sanctification performed by the preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments by those in Holy Orders, or in determined circumstances, by laity. The New Testament speaks of a variety of ministries in the Church; Christ himself is the source of ministry in the Church. Bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained ministers in the Church.

Mixed Marriage: Marriage of a Catholic to a member of another Christian church. Canon 1124-25 states, “Without the express permission of the competent authority, marriage is prohibited between two baptized persons, one of whom was baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it after baptism and has not defected from it by a formal act, the other of whom belongs to a Church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church.

“The local Ordinary can grant this permission if there is a just and reasonable cause. He is not to grant it unless the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. The Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith, and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power in order that all the children be baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church;
2. The other party is to be informed in good time of these promises to be made by the Catholic party, so that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and of the obligation of the Catholic party.
3. Both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either contractant.”

“Mixed marriage” is a loose term for a Catholic and non-Catholic wedding. Mixed religion is a term for a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic wedding. Disparity of worship is a term for a marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person.

Mystagogy: A liturgical catechesis which aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ. In a more specific sense, the catechetical period following immediately after the reception of Baptism by adults.

-N-

Nihil obstat: The verification that “nothing stands in the way” of something happening. In terms of marriage, it means that there are no impediments or any other reasons why a couple would be prohibited from entering into marriage.

Nuptial blessing: Prayers for the blessing of a couple being married, especially of the bride.

-O-

Obedience: (1) The submission to the authority of God which requires everyone to obey the divine law. Obedience to the Church is required in those things that pertain to our salvation; and obedience is due to legitimate civil authority, which has its origin in God for the sake of the common good and the order of society. The fourth commandment obliges children to obey their parents. (2) Obedience of faith: The first

obedience is that of faith: to listen and freely submit to the word of God. (3) Obedience of Christ: Jesus Christ substituted his obedience to the will of his Father even unto death, for the disobedience of sin, in order to bring us the grace of justification and to satisfy for our sins. (4) Vow of obedience: In imitation of this obedience of Jesus, as an evangelical counsel, the faithful may profess a vow of obedience; a public vow of obedience, accepted by Church authority, is one element that characterizes the consecrated life.

Ordinary: A person who has been placed over a particular church or over a community that is equivalent to it, as well as those who possess ordinary general executive power in said churches and communities, namely vicars general and episcopal vicars; and likewise for their own members the major superiors of clerical religious institutes or pontifical right and of clerical societies of apostolic life of pontifical right, who possess at least ordinary executive power.

Orthodox Churches: The Eastern Christian Churches that separated from full union with the Catholic Church.

-P-

Parish: A stable community of the faithful within a particular church or diocese, whose pastoral care is confided by the bishop to a priest as pastor.

Paschal Mystery/ Sacrifice: Christ's work of redemption accomplished principally by his Passion, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension, whereby "dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life" (1067; cf. 654). The paschal mystery is celebrated and made present in the liturgy of the Church, and its saving effects are communicated through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which renews the paschal sacrifice of Christ as the sacrifice offered by the Church.

Pastor/pastoral office: The ministry of shepherding the faithful in the name of Christ. The Pope and bishops receive the pastoral office which they are to exercise with Christ the Good Shepherd as their model; they share their pastoral ministry with priests, to whom they give responsibility over a portion of the flock as pastors of parishes.

People of God: A synonym for the Church, taken from the Old Testament people whom God chose, Israel. Christ instituted the new and eternal covenant by which a new priestly, prophetic, and royal People of God, the Church, participates in these offices of Christ and in the mission and service which flows from them.

Prayer: The elevation of the mind and heart to God in praise of his glory; a petition made to God for some desired good, or in thanksgiving for a good received or in intercession for others before God. Through prayer the Christian experiences a communion with God through Christ in the Church.

Prohibition (Sometimes called a prohibition, a restriction, a rider, or a vetitum on the person): Issues that came to light during the Tribunal process which would indicate that the person is at risk for entering into marriage. It could also mean that the person is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities toward the children, or that the person has demonstrated an understanding of marriage that is greatly at odds with the Church's teaching on marriage. This prohibition is stated in the final letter to the person as well as the decree from the Tribunal. It should also appear on the person's baptismal record.

Proxy: A marriage in which at least one of the parties is represented by another person who has been officially designated by the party for this purpose.

Putative: An invalid marriage that has been entered into by at least one of the parties in good faith.

-Q-

Quasi-domicile: Part-time residency within the territory of a certain parish or of a diocese that is acquired by the intention of remaining there at least three months unless called away, or by actual residency in the territory for three months.

-R-

Racism: Unjust discrimination on the basis of a person's race; a violation of human dignity, and a sin against justice.

Ratified: A valid marriage that has been entered into by two baptized persons.

Restriction: See Prohibition.

Rider: See Prohibition.

Rite of Marriage, The: There are three options for *The Rite of Marriage*:

1. *The Rite for Celebrating Marriage During Mass:* A Nuptial Mass, which is a Mass that includes the celebration of the sacrament of marriage. This form is normally used when two Catholics marry. It has special readings and prayers suitable to the Sacrament of Marriage. The Sacrament of Marriage between two baptized Catholics should normally be celebrated within Mass. If the situation warrants it and the local bishop gives permission, a Nuptial Mass may be celebrated for a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized person who is not a Catholic, except that Communion is not given to the non-Catholic since the general law of the Church does not allow it. In such instances, it is better to use the appropriate ritual for marriage outside Mass. This is always the case in a marriage between a baptized Catholic and a non-baptized person.
2. *The Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass:* The second form is normally used when a Catholic marries a baptized non-Catholic. This form is preferred since the wedding liturgy is a time to stress the unity of two families. The wedding liturgy outside of Mass might be more familiar to non-Catholic families and guests and current Church regulations prohibit non-Catholics from receiving communion at Mass.
3. *The Rite for Celebrating Marriage Between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person:* The third form is used when a Catholic marries someone who is not baptized, either a catechumen or a non-Christian.

Rites: The diverse liturgical traditions in which the one catholic and apostolic faith has come to be expressed and celebrated in various cultures and lands; for example, in the West, the Roman and Ambrosian (Latin) rites; in the East, the Byzantine, Coptic (Alexandrian), Syriac, Armenian, Maronite, and Chaldean rites (1201-1203). "Rite" and "ritual" are sometimes interchanged, as in "the sacramental rite" or "the sacramental ritual."

-S-

Sacrament: An efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. The sacraments (called "mysteries" in the

Eastern Churches) are seven in number: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance or Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: The sacramental celebration in which, through God's mercy and forgiveness, the sinner is reconciled with God and also with the Church, Christ's Body, which is wounded by sin.

Sanatio in radice: A retroactive convalidation of the marriage which does not require a new act of consent.

Scandal: An attitude or behavior that leads another to do evil.

-T-

Tradition: The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church. The oral preaching of the Apostles, and the written message of salvation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Bible), are conserved and handed on as the deposit of faith through the apostolic succession in the Church. Both the living Tradition and the written Scriptures have their common source in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The theological, liturgical, disciplinary, and devotional traditions of the local churches both contain and can be distinguished from this apostolic Tradition.

Tribunal: Those courts established by the church to decide issues presented to it for resolution; most of the work of a tribunal involves cases for the determination of the invalidity of a marriage.

Trinity: The mystery of God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The revealed truth of the Holy Trinity is at the very root of the Church's living faith as expressed in the Creed. The mystery of the Trinity in itself is inaccessible to the human mind and is the object of faith only because it was revealed by Jesus Christ, the divine Son of the eternal Father.

-U-

Uniate: Eastern Catholic Churches. One in favor of the union of the Greek and Roman Catholic churches. A Christian of a church adhering to an Eastern rite and discipline but submitting to papal authority. Note: This is a pejorative term used by Orthodox, and objectionable to Eastern Catholics.

Unity: An essential property of marriage that indicates complete monogamy and faithfulness.

-V-

Valid: A canonical description that signifies that a particular act has its intended consequences due to its fulfillment of the requirements of the law.

Vetitum: See Prohibition.

Vocation: The calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. God has created the human person to love and serve him; the fulfillment of this vocation is eternal happiness. Christ calls the faithful to the perfection of holiness. The vocation of the laity consists in seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. Priestly and religious vocations are dedicated to the service of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation.

APPENDIX F: HELPFUL QUOTES AND INSIGHTS

- F-1** “Marriage is more than just a love match. Good relationships involve skills that need to be taught and learned.”⁴²
- F-2** “Marriage is not merely a private taste or private relation; it is an important public good. As marriage weakens, the costs are borne not only by individual children and families, but also by all of us taxpayers, citizens, and neighbors. We all incur the costs of higher crime, welfare, education and health care expenditures, and in reduced security for our own marriage investments... as a matter of public health alone, to take just one public consequence of marriage’s decline, a new campaign to reduce marriage failure is as important as the campaign to reduce smoking.”⁴³
- F-3** “Marriage is a fundamental social institution. It is central to the nurture and raising of children. It is the social glue that reliably attaches fathers to children. It contributes to the physical, emotional and economic health of men, women, and children, and thus to the nation as a whole.”⁴⁴
- F-4** The Northwest Marriage and Family Movement concludes from its research: “Healthy, strong marriages between a man and a woman are good for adults, essential for children, and positive for society.”⁴⁵
- F-5** “If family trends of recent decades are extended into the future, the result will be not only growing uncertainty within marriage, but the gradual elimination of marriage in favor of casual liaisons oriented to adult expressiveness and self-fulfillment. The problem with that scenario is that children will be harmed, adults will probably be no happier, and the social order could collapse.”⁴⁶
- F-6** According to the Marriage Movement Statement, signed by various leaders, “...the decline of marriage is not inevitable. Social recovery is possible, as the recent encouraging turnaround in the divorce rate affirms.”⁴⁷
- F-7** Hopeful recent statistical trends:
- Sexual abstinence and secondary abstinence among young people is on the rise.⁴⁸
 - The number of couples divorcing is slightly decreasing.⁴⁹
 - Divorce rates have virtually leveled off.⁵⁰
 - The rate of teenage pregnancies and births has dropped.⁵¹

⁴² Feurherd, Joe. November 28, 2003. “Bush’s Antipoverty Weapon.” *National Catholic Reporter*.

⁴³ Waite and Gallagher. *The Case for Marriage*, 186.

⁴⁴ Popenoe, David, and Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. *The State of Our Unions 2002: The Social Health of Marriage in America*. Piscataway, New Jersey: The National Marriage Project, 4.

⁴⁵ Northwest Marriage and Family Movement. *Families Northwest*, 6.

⁴⁶ Popenoe, David. “Modern Marriage: Revisiting the Cultural Script,” *Promises to Keep*, 1996, 248.

⁴⁷ Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, Institute for American Values, and the Religion, Culture, and Family Project of the University of Chicago Divinity School. *The Marriage Movement*, 7.

⁴⁸ National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. 2000. “Fact Sheet: The Cautious Generation? Teen Sexual Behaviors and Attitudes.” Found at www.teenpregnancy.org.

⁴⁹ Popenoe and Whitehead. *The State of Our Unions*, 2002, 20.

⁵⁰ Popenoe and Whitehead. *The State of Our Unions*, 2002, 20.

⁵¹ Rubin, Rita. “Teen birth rates drop to a new low.” *USA Today*. April 18, 2001.

APPENDIX G: MARRIAGE PREPARATION “MUSTS”

G-1 In the broader “General Information” section you’ll find the rationale for all of these steps; but here we want to provide a quick guide to what must be done in marriage preparation. These steps should also be done in this approximate order as well. Each is marked as to whether not doing that step would invalidate or merely make illicit the wedding celebrated.⁵²

1. You must fill in the Pre-Marriage File in its entirety. At the first session all information about names, addresses, family background, baptismal information [when the couple makes initial contact, it’s helpful to tell them what to bring along so that contemporary information is ready at that first session] should be entered into the form and as you work through preparation all empty spaces should be filled in. Each item is essential in establishing the freedom of the party to marry not only for the wedding day, but in future should there ever be a challenge to the validity of consent. The MA provides that proof on every line. {Liceity}
2. Many clergy don’t use the Pre-Marriage File to compile observations and notes, but when it’s time to sign off on the couple’s preparedness, it’s really useful to have a few notes to jog the memory. Years later those notes may be equally helpful to somebody else [unfortunately, to the Tribunal, which can make good use of a parish minister’s insights at the time of consent]. The Pre-Marriage File is necessary not merely as part of the permanent record, but is necessary because as assisting Minister, you must know who you are marrying. Not just by name, but by the qualities which will help them make marriage at consent. Your observations will also be helpful in structuring subsequent sessions, and perhaps even in determining how many such sessions are required to instill in the couple the proper disposition toward a “Catholic” and sacramental bond. {Liceity}
3. No Pastor, even the Bishop, may deny a wedding to a member of the Parish. You may, for a grave cause [this means what it says, a “deadly” reason], delay a marriage [which means you agree to provide the appropriate catechesis and preparation so that a wedding can eventually happen] until the cause has been set aside [as with those seventeen year olds who can’t get Mom or Dad to sign off – delay until they turn 18, but don’t deny the natural right to marry].⁵³ Another example might be this: a marriage cannot be denied because a couple happens to be living together; in fact, as Pastor you may wish to assist the couple by urging them to marry sooner rather than later so as to avoid a situation the Church deplors and cannot condone (see the General Section on specific guidelines of the diocese and don’t make any rules stricter than those). If a person lives in the territory they are as good as registered and their wedding cannot

⁵² “Illicit” is a technical canonical term. It means the rules were not followed by the Minister of the Church and no bad effects accrue to the victim who otherwise thought the Church could provide the required service. It also means that the Minister who provided the service could be subject to some kind of official church intervention or punishment for breaking the rules, though. Invalidity means the service offered did not in fact occur.

⁵³ There are different grades of “cause” in the Church. The most severe is the one here, “grave” which means what any grave means, something has died because of the cause. There are also serious causes, just causes and causes, in a kind of descending order of value.

be denied even if they refuse to register. However, no Pastor or Pastoral Leader is required to assist at the weddings of those who are resident in another territorial parish, with some exceptions as noted in Canon Law but which are rare enough we won't bother you with them here (you can find them in the expanded section). Your parish may have developed regulations about how long a youngster can be 'gone' from the parish and still be married there, or whether grandchildren of parishioners can be married there, or whether you will allow non-registered Catholics who don't live in your territory to be married at your parish. These are fine as long as they do not make the diocesan regulations seem mild by comparison [it is a norm of the Law that no specific regulation can be harder than the one it's based on] and should always be applied equally to all who approach the parish for a wedding. {The outright denial of a natural right of a party to marry can get the Assisting Minister into canonical trouble if the couple pursues the issue, but since there is no wedding a denial is neither invalidating nor does it render anything illicit}

4. As part of the process, you **must** determine the presence of any impediments. In brief, these are: **Age** [we default to the Ohio General Assembly and follow the "18 and over" rule, 16 and over with parents' permission – the Code suggests that where a parent's permission is required, it be an informed permission, the information being what you as parish minister need to know to be able to sign off on the preparedness of the couple – should you celebrate a marriage of a couple either of whom is canonically of age and not civilly of age the marriage would be valid but civilly invalid and your license to witness marriage could be revoked and a fine levied. By the same token, the impediment was created by the Church so could be dispensed since marriage is a natural right every human person is born with. Dispensation is rare in Western cultures where intellectual and personal maturation comes later; however, Louis XIV was validly married at age 7]; **impotence** [to put this very bluntly, part "A" must be able to fit part "B" and that's all. Sterility is not an impediment. Keep in mind that this impediment cannot be dispensed.]; **prior marriage** [cannot be dispensed. Even if a person, or the Assisting Minister, believes the first marriage to be invalid, and even if it can be shown that it was, the celebration of a marriage before the proper canonical process has been completed renders the second marriage invalid]; **worship** [marriage to a non-baptized. The impediment can be dispensed]; **orders** [technically, this can be dispensed, and often is for the Deacon but not for the priest, who must be fully laicized in order to receive the dispensation, which does not have to be given even when the priest is otherwise released from his obligations as a priest]{validity}; a **public vow of chastity** [this refers only to those who are vowed members of a religious institution and have not been released from those vows by the appropriate methodology called for in the Order's official charter} validity; **abduction** [this means the actual kidnapping of a woman by a man and not vice versa and amounts to a situation of "force and fear." While the impediment can be dispensed, few bishops would do so while a guy is holding the woman captive]; or **murder** [or at least the killing of a husband, wife, one's own or another's, to free up somebody to marry. The "spiritual" killing of a marriage by adultery does not enter into this picture. It can be dispensed, only by the Holy See but rarely is]; **relationship** [there are several aspects to this impediment: that of "direct" relatives, those who are either "directly" ahead of us or "directly" behind us, namely, parents and their parents to infinity and children and their children to infinity. Another aspect of "direct" relationship has to do with the extended family, that of those related to our parents "directly" as their brothers and sisters and who are "off limits" as would be their first generation of offspring. Cannot be

dispensed. A third aspect is the “family” inherited through a marriage, often referred to as the affines from our Roman Law history. This refers to in-laws who stand in the “direct” line to a spouse. The impediment can be dispensed]; **Public Propriety** [this impediment refers to the public knowledge that somebody was shacking up with somebody, creating a “natural” union which brings into play the “family” relationship of affinity. If person “A” lived with “B” in a public manner and they separated, “A” could not marry the “direct” relatives of “B” and vice versa. This is not a common problem now, but as young people increasingly turn to cohabitation as a middle grounds before marrying, it can become one. How you handle finding out whether “A” lived with “B’s” brother or sister and presented him or her self as “married” by living as such is a delicate problem. It can be dispensed, though,]; and **Adoption** [an adopted child becomes family and is bound by the same regulations as any other family member and thus the impediments of consanguinity and affinity would apply. It can be dispensed, but make sure there has been proper civil attention to the status as well]. Early into the process make sure you take care of these according to the appropriate canonical process, either by *delaying* the marriage, *obtaining a dispensation*, or *informing the couple* why a particular impediment [example, blood relationship] cannot be dispensed. Impediments can make a marriage invalid and explaining to a young couple later that you goofed things up can alienate them from the Church, so ask early and take care of them, the couple and the impediment. The proper form in your file explains the proper way to take care of impediments and the General Section of this document includes an expanded discussion of each of the impediments and why they might affect consent, citing the appropriate Law and Commentators. You’ll find it at page ---- below.

5. You **must** schedule a wedding in the appropriate parish calendars *only after determining the freedom of the couple to marry*. This may require you to meet with the couple several times before you feel comfortable enough to set a date.
6. You **must** obtain and place in the file current baptismal information. If the couple is from your parish, include the volume and page number for the required data to force yourself to be thorough. If the couple, or one of them, is from someplace else, send for, call for, or ask to have faxed a copy of the *complete* baptismal record. The whole idea is to establish freedom to marry and the complete record will make sure that each party is sacramentally prepared and truly free. Non-Catholic Christians should be asked to provide a *recent* baptismal certificate, or proof of baptism, from the church where it occurred, not the ‘original’ handed to them at the event itself.
7. You **must** comply with the regulations of both the Roman Catholic and *any other Uniate Church* to which either party belongs [here’s where baptismal information is helpful – a youngster baptized in any of the Oriental Catholic Churches remains ascribed to that Church; and they all have specific rules for kids marrying which must be followed, even by Latin priests. We have established Uniate communities in our diocese, Ukranian and Byzantine, and with immigration at an all time high, we can trust there will be many more Catholics who are not of the Latin or *Roman* rite. Oriental Catholics can change rites, i.e. for our purposes, become Roman Catholics only after applying to the Holy See; however, this permission is not generally granted (read “never”)]. If you come across a Uniate marrying a member of your parish, see the special rules section in the General Section so that you take the appropriate

steps to celebrate a valid marriage with him or her. The General Section will also tell you how to deal with an Orthodox-Catholic marriage.] {Validity}

8. You **must** notify the parish of baptism of the wedding *immediately*. Baptismal records are the permanent record, and marriage is to be recorded there as soon as is possible after the nuptials. {Obviously, since the wedding has already occurred, the failure to transmit the information does not affect the marriage, but could result in serious consequences for the Assisting Minister who “forgot” to do so.
9. You **must** forward the MA to the territorial parish of the place where a marriage celebrated in absence of form has taken place if it is outside the territory of your own parish [Suzy Q chooses to marry Billy Joe at Trinity Methodist which is in St. Lucy Parish, diocese of Pookipsee – the MA should be filed in *that* parish and a record can be kept in your files, but the wedding took place in St. Lucy’s parish]
10. You **must** obtain permissions if a party seeking marriage in your parish belongs to another parish. Many pastors who discover that a young man or woman has been baptized but is not a member of a parish will also discover that some specific areas of marriage preparation will demand extra effort and attention. Again, this should help to establish freedom and can be helpful in knowing which areas of pre marriage preparation ought to be given any extra attention. {Liceity}

If the presiding priest/deacon is not from the parish where the wedding will take place or from another diocese, he must present his credentials from his Bishop/Superior to the Episcopal Vicar so that he may grant permission to celebrate that marriage. This letter is given to the pastor of the parish where the wedding will take place.

11. You **must** register the couple for the appropriate pre-marriage conferences as required by the Province of Ohio and the diocese. This is not a universal canonical provision, but is among the Provincial and Particular Laws that affect the liceity of a marriage.⁵⁴ Youngsters who have never been married must do an engaged couples conference. Couples going into a second marriage must do Cana II and may be required to take some other specific counseling. Couples under age are still required to attend counseling. Your parish may also have requirements for counseling for pregnancy or other special circumstances. You should be aware of those offered in your immediate area, in your deanery, or around the diocese (www..... to learn the diocesan schedule). It would be helpful as well to know the availability of Engaged Encounter for those who are seeking a richer premarital dialogue. {Liceity}
12. You **must** comply with any regulations included in a post-annulment process. If you receive or discover from the parish of baptism that an annulment included a *monitum*, *vetitum*, or restriction, contact the Tribunal where the annulment was granted *immediately*.⁵⁵ These

⁵⁴ Provincial legislation means things the six bishops of Ohio have agreed should be applied across the board. Particular Law is what a diocesan bishop sets as policy and can be found in the Blue Book.

⁵⁵ A “monitum” is a warning about a particular person or situation. It normally suggests some useful kind of premarital counseling that should take place. A “vetitum” is a prohibition of marriage and, while they are usually things that can be lifted by undertaking some specific action, generally counseling with a professional, now and then, where an annulment

restrictions can be lifted only as the initial decree states: by the Tribunal, by a bishop, or by the pastor, depending on the restriction. Most often, these restrictions address the causes for a marital breakdown and working with the Tribunal will help you better know and then assist the couple. {Validity/Liceity}

13. You **must** ascertain that all child support, alimony and any other fiscal responsibilities are being met by a party who wants to enter a second marriage. You cannot *deny* a marriage for non-payment of child support, but you *must delay* the wedding until payments have become current. {Liceity}
14. You **must** have in hand the proper State documents and must be an approved State minister of the public status of marriage. Be sure to fill in the wedding license information on the license and in the permanent record. When welcoming a visiting priest or deacon from another diocese, ascertain that they have reciprocal civil authority to witness a marriage *before* extending them delegation. A visiting Priest Uncle of the Bride from Uganda may not have any civil jurisdiction in the United States and that wedding would be civilly invalid. {While this “must” effects neither liceity nor validity, it can have huge consequences in terms of the civil marriage, and can result in fines and loss of civil license to be a witness at marriages}
15. As Pastor or Pastoral Leader, you **must** delegate others to perform weddings in your Parish. While this can be done verbally, there is a place to record the delegation and it ought to be used so that proof of delegation is available years later.
16. The record of the marriage **must be completely and legibly filled into the parish registers** as soon after the wedding as possible. The permanent record is not just the MA, but includes what goes into the register. (MA forms are never to be destroyed, they *are part* of the permanent record). Provide *all* information asked for and do so in a way that can be deciphered later, printing if your penmanship cannot be interpreted by anyone but yourself.
17. You may not celebrate the marriage of any of the following without getting, in writing, the prior permission of the bishop:
 - a. wanderers, or those with no fixed abode [“wanderer” normally means somebody who has not been in your territory, or the territory of the diocese, for at least a month];
 - b. those who cannot obtain a valid civil license [illegal immigrants would be the most obvious class here];
 - c. those bound by natural obligations to others, particularly children;
 - d. those who have with bad public awareness left or denounced the Catholic Church;

has been granted on grounds of canon 1095.3 [lack of capacity to do what marriage requires] these may be universal and permanent if the mental cause is deep and cannot be remediated by normal counseling techniques currently available. A “restriction” is just that, a temporary reason to delay a marriage until something happens. The Diocese of Toledo usually places only “restrictions;” however, you may be dealing with another diocese which has placed either the vetitum or the monitum. Failure to contact the required Tribunal may result in an invalid marriage with all the consequences that can accrue to the Assisting Minister.

- e. those under an official censure from the Church [as with the *monitum* and *vetitum*];
- f. those not of age whose parents are unaware of it or who reasonably oppose it; and
- g. those who intend to marry by proxy [there are special requirements for a wedding by proxy, the most important of which is there should be a written assignment of the proxy in the MA file].

G-2 In order to have a good first session, it might be helpful to establish a protocol for responding to a young couple who call the Parish Office to request a wedding date. A script could be developed that helps the Secretary or Receptionist to help celebrate with the young couple, and appries them of the necessary information they and the parish need to get things started. It might be good, minimally, to obtain the *names* of both parties, their age and birth date, their *religion*, membership in a parish or church community and/or *connection* to your parish, prior marital history, and a relative calendar region when they'd like to be married. This can be most helpful when the Assisting Minister contacts them to set up a first session by providing a little information that makes the couple "known." Some of what follows is repeated in greater detail elsewhere, but in addition to names and addresses, you should do the following:

1. Be sure to provide the necessary contacts to other marriage preparation personnel in your parish cluster, or region. This would include mentoring teams, liturgists, musicians and the like. If you have regulations, you should go over these early on and, where possible, provide them in writing so the couple can undertake preparation in accord with diocesan and parish rules. It is helpful if you explain the rationale behind restrictions, i.e., bird seed attracts birds which bomb the guests or becomes roller bearings to trip up the little old ladies; gum chewing is discouraged so that it doesn't wind up under the pew and then attached to somebody's clothes at a weekend Mass, etc.
2. If your parish uses written aids, these should be given early into the process and explained to the couple. Champlin's *Together for Life* is a commonly used aide in the Diocese of Toledo, others might include theological, liturgical, and pastoral booklets. The couple will use them if they feel comfortable with them, so you should go through them quickly to familiarize the couple with what's in them and why they might find them useful.
3. You should provide the couple samples of a wedding program consistent with the kind of liturgical celebration you and your parish wish them to experience. While the couple may have received a program that appealed to them at a friend's wedding, they are not liturgical planners and your help in putting together a worship aide can assist in making the ceremony meaningful and participatory. It doesn't hurt to remind them to include 'responses' in the program as many guests have no idea what a Catholic liturgy is all about.
4. You should be prepared to discuss the popular wedding rituals [unity candle, visit to the Mary shrine, jumping through the lasso, etc.] with the couple and, depending on whether your parish allows cultural and popular additions, explain these to the couple as part of preparation so that they understand the actual ritual which binds them into marriage, or variously explain why

5. your parish does not allow these additions to the ritual. It is a good idea to have these rules in writing so nobody thinks you're "making them up on the spot" and application can be made universal.

APPENDIX H: CHECKLIST FORM FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION “MUSTS”

Marriage Preparation Musts in Checklist Form (Roman canonical references are provided or those who wonder where these rules come from—parallel Oriental canons are offered in the expanded section.)

- _____ The Pre-Marriage File must be filled in completely (canons 1067, 1121.1)
- _____ Baptismal records of all parties must be included in the Pre-Marriage File (canons 1066, 1067)
- _____ The Assisting Minister must sign off on his personal knowledge of the preparedness and freedom of the couple (Canon 1114)
- _____ If the presiding priest/deacon is not from the parish where the wedding will take place or from another diocese, he must obtain a letter from the Episcopal Vicar granting permission to celebrate that marriage. This letter is to be given to the pastor of the parish where the wedding is taking place.
- _____ Review for impediments must be thorough. Check for (+can be dispensed; - cannot be dispensed) (canons 1066, 1075, 1077, 1078):
 - _____ + Age (must be 18 or have parental permission) (canons 1072, 1083)
 - _____ - Impotence (must be able to “do” sexual activity, whether sterile or not) (canon 1085)
 - _____ - Prior marriage (must be free by decree of the competent authority) (canon 1085)
 - _____ + Marriage to a non-baptized (canon 1086)
 - _____ + (see the general commentary on impediments) Sacred Orders (either priest or deacon ordination renders invalid) (canon 1087)
 - _____ + Public vow in a religious institution (canon 1088)
 - _____ + Abduction of a woman by a man (canon 1089)
 - _____ + (reserved to Rome) Killing a husband, wife or one self or another specifically to free up self or the other for marriage (canon 1091)
 - _____ Blood relationship either – directly or + collaterally (canon 1091)
 - _____ - Marital relationship on the direct line (canon 1092)

- _____ + Public propriety, or the relationship formed by living together or (for the Catholic, living in a civil non-sacramental marriage)
- _____ + Adoption
- _____ No date set until all diocesan requirements have been met (canons 1066, 1067)
- _____ Compliance with any regulations of non-Latin but Catholic Churches to which either party belongs (see the specific regulations elsewhere) (canons of the Oriental Code, 780 §2, 1, 784, 811 §1, 813, 828, 830, 833, 834.2 and especially 838 §2)
- _____ Notification of the parish of baptism as soon as possible after the wedding (canon 1122 §2)
- _____ Filing the Pre-Marriage File in territorial parish where a dispensation from form occurs if not in your own parish boundaries (canon 1121 §3)
- _____ Permissions for non-parishioners from their own proper pastor (canon 1115)
- _____ Signing up the couple for engaged couples conferences as required by provincial norms
- _____ Compliance with any Tribunal restrictions in a second marriage situation (canon 1071 §5)
- _____ Compliance with regulations regarding proof of currency in support/alimony (canon 1071 §3)
- _____ Compliance with civil regulations regarding your license to witness marriage (There is no canonical reference here, but civil law applies)
- _____ Proper and recorded delegation (note there are both Church and civil aspects) (canons 1111 §2 and 1114)
- _____ Recording the marriage in both the Parish Marriage Register (canon 1121 §1 and Baptismal Registers (where applicable) ASAP and legibly (canon 1122 §1)

APPENDIX I: DIOCESE OF TOLEDO MARRIAGE AND RELATED FORMS

- A. Pre-Marriage File
- B. Affidavit Concerning the Freedom to Marry
- C. Marriage Dispensation Request
- D. Marriage Sanation Request
- E. Couples Interview Questions
- F. Sharing Our Understanding of Faith
- G. Human Sexuality Inventory
- H. Letter of Suitability for Clerics/Letter of Delegation for Weddings

I-1 In this section you'll find the primary forms required by the current Code of Canons for keeping the records of a marriage. These are part of the permanent file that must be retained in the parish. Filling them out is not an option nor should it be taken lightly. Proper preparation of a young couple will assist them in understanding the ramification of their consent and provide the proper proofs of that consent in the future. These forms also provide the Preparing Minister with the insights he or she must have in order to attest to the readiness of the couple intellectually and spiritually to fruitfully celebrate marriage. There is also a Couples Interview Questionnaire that is not required, but can be very useful when meeting with this couple for counseling or a possible annulment. We have also included a draft copy of the "Letter of Suitability for Clerics" and a "Letter of Delegation for Weddings" because this is a recent requirement in the dioceses in our country.

The forms include:

- I-2 The Pre-Marriage File** – this form accumulates the necessary background information with which the Preparing Minister can assess the readiness and freedom of the couple to marry. In the short term, it also provides easily accessed contact information, but its primary purpose is to meet the requirements of canons 1063-1072.
- I-3** <http://www.toledodiocese.org/images/Marriage/1-premarriagefile.pdf>
- I-4 The Affidavit Concerning the Freedom to Marry** – No pastor is supposed to witness the marriage of people whom he does not know. Often, children of parishioners, or people looking for a long aisle, will stop by to arrange a marriage. The MB provides an easy way to find out who the unknown applicant for a wedding really is. It's required by the Law, canons 1066-1072.
- I-5** <http://www.toledodiocese.org/images/Marriage/2-marriageaffidavit.pdf>
- I-6 The Marriage Dispensation Request** – Canons 1073-1094 discuss those things which stand in the way of a marriage and how to remove those things where they can be removed since some impediments are permanent, as for example, the prohibition on a brother marrying his sister. The Law requires that a dispensation only be granted for certain reasons, so the form lists those as well as the pertinent information about the person impeded.

- I-7 <http://www.toledodiocese.org/images/Marriage/3-marriagedispensation.pdf>
- I-8 **The Marriage Sanation Request** – If a couple who has attempted marriage elsewhere comes to the parish asking for the “Church’s Blessing,” the Preparing Minister must ascertain how best to handle the situation. There is the possibility of a simple validation, or convalidation ceremony; however, canon 1157 states clearly that this must be a “new act of the will,” which is to say neither of the parties to that attempted marriage must believe they are married. Where one or both does, canons 1161-1165 provide for a “healing at the root” of consent, or a retroactive validation by sanation. This form provides the necessary information so that the Bishop can exercise this privilege and grant the retroactive validation.
- I-9 <http://www.toledodiocese.org/images/Marriage/4-marriagesanation.pdf>
- I-10 **Couples Interview Questions** – It is very beneficial to record some detailed information on the bride and groom that is not requested in other forms. This information can be very useful when the couples may return for counseling or possibly an annulment. (See Below)
- I-11 **Sharing Our Understanding of Faith** – This inventory is designed to help the engaged couple reflect on their own experience and knowledge of faith as well as dialogue about it with each other and with God when they discuss their attitudes and beliefs about faith and religion.
- I-12 <http://www.toledodiocese.org/images/Marriage/6-sharingunderstanding.pdf>
- I-13 **Human Sexuality Inventory** – This inventory is for the engaged couple to complete individually and then spend some time discussing with each other their respective answers. The priest, deacon, or pastoral minister will ask the couple to bring this inventory to the next session so that they can discuss the responses together.
- I-14 <http://www.toledodiocese.org/images/Marriage/7-humansexualityinventory.pdf>
- I-15 **Letter of Suitability for Clerics/Letter for Delegation for Weddings** – This requirement has recently been imposed on the dioceses of the country.
- I-16 When a cleric (priest or deacon) from outside the Diocese of Toledo comes into the diocese for a wedding he must provide a letter of suitability from his diocese of incardination or religious superior. This letter of suitability should be directed to the Chancery.
- I-17 If a priest or deacon of the Diocese of Toledo needs a letter of suitability please feel free to contact the Chancery. (See I-19 - I-20)

I-18 Couple Interview Questions

| Couple Interview Questions | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Category | Bride | Groom |
| Names | | |
| Parents (Divorced/Deceased) | | |
| Brothers/Sisters | | |
| Birth Position | | |
| Education | | |
| Present Employment | | |
| Present Attitude Toward Church | | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| When & How Did You Meet? | |
| How long have you Dated? | |
| Engagement: Date/Circumstances | |
| Notes: | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Maturity Level | |
| Importance of Religion In This Relationship | |
| Features/Characteristics For Future Identification | |
| General Appearance | |

Date of Interview: _____

Conducted by: _____

Wedding: Date Set for: _____

() No Date set. Advice given: _____

I-19 Sample Letter of Suitability/Delegation for Priests or Deacons (p. 1)

<Current Date>

<Presider's Name>

<Presider's Address>

Dear <Presider's Name>:

As a guest presider at <Parish Name> for the wedding of <Bride's Name> and <Groom's Name> on <Wedding Date> at <Wedding Time>, I understand that you may not be familiar with the practices that have been established for weddings in our Church.

As the official witness, please be sure that you have completely determined that there are no canonical problems with this wedding. There should be death certificates, annulments and privileges obtained for any type of marriages, including all civil and common laws marriages. Also, for any existing canonical Impediments, the needed dispensations and permissions are to be obtained by you for this couple. One of the parties must be a Roman Catholic in good standing, not having left the Church by a formal act. Marriages where both parties are non-Catholic and /or formerly Catholic are not permitted in the <Parish Name>.

Upon receiving your letter stating that you will be the official witness of this wedding; that there does not exist any canonical difficulties and that all the above requirements for this wedding to be celebrated in the Catholic Church are fulfilled, you will be delegated by me to witness this marriage according to the current Faculties for Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Toledo, #10 (May 1, 1985) (Canon 1111, Par 1, 2).

In accord with the Charter and Norms, priests and deacons residing outside of the Diocese must submit a certificate of aptitude from their sponsoring diocese and/or religious superior to receive delegation.

Weddings that take place in the <Parish Name> are recorded here and the marriage files are kept here. Please provide the parish office with the MA form and all related documents no later than one month before the ceremony. Because of the number of weddings celebrated at <Parish Name>, you understand we must insist that you get the records to us in advance of the day of the wedding.

Please return the bottom portion of the civil license to the Probate court. Record the civil license number on the MA form and return the top portion of the license to the wedding couple.

I hope and pray that this wedding ceremony may lead to a grace filled life for the bride and groom.

In Christ Jesus,

<Pastor's Name>

I-20 Sample Letter of Suitability/Delegation for Priests or Deacons (p. 2)

< current date >

<Pastor's Name>
<Parish Name>
<Parish Address>

Dear <Pastor's Name>:

I do hereby signify that I am the official Catholic witness for the marriage of <Bride's Name> and <Groom's Name> to be celebrated on <Wedding Date> at <Wedding Time> in <Parish Name>. I am a Roman Catholic Latin Rite Priest/Deacon in good standing with faculties in my diocese of domicile or quasi domicile or religious community or society.

(_____)

I also hold a valid State of Ohio civil license to witness marriages.

There are no canonical difficulties with this couple and all needed dispensations and permissions will be obtained before the wedding ceremony. Any needed annulments have been obtained already. Also, at least one of the parties of this marriage is a member of the Roman Catholic Latin Rite in good standing and has not left the Church by a formal act.

Sincerely,

<Presider's Name>

I hereby delegate _____ to witness the above marriage.

<Pastor's Name>
<Parish Name>

Date _____

APPENDIX J: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- J-1** **FAQ** The Groom has asked that I share Eucharist with his Bride so that signs of unity can be preserved at his wedding. What do I do?
- A. The rules regarding intercommunion are quite clear. Only those who believe in the Divine Presence according to the theology of the Catholic Church are to be admitted. This problem speaks to the disunity among Christians and ought not to be lightly dismissed by the Assisting Minister for any reason; including making the guests or even the couple at a wedding “feel” better. Refer to the sections in the Manual that discuss options for the mixed marriage beginning on page 50 entitled “Marriage to a Member of another Christian Church”.
- J-2** **FAQ** Is Mormon Baptism recognized by the Church for the purpose of marrying a Mormon and a Catholic?
- A. In a word, no. A decree from the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 2001 stated that because not all Mormon Baptisms were performed using the Trinitarian Formula (some are, by the way), there would be no recognition granted for any baptism in the Mormon faith. If a Mormon approaches the Church for a marriage to a Catholic, the Preparing Minister must apply for a dispensation from Disparity of Worship, *ad cautelam*, or for precautionary purposes. To be recognized by the Catholic Church, baptism must be “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” as prescribed in the Ritual Books. Baptism “In the Name of the Father,” “In the Name of God,” “In the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier,” and any other form not invoking the three persons of the Blessed Trinity in specific is not recognized and anyone baptized using such a ritual must have a dispensation from Disparity of Worship in order to be married in the Catholic Church. While it is impossible to list all the Churches which do not use the Trinitarian Formula, a few of them include the Mormons, the Oneness Pentecostals, the Jesus Only Pentecostals, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Where there is a doubt, the Preparing Minister should apply for a dispensation from Disparity of Worship *ad cautelam*.
- J-3** **FAQ** Can a marriage be denied because a Catholic has not been confirmed?
- A. Canon 1065, §1 states: “Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience.” In essence, if the person him or her self does not wish to be confirmed prior to a marriage, the parish cannot delay or deny the marriage of anyone living in the territory or registered at the parish. Grave inconvenience is not determined by the Parish in this case, except as to how catechizing and celebrating the sacrament would require Parish involvement; rather, it is for the person to determine in terms of the required time in addition to that required for catechesis and celebration of marriage.
- J-4** **FAQ** I’m having a wedding with a Roman Catholic and a Maronite from North Toledo. Can I

have the Deacon take care of it for me since I'll be on vacation?

A. In general, no. The current legislation of the Universal Church pays particular attention to the ritual rights of the Oriental Churches, among them the Maronite. The Law for the Churches of the East requires that a priest be present to impart the Blessing. This is not the Latin Nuptial Blessing at the time of the Lord's Prayer, but the blessing of the marriage during the rite of consent itself. A Deacon is not empowered by the Oriental Churches to administer this blessing, so you must either skip vacation or find another priest willing to come and perform that important function.

J-5 *FAQ* Is there an appropriate contemporary "theology" for including a visit to the Virgin Shrine in the wedding ceremony?

A. Often, given the modern propensity for mixed marriages, a large part of the congregation will not be Catholic and anything smacking of idol worship and the unknown can be a cause for sowing the seeds of suspicion and rancor which can be visited on the couple later. When there are non-Catholics present, one might attempt to explain the visit in a way that catechizes and illuminates rather than leaves the door open to unknowing. Here's an example: "Here in our Church we like to think of the House of God much as we would our own homes. We even put up pictures and images of the famous forerunners in our 'Church family' just the way we have pictures of Grandma and Grandpa at home. Our young couple is going to go over to an image of one of our famous ancestors, Mary, the mother of Jesus and they will leave a rose there to remind us that, like Mary before them, they want to be role models for the rest of us. Like Mary, they will first and foremost choose, by their yes to the request of Jesus to live in a sacred bond of matrimony, to be Disciples of Christ. Like Mary and Joseph, they wish to model their faith in the primary cell of all society, marriage and family. And, like Mary, who knew when to discipline Jesus and when to free him to undertake his own Mission and Ministry on the Cross, they remind us that they choose today to become good parents, knowing when to admonish and when to liberate their own children to take up their Mission and Ministry in the world.

J-6 *FAQ* What is the appropriate stipend for a marriage?

A. The Province of Ohio has established a standard stipend of \$50. This is considered an offering by the couple for the continued work of Jesus Christ in the parish where the celebration occurred. It is not a gift to the pastor or celebrant and in the Diocese of Toledo is to be deposited in the stipend accounts. Certainly, the parish may suggest a more substantial gift for the work of the parish commensurate to the dignity of the celebration, perhaps citing the cost of the wedding dress, reception, photographs, honeymoon or some other comparable part of the larger celebration as an appropriate measure for an offering to the Church; however no larger gift may be mandated. On the other hand, the parish may well, as part of a more general set of standardized (written, evenly applied, and made available well before the nuptials) regulations, establish a set of fees appropriate to the added costs incurred by the parish to have on hand staff, decorators, technicians, musicians and to assist in making sure that costs of lighting, air conditioning or heating and the like are adequately met. Fees for non-parishioners may well reflect the fact that, unlike those who belong, and attend, the couples do not regularly assist in

defraying costs born by the weekly offering of the community. In the event that any additional fee is charged, there must be clear catechesis on what the stipend is, and what any additional fees might be. Clearly established (written and uniformly applied) policy regarding the “denial” of a wedding for any parishioner unable to meet fees beyond the stipend, and even where the stipend itself cannot be met, must make it clear that no wedding of anyone registered at or living in the territory of the parish will be denied for non-payment. If a parish wishes to establish a particular fee to discourage non-parishioners from celebrating in the parish as a means of assisting them in taking an active part in their own territorial parish, the fee should be made part of a written policy, which is uniformly applied, with clear “rules” for its waiver.

J-7 **FAQ** The couple handed me a check, made out in my name, for \$50. Can I keep it?

A. The reasonable purpose for the check must be considered. If the couple can reasonably be thought to have made the offering of the stipend to the Assisting Minister, it is in fact the stipend and should be deposited in Parish accounts. If, however, the check is reasonably thought to be a specific gift to the Assisting Minister in thanks for his participation, it is a gift which can be kept.

J-8 **FAQ** Does the non-Catholic ever have to sign off on the “promises” to raise any children Catholic?

A. Only if a marriage is being celebrated using the Petrine Privilege, it is the non-Catholic who must sign the promises. Should the non-baptized be unwilling, the privilege would not be granted. The promises are required before the Privilege is processed and granted by the Holy See. In no other circumstances need the non-Catholic sign the promise, and no one is to be forced to “convert” in order to have a wedding in the Catholic Church.

J-9 **FAQ** Can a Catholic be married in a garden ceremony, or in some similar venue?

A. In general, no. Canon 1118, §1 states “A marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic party and a non-Catholic baptized party is to be celebrated in a parish church. It can be celebrated in another church or oratory with the permission of the local ordinary or pastor.” If even one of the people is Catholic, the requirement is that it always be in a place of prayer. This is so in order to link the celebration to the sacramental life of the Catholic party. The canon goes on to say, in §2, “The local ordinary can permit a marriage to be celebrated in another suitable place.” In general, this means another church or a place where the religious aspects of the celebration can be properly underscored so that any specific place would have to be named in advance so that a ruling on its suitability can be made by the “local ordinary,” which means the Bishop or his delegate, not the pastor. In §3, the canon states “A marriage between a Catholic party and a non-baptized party can be celebrated in another suitable place.” While it may seem to the Catholic that a backyard garden is “suitable,” and he or she can make that determination, it would be appropriate for the Preparing Minister to do a little catechesis on what an appropriate religious venue for marriage might be. However, if there is a non-baptized involved, the Catholic may choose a place without regard to the insights of either the local ordinary or the pastor. Notably, the local pastor cannot fail to assist that Catholic marrying a non-baptized, even if the marriage is going to be in what the pastor might think was

an inappropriate place. It would be appropriate to offer additional catechetical instruction in the event that a Catholic chooses such a place as would strike the pastor as being inappropriate!

J-10 *FAQ* Can a couple write their own vows?

A. No, the options for vows that are presented in the Rite of Marriage must be used at all ceremonies in the Diocese of Toledo.

J-11 *FAQ* Can I prohibit rice, bird seed, balloons, and bubbles after the wedding?

A. Yes. Rice and bird seed attract birds, which may leave evidence on the steps and the parishioners of their presence. Rice and bird seed make wonderful roller bearings to trip up Grandma and raise liability insurance costs. Rice and bird seed require a janitor to clean them up, which most couples do not bring along since the regular Parish employees enjoy the same “weekend off” as do their secular counterparts. Balloons and bubbles might also have consequences the couple did not think of. If such prohibitions are to be applied, they should be in writing, uniform for all couples, and cite some sound pastoral reasoning which the couple can understand.

J-12 *FAQ* Do we actually need the aisle runner?

A. The aisle runner comes from a time when aisles were dusty from dirt streets. They helped prevent the wedding dress from becoming dirty. Today, with the advent of plastic runners and carpeted aisles, they can pose a serious danger from tangling in heels, tearing, tripping and the like which create liability hazards for the Parish, the couple and even the florist who sold it. These dangers can be explored with the couple. If the parish forbids them in general, this should be in writing and uniformly applied to all couples.

J-13 *FAQ* What about a lot of candles around the altar?

A. Yes, couples often like the “candle-light” effect; however, the general rule of thumb remains this: There should be no more candles lit than would normally grace the table of the Lord during a weekend celebration of the Eucharist. This rule applies for more than just marriage and is appropriate to any celebration in the Sanctuary. Candles down the aisles, or elsewhere, should be restricted according to local fire codes or a written policy of the parish.

J-14 *FAQ* How serious is the Church about a simple ceremony during Lent and Advent?

A. Very. The liturgical seasons are the external manifestation of the spiritual pilgrimage of the Parish and its people and orient the community toward a particular style of prayer and celebration. A wedding, set in the midst of the general community life of prayer and celebration, should reflect the season, not vice versa. In general, couples celebrating a marriage should augment the weekly celebration, not replace it, and written policy could assist them in reflecting upon and then involving the larger parish in the wedding ceremony even in the aspect of decorations and accoutrements employed during the ceremony or left for the enhancement of the weekend liturgical celebration of the parish.

J-15 FAQ Can I have a “Closed” wedding?

A. In general, no. Any sacramental celebration is the celebration of the sacramental community. A wedding involves the whole parish, not merely those “invited,” and the couple should be made aware that scheduling a wedding at the parish, and posting it in the calendar, is an invitation to the praying community to do just that, come and pray with and for the couple. It is inappropriate to exclude anyone from such a gathering; however, from time to time, the nature of the wedding itself may suggest that pastoral considerations preclude a grand or extensive invitation to all and sundry, as when the families are large and space would not be available for the general parish.

J-16 FAQ What’s the bare minimum I have to do to get this wedding over with?

A. Canon 1063 makes it clear that there is no real “shortcut” to avoid the proper preparation of a couple for marriage. In general, that suggests that marriage and family issues should stand at the core of catechesis, praxis and development within the parish at large. The Catholic Youth and Schools Office has instituted a program, Generations of Faith, which seeks to undertake broad family formation, and therefore remote preparation for marriage and family. Implementing this program, or others like it, can be extremely beneficial in providing ample and appropriate preparation well before a person contemplates marriage for him or her self. Couples should be trained and made available to serve as mentors for youngsters considering marriage. The Diocesan Office of Stewardship provides materials and encouragement in the application of the Stewardship Way of Life which can be of immense value in recruitment and training of mentor couples, engaged couple training teams and the like which would enhance both proximate and immediate marriage preparation in the Parish, alleviating much of the “last minute” sense of preparation this question seeks to address. By the same token, Preparing Ministers should avail themselves of contemporary theological and social materials apt to their own enrichment in the field of marriage and family. Finally, when a couple comes forward requesting a marriage, the Preparing Minister, ought to have both the time and desire to assist them in a fruitful exploration of all that marriage is and can be, not merely for the couple, but for the larger sacramental community in which that couple will live, work and pray. Perhaps that means more work and greater intensity of effort; however, it is such effort that yields up blessings for all involved, particularly for the Church as she seeks to live the mandate of Jesus Christ.

J-17 FAQ Can my parishioners have their wedding in the school chapel?

A. No. Marriage is one of the seven sacraments, and its celebration should be where sacraments are celebrated, the parish Church. .”

J-18 FAQ Can the Groom’s dog be part of the wedding party?

A. No. A wedding is the celebration of the praying community, and the general rules, which

apply Sunday morning, are apt to the nuptial celebration as well. Just as pets do not attend the baptismal rites, and are not part of the Eucharistic liturgy, so too they are forbidden to be part of the wedding. Of course, guide dogs would be an obvious exception to this rule, just as that guide dog would be welcomed Sunday morning.

J-19 *FAQ* Can a prenuptial agreement be included in the remote planning for a wedding?

A. In general, no. Prenuptial plans are a condition placed against the future, and all significant and serious future conditions make consent invalid (canon 1102, §1). There are a few exceptions, such as when older couples restrict estates to their own natural children; however, when the Preparing Minister learns that a couple is considering a prenuptial agreement he or she ought to be aware that there may be issues of commitment which would vitiate consent and discuss these fully with the couple.

J-20 *FAQ* Does a Wedding Mass meet my Sunday Mass Obligation?

A. Only if it's a Sunday Mass. That means it occurs after 4:00 p.m. on a Saturday, or at any time on Sunday, and has used the appropriate Sunday Mass lections and prayers (while the lections can be changed for good pastoral reasons, to do so for a wedding does not rise to the test). Any other wedding Liturgy would not fulfill the obligation regardless of the time it was celebrated. The Pastor can, however, allow the Wedding Liturgy to fulfill an obligation for a specific person for a good reason, as see canon 1245; however, this canon is dependent upon canon 1244 so that the "good cause" can't just be "because you came to this wedding." There must be a genuine good reason to extend the permission. The bishop could, according to canon 87, provide for the wedding to be a "weekend" liturgy; however, this is rarely done. Diocesan policy reflects the need for adhering to the canonical limitations of the number of Sunday Liturgies any particular priest may celebrate, which means that normally, adding a Saturday vigil mass would not be allowed just to have a wedding at a later hour.

J-21 *FAQ* I have an older couple, can I waive the six-month waiting period?

A. For pastoral reasons, you may certainly waive whatever part of it you, as the Preparing Minister, conclude may be waived. However, it's often not a good idea to indiscriminately presume that because a couple is "older" they are adequately prepared for all the ramifications of marriage. Many older people are coming from situations to which they have become accustomed, and marriage will present huge challenges to their time, their energy, the focus of their leisure, the commitment to other interests, previous friendships and a host of other issues which might be explored before a marriage rather than encountering them as problems afterward. In addition, many older people are entering a second marriage, whether after a divorce or the death of a previous spouse. It may require several sessions, and a lot of time, to assist the couple in coming to grips with the loss of a first relationship and the new dynamic which should be developed in a second. Any decision to abbreviate the period of preparation should be taken only after assessing the actual, not presumed, readiness of the couple, and the dignity of the sacrament they now wish to share, not merely between themselves, but with the Parish and the entire Church.

J-22 *FAQ* I have a person who wants to get married but had a hysterectomy, tubal ligation, vasectomy, etc. Are they impeded by the impotence canon?

A. In general, no. Canon 1084, §1 reads “antecedent and perpetual impotence to have intercourse, whether on the part of the man or the woman, whether absolute or relative, nullifies marriage by its very nature.” Because the impediment is perpetual, it would, if present, entirely eradicate a person’s natural right to marry. Therefore, it must be interpreted on the strictest possible lines (c. 18). Because it specifically mentions intercourse, not the capacity to generate offspring, most of the things we might think of as “sterilizing” a person would not qualify, since most of these can be reversed, or do not work with 100% efficiency and are not actually perpetual nor are they germane to the physical act of intercourse (see c. 1084, §3). Only those instances where the actual performance of the conjugal act is perpetually prevented, not merely presumed, bring this impediment into play. Each case must be judged in and of itself, so there is no blanket impediment linked to any particular condition, including paraplegia, and the canon itself (c. 1084, 2) suggests that if there is the slightest doubt in a particular case, there can be no subjective refusal of marriage by the Church or its Preparing Minister(s). “Absolute” in the canon means that the condition, if proved, applies to every person with whom the afflicted party wishes to consider marriage, and “relative” means that the afflicted person cannot entertain normal sexual contact with a particular person. Some things, which come to mind, are the disproportionate size of the male and female sexual organs (relative), loss of the male organ (absolute) and things of that nature.

J-23 *FAQ* Do I have to put up with the Wedding Coordinator the couple hired?

A. In general, no. The celebration of marriage is governed by the Church, not by contemporary customs and styles, and certainly not by the consumer driven culture which has made the “wedding” a major show. However, do not dismiss this chance to evangelize in the market place by merely saying “NO!!!!” to a Wedding Coordinator. Many wedding planners are quite willing to work with a Church or Parish, and perhaps the development of a set of wedding guidelines apt to your particular Parish, and made available to the couple early on, with specific rules and regulations applying to Wedding Coordinators (as well as photographers, videographers, limousine drivers, etc) could actually assist in the catechesis of those people in what a Catholic marriage celebration is all about and obtain their active cooperation in making the entire preparation, that done at the Parish Center, and that done by the Wedding Coordinator, follow the same thematic pathways.

J-24 *FAQ* Where do the Banns of marriage fit into the preparation period?

A. Banns are a remnant of the medieval period when the baptismal status, to say nothing of the marital status, of the parties to a future wedding were in doubt. It was required, by the Council of Trent, that the Assisting Minister know the couple. That meant knowing whether each was 1) baptized, 2) free to marry (not previously married, especially in a pre-Tridentine secret marriage) and 3) a member of the Parish (since the Council forbade the clergy from celebrating marriages of strangers without first ascertaining who they were in terms of nos. 1 and 2!). This requirement was retained when the Church promulgated its first Code of Canons in 1917 (cc. 1022 and 1024), demanding that the Banns be published in the parish where the person had

been baptized, where he or she was registered as a member, and in the parish where the person planned on being married (in 1917 that was usually the same parish, by the way). In the current Code, canon 1069 states that “all the faithful are obliged to reveal any impediments they know about to the pastor or local ordinary before the celebration of the marriage.” Unless the date, time and names of the couple and their wedding are published, how could this canon have any relevance at all? Canon 1067 provides the answer, reminding us that the Episcopal Conference is to establish policy regarding the publication of Banns. In the United States, since the civil government and Church both keep excellent records, the reality of a secret marriage is almost unknown, and the work of the faithful is now done by astute records at the Court House and Parish Office. They are not required in the Diocese of Toledo, but many couples like to see their name in print and as part of the lionization of marriage, the Banns might be posted with an appeal to the community to pray for the couple as they approach the celebration of a significant sacramental moment in their lives.

J-25 *FAQ* Do I have to let the couple use a unity candle?

A. No. As a matter of fact, the unity candle is not a part of the Catholic marriage rite, and never has been. It developed as an accoutrement for Protestant weddings at which there was no specific sacramental symbolism. However, while it is not a formal part of the Catholic rite, it need not be seen as having no place in the broader celebration of the couple and the Church. Canon 1063, §3 certainly reminds us that the wedding ceremony should in every sense reveal the unity between Christ and his people, and that suggests using the symbols of the culture in a way that magnifies their potential as catechetical devices for enriching the lives of the couple, those who attend the wedding ceremony and even of the larger parish. The unity candle can express a common Christian symbol, the light of Christ illuminating the lives of his people. The tapers, particularly if the couple is invited to bring along their own baptismal candle, or use tapers reminiscent of the sacramental dignity of the person, can provide a powerful teaching tool which can be employed to make a connection between the grace imparted at baptism coming alive in a new and fecund way in the sacrament of matrimony. Before saying “No!!!” give thought to how this commonly used secular symbol might become a significant device for the couple’s growth in faith. And remember, saying “No!” may well alienate the couple at a time when the Church ought to be extending the most particular of welcomes. Perhaps your Parish, or the Pastoral Council, could develop an appropriate instrument as part of a broader set of marriage regulations apt to the Parish which explains the candle and why or why not the couple may wish to make it part of their wedding celebration.

J-26 *FAQ* Do I need to get dispensations if I’m only doing a sanation?

A. Yes. All dispensations that would have been required for a wedding are also required for the granting of a sanation. The dispensation request is part of the package when submitting the request for a sanation.

J-27 *FAQ* The bride-to-be wants to hide from the groom until the wedding procession begins. Should I go along with that?

A. The custom of separating the bride and groom dates to the distant past, when the bride was

being transferred from the authority of the Pater familias to that of the husband. Today, most couples have been just that, a couple, for some time. The wedding marks an important moment in a growing relationship. So, it would seem that the separation of the couple prior to the ceremony is not consistent with who they are. Perhaps the Parish could develop a catechetical handout which explains the sacramental ceremony as one in which the couple are witnessing to the hospitality and ministry of family, a theme the Universal Church has underscored for the past seven decades. One way to accomplish this is to invite the couple to be prepared prior to the beginning of the celebration to greet their guests and make them welcome as they arrive at the Church. This stresses the vitality of their unity and creates a sense in the guests that the couple was serious about inviting them to participate in the nuptials.

J-28 *FAQ* I found the groom's men enjoying a final beer over in the Service Sacristy. What do I do now?

A. The Church requires that the bride and groom, as well as the official witnesses, be physically and morally present. The use of intoxicants, mood depressants or mood enhancing drugs can seriously affect the capacity of the couple to validly exchange consent, or of the official witnesses to function in that role. If the Church's Minister discovers that such things are being used, he must make a determination on the spot as to the moral presence of the party/ies. Parish policy and guidelines made available to the couple well in advance of the celebration can alleviate this problem by making it clear that no alcoholic beverages, or mood altering drugs, are allowed at the Church, and that, where it happens, the "custom" of bar hopping before the wedding will cancel the event.

J-29 *FAQ* If a divorced and remarried couple gets an annulment, does that mean they cannot get a sanation because the civil marriage was invalid?

A. In general, an annulment is a declaration by the Church that a previous marriage was invalid, and thus the party is declared to have been free to marry all along. That being the case, the second marriage, one which occurs before an annulment, was celebrated by a party free naturally to do so. Therefore, a sanation can be granted.

J-30 *FAQ* Why do some priests still have weddings after 4:00 p.m. on Saturday?

A. In general, because they asked for a permission to do so. The policy of the Diocese makes it clear that no wedding is to be celebrated after 2:00 p.m. on Saturday unless it is at the regular Saturday vigil Mass and makes use of the Sunday lections. Where there is no vigil Mass, and the pastor has expressed a proven need to the Bishop, a special permission can be granted for evening weddings. Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral and The Historic Church of St. Patrick's in Toledo have special permission from the bishop to have weddings after 2:00 p.m. on Saturday's.

J-31 *FAQ* Can a couple have a simple wedding at Church then have a big to-do in their back yard?

A. In general, no. The Code of Canon Law makes it clear that there cannot be a multiplication of ceremonies at which vows, or anything which looks like vows, are exchanged (canon 1127,

§3). If the reason for the “simple ceremony” is to allow the couple to restage the “wedding” at a garden party, in a private club, or at some other venue, it is forbidden. However, if the couple merely wants to have a quiet wedding and then a huge reception, there is nothing “wrong” about that beyond the possible failure of the couple to adequately understand the nature of the wedding ceremony.

J-32 *FAQ* I got a call about doing a wedding at Nazareth Hall. . .

A. You may not assist at a wedding at Nazareth Hall. A Catholic party wishing to have a wedding there requires a dispensation from Form and at least some reasonable proof that the wedding will be a religious ceremony. The Catholic priest may be present according to the terms of canon law, but may not elicit consent.

J-33 *FAQ* Do I have to let the couple have a ring bearer who isn’t going to carry the rings?

A. No. However, keep in mind that the wedding is a chance to do significant catechesis about marriage and family. The ring bearer, a left over from the middle ages when the rings represented the powerful bond of partnership beyond the couple and into the realm of the extended family, can be a sign of the importance of the bond represented by the rings, and mentioned in the homily or other remarks. If the ring bearer is young, and will not have the real rings, perhaps the reception of the rings could be reduced in its obvious departure from the bearer so that there are no signs of discontinuity. Very young children, whether ring bearers or flower girls, or whatever, ought to be discouraged. Often, very young children, either by age or maturity, become confused and upset, and this will distract from the “signs of unity” which a wedding ceremony seeks to evoke. Policy can be developed by the Parish to establish a minimum age; however, it should be written, applied uniformly, and made available well in advance.

J-34 *FAQ* The Bride told me she was going to have a Junior Bride. Is that all right?

A. In the Rite of Marriage it is made clear that the expectation of the Church is a Bride, a Groom, and two official witnesses. The expansion of the wedding party beyond that can quickly become unmanageable and distract from the dignity of the couple who have come to exchange consent in a sacramental venue. While each case must be judged according to Parish policy and guidelines (written, evenly applied, and readily available well before the marriage occurs), and in a genuinely pastoral manner, the presence of a Junior Bride or Groom is inconsistent with the sacramental nature of the event and should be discouraged. Remote preparation for marriage, i.e., that which occurs in the years of childhood and adolescence, can be a time to properly dispose Catholics toward the appropriate understanding of the “wedding party.” The Parish may also wish to include in its own policy appropriate reasoning for limiting the size of the wedding party, as for instance, the limitations of the available space, the focus on the couple, and similar issues which may dictate the size of a wedding party.

J-35 *FAQ* My Parish organist just called and said the Bride wants her to play Stand By Your Man for the Communion Reflection. What should I do?

- A. Well written Parish policy about wedding music would alleviate this problem. Diocesan policy requires that all music and song used during the actual ritual be taken from appropriate ritual books, i.e., the Parish hymnals, so that it will meet two tests: 1) that it be appropriate to the action then being undertaken and 2) that it be material well known to the community gathered so that they can take an active part. In general, secular music would thus be prohibited after the Processional and until the Recessional, and even these should reflect the dignity of the sacramental celebration.

J-36 FAQ What is the symbolism of only the father walking the bride down the aisle?

- A. The practice of the father walking his daughter down the aisle is a custom that grew out of the days of patriarchy, which presumed ownership of all property including one's children by the father of the family. In effect, then, the father is giving the bride away as property to the groom. This practice is outdated in this day and age, but it has become traditional. *The Rite of Marriage* recommends that the bride and groom both be accompanied by their parents down the aisle with an exchange of the families at the front of the church. In developing parish policy, you may want to look at the Marriage Ritual so the couples know what they are doing.

J-37 FAQ What is the difference between a Sanation and a Convalidation?

- A. There's no right word for this phenomenon. Canonically, it's called convalidation; however, most couples will refer to it as "getting our marriage blessed by the Church."

Most often, it will be encountered when a couple has entered into a civil union, or been married at another church, and the Catholic party wishes to get things right with the Church. In the Church's Law, that earlier marriage may not be recognized; however, there is probably some sort of commitment which they made to one another, and some sort of moral responsibilities which they understand flow from that commitment. In order to rectify the situation, it is necessary to determine how much of a commitment, and to what object the parties have given their consent.

Since their status with the Church is problematic, the Pastor/Pastoral Leader will want to ascertain what steps are necessary in order to provide the couple with proper "Catholic" remediation. There are two possible avenues to pursue with the couple, the formal convalidation, or a retroactive validation of their original consent, wherever it may have been celebrated. These are two very different approaches which require different pastoral treatment.

Marriage requires an act of consent, and it must be to marriage in the here and now. It can only be given once. In order to discover which of the two processes to employ, it is necessary to find out from the couple whether they plan to make a "new act of the will" with regard to the "blessing" they have come to receive. A couple of simple questions will suffice to know how they really feel about their original consent.

When you married at the _____, did you feel as if God were binding you to a permanent, faithful and family-oriented relationship? Was it a real marriage to which God now holds you accountable?

If the couple answers, “Well, yes, we got married,” then the Pastor/Preparing Minister ought to at least suspect that there would be no “new act of the will,” only a renewal of what has already been exchanged. In this case, the retroactive validation, called a sanation, or *sanatio in radice*, would be the appropriate way to handle the Church’s response. Since the couple believes themselves truly and genuinely married, they cannot give new consent to marriage. The sanation requires whatever preparatory steps the Preparing Minister feels adequate to assisting the couple in more fully understanding the relationship formed at consent, and an application to the Bishop on the appropriate form so that he can issue the Decree which, in effect, recognizes the same ceremony the couple recognizes as having begun their marriage. There is no ceremony involved since the couple are already married, and this may call for sensitivity in explaining what is happening and meeting the needs of the Catholic party for some kind of external manifestation of their renewed participation in the Church. It can be a challenging time for both the couple and the Assisting Minister since no “wedding” or wedding-like celebration can take place.

If the couple answers, “Well, no, we’re only living together and need the marriage of the Church,” then the answer is a formal ceremony to convalidate consent. This act must be to a marriage which both parties feel/admit is not a genuine marriage. Where even one feels or believes that he or she is truly married, going through a ceremony to elicit consent would be a fraud, and that’s invalid. However, having ascertained that the couple really feels “unmarried” and not merely unblessed, or at odds with the Church’s stand on marriage, all of the preparation steps required for marriage can and perhaps should come into play, with appropriate accommodation for the length of time the couple has been living together since their civil/non-Catholic religious ceremony.

While regularization of marriage is a laudable goal, and there are moments when it can be suggested to a couple, please note that no one can force a couple to regularize what the Priest, Pastoral Leader, Deacon or an other Minister of the Church may feel ought to be regularized. Thus, if a couple comes with a child seeking baptism, and it is discovered that the couple were only civilly married, it could be suggested that they think about convalidation/sanation; however, the regularization of their marriage cannot be a deciding factor in whether that other sacrament is to take place since the use of force destroys their freedom to give consent. Baptizing a child can only be delayed or postponed, and then only where there is no “founded hope” that the child would be raised a Catholic.

Remember, if even one of the parties believes that his or her original consent was to marriage as a permanent relationship which could result in children and family, you cannot do a convalidation; there can be no “Catholic wedding.” Where the convalidation is requested, and appropriate, the couple should be adequately prepared as if there had been no previous marriage.

J-38 *FAQ* If a Sanation is appropriate, can there be a way to ritualize the Sacramentality of their original marriage?

A. Often times, couples seeking to have their “marriage outside of Catholic Form” recognized by

the church, they are seeking to be “married in the church.” In most of those cases, however, a sanation is more appropriate than a convalidation (ceremony with new consent [vows]).

There is technically no ceremony connected with a sanation. There can be no renewal or exchange of vows or anything that looks like it because a sanation recognizes the original vows as valid and sacramental.

The couple, however, is often seeking or needing some kind of ritual to mark this retroactive sacramental recognition of their marriage. Simply sending the sanation paperwork to the couple often seems anticlimactic.

Upon receiving a couple’s sanation paperwork from the Tribunal, the priest or deacon may want to invite the couple to the church to pick up the document in person. While there, it may be meaningful to gather around the baptismal font, bless their rings, and pray the nuptial blessing over them. They may want to invite family or friends or put it in the context of a larger service if it is appropriate. A simple frame or special folder for the official document may help to add some importance to the occasion.

J-39 *FAQ* We believe that the couples are the sacramental ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage. As a presider, where should I stand so that it reflects my role as “official witness” and not the person “marrying” them?

A. One suggestion is for the presider to stand in the middle aisle facing the couple and wedding party lined up in front of the altar in the sanctuary.

The presider, using the portable microphone, states the vows out loud for all to hear clearly. The bride and groom then repeat the vows, a phrase at a time, to each other. Thus, the vows are private and public at the same time.

J-40 *FAQ* How can we involve the Sunday worshipping community in praying for and supporting an engaged couple?

A. Most parishes list engaged couples about to be married in their bulletin under “Marriage Banns”. It might be powerful to invite the engaged couple to be recognized at a Parish Mass in the weeks before the wedding. The congregation can formally recognize this new “couple-to-be”, congratulate them by applause, join in a blessing prayer, be invited to pray for them at home, or other little actions deemed appropriate by the pastoral team.

Another idea is to pray for the couple as a community during Sunday liturgies the weekend of their wedding. One way to do this is to include them in the Prayers of the Faithful. Another idea is for the priest to acknowledge the flowers that the couple has left from their wedding. Thank them for thinking of God and the Parish on their wedding day and invite the congregation to pray for them and their families.

APPENDIX K: ENGAGED COUPLES CONFERENCE

K-1 Sample Schedule for an Engaged Couples Conference Day

| | |
|------------|---|
| 8:00 a.m. | Team arrives to be sure everything is set up |
| 8:25 a.m. | Team has a prayer to dedicate the day |
| 8:30 a.m. | Begin to welcome engaged couples as they arrive |
| 9:00 a.m. | Welcome everyone and have an opening prayer |
| 9:15 a.m. | Have each couple introduce themselves. This includes the team couples. |
| 10:00 a.m. | First Presentation: Communications in Marriage. Second Presentation: Family of Origin and how it will affect the marriage. |
| 11:00 a.m. | Break |
| 11:15 a.m. | Third Presentation: Finance in Marriage |
| Noon | Lunch |
| 12:45 p.m. | Fourth Presentation: Intimacy in Marriage |
| 2:00 p.m. | Break |
| 2:15 p.m. | Fifth Presentation: Married Spirituality |
| 3:30 p.m. | Break |
| 3:45 p.m. | Summary of the day and evaluation time |
| 4:00 p.m. | Prayer Service honoring the engaged couples with presentation of certificates |

K-2 Engaged Couples Conference Day Sample Evaluation

Engaged Couples Conference Day Evaluation

Date _____

To help the committee evaluate and improve the content of the marriage preparation day, we would appreciate your comments. Please answer the following questions as candidly as possible. Use a scale of 1 to 5 with the following guidelines:

5 - Excellent 4 - Good 3 - Fair 2 - Poor 1 - Very Poor

- 1. I enjoyed the Marriage Preparation Day.
5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
- 2. Was there enough emphasis on group discussion and the active participation of engaged couples?
5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
- 3. Overall evaluation of this day is
5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
- 4. Rate the following area of the day:
Communication 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Family of Origin 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Finance 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Married Intimacy 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
Married Spirituality 5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____
- 5. What was your overall evaluation of this day? Please feel free to make critical comments and/or suggestions.
- 6. Were you left with any unanswered questions that you thought would be covered but were not?
- 7. Would you consider being a team couple, assisting with future marriage preparation days?
- 8. Would you be interested in a mentoring program where one of the couples would be available for discussion, problem solving, or general advice during the first years of your marriage?

Optional

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

APPENDIX L: SUGGESTED SACRAMENTAL APPROACH TO MARRIAGE PREPARATION

- L-1** As a priest or deacon ultimately responsible for preparing a couple for marriage, it is important to remember (and convey to the couple) that they are preparing for a sacrament of the Catholic Church. The priest/deacon may want to use the concept of Sacramental Preparation as a theme that runs throughout their time with the couple.
- L-2** Since marriage preparation is preparation for a sacrament, the priest or deacon involved may want to review with the couple:
- The definition of Sacrament
 - The types of Sacraments
 - The concept of Minister of the Sacrament
 - An explanation of the definition of marriage on the back of the marriage form.
- L-3** In practice, it could look something like the following:

“Joe and Suzie,” in coming here to the Catholic Church to be married, you are asking for more than just a wedding. You are asking for a Sacrament of the Church. Since we will be celebrating a Sacrament, we are bound by the Church’s guidelines when it comes to things like where the wedding will take place, what music can be used, what can be photographed, what can be worn, etc. These guidelines will help you to prepare for a Sacramental wedding. (The preparer can then give the couple Together For Life, the parish’s guidelines, and any other materials the parish uses.)

You probably remember from your Catholic Education that a Sacrament is an “outward sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace.” I sometimes think of them as special rituals given to us from God to communicate His love for us. Although we know that God is with us always, we are guaranteed that God shows up in a powerful way in our Sacraments. Sacraments also are a time that we focus in a special way on God’s love and presence in our lives through our children (Baptism), spouse (Marriage), Church (Confirmation), and the Eucharist.

As you remember, there are three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. In the early church, these three Sacraments were one ceremony. (Elaborate and connect to “non-baptized” converts through RCIA if you wish. Go on to explain the three as necessary.) There are also two Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. (Elaborate as appropriate.) Finally, there are two Sacraments of Vocation: Marriage and Holy Orders. (Explain these Sacraments as necessary).

In each of the Sacraments, there is a Sacramental minister and special signs and symbols through which God communicates His presence. Since Jesus left us in physical body, He left us

Sacraments through which we can experience Him tangibly through our senses. A priest is the usual Sacramental Minister for Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick. A deacon or priest can be the Sacramental Minister of Baptism. A Bishop is the Sacramental Minister for Confirmation and Holy Orders. You – the couple – are the official Ministers of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. God will work through the two of you to bind your souls together forever.

Each of the Sacraments has special signs and symbols (stuff) that God works through: water, oil, candle, white garment, bread and wine, Holy Chrism, laying on of hands, confession of sins, etc. The sign or symbol (stuff) that God will use to bind your souls together is your consent – your “I do.” It is very important, therefore, that, on your wedding day, you thoroughly understand what you are saying “I do” to.

So, what are you saying “I do” to?

L-4 On the back of the Marriage Form is the Church’s official description of what marriage is:

In the presence of one another, we individually declare our freedom to marry and our freedom from anything that hinders us from celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.

We hold marriage to be a life-long and faithful union;

A process of choosing each other for the mutual sharing of our life and our love;

A union which is open to children;

A union which is modeled after and symbolizes God’s ever-faithful love for His people.

It is this partnership of life and love that we seek in marriage and we will publicly give our consent during the Marriage Ritual.

(The preparer should thoroughly discuss this explanation with the couple.)

APPENDIX M: THE ANNULMENT PROCESS

M-1 It is not uncommon that during the initial phase of marriage preparation the preparing minister will discover the existence of a prior marriage. In order to assist in dealing with these situations this appendix offers the documents of the Diocese of Toledo Marriage Tribunal. For further information contact the Diocesan Tribunal at 419-244-6711.

A Brief Overview of the Annulment Process

M-2 The annulment of a marriage is to incorrectly name what the process is really all about. People get married in many ways, and the annulment only looks at one of those, just as the State would look at only one marriage, the one it sanctioned. Our process does not affect the civil status, thus we would never grant an annulment to a couple still married. Our process does not affect the natural effects of marriage, thus we would never ‘annul’ children or suggest that they were not the offspring of a couple who, we hope, wanted them and continues to love them. Our process is an examination of what makes a marriage become what the Church prays all marriages will become, a permanent, faithful, loving and creative relationship which symbolizes God’s ever faithful love for his people. Thus, we would be looking at consent, but our examination is made through the lens of a process which begins with how people come to understand marriage, i.e., their family of origin, and then looks at how they refined that notion through experience of life, i.e., dating and courting, and then how they weighed the consequences of both asking and accepting a proposal of marriage. Our examination then focuses on consent from what happened as a result of giving and receiving it, or the dynamic growth or non-growth of a marital relationship.

M-3 To begin a process several things must happen first. Not least of these is that a marriage must be declared over by either divorce or dissolution by the competent civil authority. Second, somebody has to ask. The Church presumes that every marriage is valid, so would never initiate an examination without being invited to do so. However, it isn’t enough that somebody just ask “Take a look.” There has to be a reason to look, a suspicion by the person asking that something was wrong from the beginning.

M-4 The Church would entertain several different reasons for something having been amiss, they’re called grounds, and they are similar to what the civil state would explore if a couple wanted to annul their marriage in civil court. In general, the grounds that must be alleged are taken from this list:

1. **Age** – one or another of the parties was not old enough to get married. The Church accepts the same limits here as does the state, in Ohio, 18 or 16 with parental permission;
2. **Impotence** – “antecedent and perpetual” inability to do what married couples must do in order to have children (sterility does not count, only the physical impossibility to engage in normal heterosexual intercourse);
3. **Prior marriage** – in the State this is the crime of bigamy.
4. **Disparity of Worship not Dispensed** – this one is unique to the Church and suggests that those bound by the moral obligations of Catholicism cannot marry somebody who is not so

bound unless they get a special permit to do so;

5. **Sacred Orders** – Deacons and Priests are not allowed to marry in the Church – of course, the State has no similar bar;
6. **Public Vow of Chastity in a Religious Institute of Pontifical Right**– here’s another ‘Church only’ rule, those who belong to a recognized religious order (nuns and monks) are not allowed to get married;
7. **Crime** – the commission of two crimes against marriage are recognized by the Church, murder of a husband or wife or another’s fiancé/affianced, or kidnap of somebody to force them to marry;
8. **Relatives** – both Church and State agree that some relatives are not allowed to marry;
9. **Incapacity** – State and Church laws both require that people entering into a contract have their wits about them. In the Church there are three ‘qualities’ of wits required 1) that a person be capable of normal human reason; 2) that a person be able to properly weigh the choice to marry in terms of both the object of marriage and the consequences of marrying a particular person; and 3) that a person have the mental capacity to ‘deliver the goods’ required by consent to marry;
10. **Ignorance** – Both the Church and State agree that people ought to know what they’re getting into. For the Church, the basic elements that must be known are that marriage is a “permanent partnership between a man and a woman ordered to the procreation of offspring by means of some sexual cooperation.”
11. **Error of Person** – both Church and State agree that when getting married one has the right to marry the person one wants to (no substitutions) – in the Church this is a common problem in countries where marriages are still arranged; however in North America a much more prevalent problem is a substantial error about some quality one wants or expects, and has been led to believe exists, in the person of the intended;
12. **Deceit/Fraud** – both Church and State believe that a contract requires people to be honest when making the contract. For the Church this deceit must be malicious and deliberately undertaken to get the other person to consent;
13. **Error about marriage itself** – both Church and State would agree that when consenting to marriage, the parties better consent to the definition being provided by the Church or State;
14. **Exclusion** – like fraud, an exclusion ‘cheats’ somebody of the very things that were promised at consent. The essential obligations being given and received when two people agree to marry for the church are 1) permanence, 2) fidelity and 3) children, at least the right to try and have some. An exclusion could be denying all or part of that object;
15. **Condition** – Placing terms that are not part of a contract in the contract is not allowed by either Church or State.
16. **Force and Fear** – obtaining consent under duress voids both civil and Church contracts.

M-5 If any of these grounds seems apt, the person who wants the examination makes a request and becomes the Petitioner. He or she must provide proofs that the alleged ground was active at consent. This proof is offered by way of three basic documentary sources: The initial request for

an annulment outlines some outstanding reason the Petitioner believes it applies; the Petitioner submits an extensive written overview of the preparation for and time of consent; the Petitioner provides the names of a few people who can 1) tell the Church the Petitioner is honest, and 2) who may be able to provide some further insight into the preparation for and moment of consent.

- M-6** Since the Process also benefits the other party, called the Respondent, that person must be asked to participate, provide his or her own testimony and witnesses and challenge the ground and the allegations supporting it. He or she may not want to, but they certainly have a right to do so.
- M-7** The process is usually handled by using field agents, called Advocates, who help the Petitioner work up the allegation, answer the questionnaire, present the case and then act as a kind of legal adviser to the Church on behalf of the Petitioner (the Respondent may also have an agent who would do the same things).
- M-8** When all of the facts have been gathered, the parties are asked if they want to review things, read testimonies, respond to what might be in the evidence, or challenge some part of it. Most people don't do this, trusting their Advocate to do it for them since that person has been trained to do it well; however, the right to see what's in the case remains for both the Petitioner and the Respondent (no one else may see the evidence).
- M-9** After this review, a person called the Defender of the Bond goes through the entire case and finds everything which can logically be adduced to show that 1) the couple knew what they were doing 2) wanted to do it and 3) had what it took to do it. This is important because the Church believes that people are all given the capacity to marry by God, not by the State or even by the Church. Thus, marrying is a 'natural' and to overturn what is normal and usual takes some strong proofs.
- M-10** Once the Defender has prepared a statement, the entire case is delivered to a Tribunal, normally three people trained in the Law which explains each of those many grounds listed above. Often, because of a shortage of personnel, a single Judge can be appointed. The Tribunal goes through two contrasting elements, the Law and the Facts and by comparing them arrives at a decision: The alleged ground is true or it's not. A formal Sentence is always written to explain that deliberation and the parties are invited to read it, challenge it, or even appeal it. Once the Sentence has been issued, it undergoes an automatic appeal because the Church takes marriage seriously and wants to protect the value of this important symbol of "God's ever faithful love for his people." If the appeal affirms the initial sentence, the freedom of the couple to remarry is considered established and both parties are notified of this.
- M-11** Hopefully the process would do three things. First, it is an opportunity to find healing. Often, because Genesis works, and even a poorly conceived marriage tends to try to force the two to become one, the dynamic of a relationship can be both magnetic and repulsive so that in an invalid condition of consent the couple does its best to build a relationship but just seems to have one problem after the other, with stress and tension leading to anger and resentment. It's a real love-hate relationship! Since this creates hurt, there must be healing. It comes by reflecting on getting into the relationship, discovering what each party did wrong, or overlooked, or missed, so that the hurts can be separated from the person and seen as the consequences of an improperly placed act of consent, not the former husband or former wife. It's like the examination of conscience done

before going to confession, a review of our human acts to find weaknesses that make us do foolish and sinful things. Second, it establishes our relative freedom to go out and do what marriage asks us to do, find a loving partner and with them build a relationship that can be God's ever faithful love for his people illuminated in the shared life and love of the couple. Most people see the annulment as this step only. Finally, the process ought to reveal to us the mistakes we made so that in pursuing a new marital relationship we can grow beyond those mistakes to 'do it right'. Getting to consent requires many things, and failed marriages often (but not always) are the result of forgetting, skipping, or rushing some essential developmental step along the way. By finding where we went 'wrong' we can reassure ourselves that we can go the right way.

M-12 Because every human person is unique, every marital relationship is unique, so there are no general rules applied in going through the process of getting married. The annulment thus has no standing precedents against which a particular marriage is judged, every case brought to the process is considered for what it is and was, unique. That means that the process takes some time. With the built-in waiting periods for people to respond to its various parts, that means a span of several months to several years (if it's appealed to Rome). However, this, too, ought to be seen as a period provided by God for greater understanding of what was going on as we approached that failed consent, and what we hope to avoid in future. God's will is accomplished on His time, not ours, and by working with God's understandings of 'time', we can develop a loving relationship in which dialogue, prayer, listening and learning become key components in the movement from meeting to marrying our beloved. In fact, experience with the process among those trained to assist in it reveals that most of the failed marriages encountered by the annulment process were 'rushed' in one way or another. Sometimes, the 'rush' is to overlook problems because love seems stronger than dealing with issues. Other times the 'rush' is to get out of some situation we might not like, a family of origin that is controlling or abusive, a financial situation, a work problem or other issue we want to avoid. Some marriages are 'rushed' by events and personalities who shouldn't have that kind of control (and are thus robbing us of our freedom) as for instance when a marriage is hurried along because the couple 'rushed' to the bedroom and have a little one on the way. Shy people 'rush' to become connected to anyone before he or she 'gets away', angry people 'rush' to get married for much the same reason. Other marriages are 'rushed' because drugs and alcohol disturb the person's desire or ability to undertake any kind of rational thought about a decision. In the annulment process, the Church hopes that the slower pace opens the doors to a richer and more meaningful dialogue so that any future consent is rational, well-considered and truly a free exchange of the wonderful gifts God intends for married couples, and through the couple and the family it becomes, for all of his people.

Getting an Annulment – How to do it and how much will it cost?

M-13 In order to enter into a valid Catholic marriage, Catholics must be free to do so. Sometimes this is complicated by a previous marriage, either by the Catholic or by a wonderful young man or woman the Catholic may have met who is not Catholic. The rules of the Church state quite clearly that freedom to marry means neither party is encumbered by a previous valid or presumed valid marriage (Catholics are not free to marry people who are not themselves free to marry). Obviously, people who meet, fall in love and court know the status of their first marriage or have a very strong presumption, but the Church's rules remind us that marriage is a serious business not lightly departed and that freedom in such a situation must be declared by an agency of the Church

competent to do that. Normally, that's the Tribunal, an office made up of people expert in the Church's laws, its rules, and its sacramental theology. The Tribunal will examine a prior marriage only if asked, and can do it in several different ways. We'll review them and discuss what each might 'cost' here in the Diocese of Toledo with the warning that these numbers may differ from other dioceses who support that Tribunal office in different ways.

THE FORMAL CASE

M-14 A Formal case is the usual way most people would obtain a declaration of freedom to marry. In essence, somebody comes to the Tribunal (usually through a parish priest or field Advocate) and alleges (claims) that a prior marriage was not a valid because consent was faulty. As such, the party, called a Petitioner, must have a suspected reason, perhaps they were deceived, there was force applied, they didn't intend to be married forever, but some reason that consent would not have worked. The allegation is supported by a lengthy statement in which the Petitioner provides a profile of him/herself and the other party to consent, called the Respondent. This profile is further supported by witness testimony, people who would have some insights into the two parties and/or the moment of consent. When all the materials have been gathered, and this usually takes a few months given the hesitancy of witnesses to accidentally say anything hurtful, the entire collected case is handed over to the representatives of the parties, or to the parties themselves if they wish, and reviewed for accuracy and a response if such is thought wise. Then, the whole thing goes to an official of the Tribunal called the Defender of the Bond. His/her responsibility is to defend marriage. The Church takes it seriously, and the Defender's job is to find anything and everything which suggests that the original consent was adequate to confect a natural and enduring bond. When his work is finished, the case goes to the Judge(s) who must know the appropriate Law reflecting the alleged ground and then weigh the evidence in light of that Law and come to a conclusion, called the Sentence. The Sentence is published, or made known to the parties, who are invited to review it if they wish, and then it goes for a mandatory second reading because the Church takes marriage seriously. If two sentences agree that consent did not 'fix,' then the person is declared free to marry.

M-15 The Formal Case requires time, staff and record keeping. Church law requires all Sentences to be filed away forever, there are office staff to keep track of where things are, to communicate and answer questions, there are judges, Defenders, Advocates, Office managers, rent on space, light bills and utility costs, microfilming fees, computers, legal reviews, and even file cabinets for all of those permanent records. This adds up to a cost basis that in the Diocese of Toledo averages between \$650 and \$800. Much of that cost is born by the Diocese as a service to the People of God; however, the Tribunal does ask that the Petitioner help with the cost by agreeing to pay \$250, with an up front deposit of \$50. If there is a hardship, the fee, either all or part, can be waived.

ABSENCE OF FORM

M-16 Up in the above sections we mentioned that the Church has rules. Among them is one that states that a Catholic must follow Catholic Form to get married. That Form consists of exchanging consent in front of two witnesses and the Church's official witness (who's there to record the event in the permanent record of the parish) and that it must occur in the place where the praying community regularly gathers to celebrate the sacraments, i.e., in the Church. It isn't too difficult to

get a waiver for any or all of that form, especially when one of the parties isn't Catholic and it would be a better pastoral way to handle things for the wedding to be held at another Church or someplace else with some other minister, or even a civil magistrate eliciting consent. In those instances, the Church easily grants permission and allows the other place, and the other official witness to become the Church's witness. Unfortunately, many young Catholics are in a rush to get married and don't follow the rules, either by accident or from ignorance or just plain not caring. If that marriage falls apart, and the Catholic can produce evidence that they didn't follow the rules, the Tribunal will issue a decree which, in essence, says that the party didn't follow the rules. Evidence is much simpler than in a formal case, and consists of documents including the civil marriage application, the divorce papers and a recent baptismal certificate which would lack the proper notations that a dispensation from Catholic form was granted. Since this is a much simpler process, it takes less time and less office hours, less utilities, less storage space to keep the Tribunal copy of the Decree, and therefore costs a lot less. Currently the fee for filing an Absence of Form is \$35.

PRIOR BOND

- M-17** Catholics cannot marry people who are married. That's in the rules. Now and then, a Catholic wants to marry somebody who is civilly divorced and by producing documents for a non-Catholic party, can show that the other party, lets say the first husband of a young lady, had already been married. Documents here would indicate that the young man was not free to marry the young lady, and a Decree stating that the young lady is now free to enter into a marriage due to that previous bond is issued. This takes more time, requires some advanced searching for documents, so costs a bit more. The fee is \$50.
- M-18** Tribunal costs may reflect other reasonable realities in a diocese. Some bishops ask no fee at all, thinking that they can afford to pay the people, the utilities and other costs from other sources. The Roman Tribunals assess the entire cost to the Petitioner and expect it to be paid in full because the Tribunals there receive no funding from other sources. Costs reflect diocesan sources of income and are there because in justice employees deserve a fair wage for fair work. When the various annulment options are being explored, the field Advocates are supposed to go over all of this, but nobody really likes to talk money, so often the underlying realities of people, space, utilities, equipment and storage get lost in the mix. Those costs do not, however, get lost in the budget.

**The Diocesan Tribunal
Toledo in America**
e-mail: tribunal@toledodiocese.org

We praise you, God of our ancestors, we praise your name forever and ever. Let all your created order praise you forever. You made Adam, and Eve his partner and support; and those two were parents of the human race. This was your word: It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a helpmate like him. I now take this my beloved to be my partner, not out of self interest but in true marriage. Grant that we may find mercy and grow old together.

Te alabamos, Dios a nuestros antepasados, alebamos tu nombre para siempre jamás. Que todos los creados para su alabanza siempre. Que ha hecho Adán y Eva y el apoyo de su pareja, y los dos fueron los padres de la toda la raza humana. Este fue su palabra: no es bueno para el hombre esté solo, hagamos de él un socio como el. Ahora mi querido aprovechar esta mi pareja, no por interés propio, pero en verdad el matrimonio. Haz que podamos encontrar la misericordia y envejecer juntos. (Tobit, 8, 5b-7)

M-19 The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal, together with the whole Church, believes in the sacramental dignity of that which Tobiah and Sarah called ‘true marriage’ - a marriage crafted in the will and love of God, a marriage that endures through good times and bad, through troubled times and graced times, which creates a fully functioning society in which husband and wife are co-equal in dignity, responsibility and love, a society which becomes “sign and symbol of God’s love for his people.” In the service of justice and truth, the Tribunal assists those who believe that their marital consent did not rise to that dignity, and who therefore seek to ease the conscience regarding a past decision which directly led to a failed marital bond, or to obtain a declaration of freedom to marry according to the Law of Christ and of his Church.

Como la hace la Iglesia, este Tribunal afirma la dignidad sacramental de lo que Tobías y Sara denominado ‘verdadero matrimonio’ - un matrimonio construido en la voluntad y amor de Dios, un matrimonio que perdura en el tiempo y en el mal, con problemas en el día y adornado días, que crea entre el marido y la esposa de una sociedad en la que ambos son co-iguales en dignidad, responsabilidad y amor. En el servicio a la justicia y la verdad, el Tribunal presta asistencia a aquellos creen que su consentimiento matrimonial no lugar a que la dignidad y que, por tanto, solicitar una declaración de la libertad de casarse con arreglo a ley Cristo y su Iglesia.

Field Advocates

M-20 Field Advocates of the Toledo Diocesan Tribunal are well-trained individuals from all across the diocese who are prepared to work with a petitioner to develop and then advance a presentation. Please feel free to call upon any of these members of the Tribunal Staff to make inquiries, begin a presentation, or track the progress of a case in which you are involved; el idioma español en la personal de contacto para el personal del Tribunal Virgilio Guerra.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Deanery (Toledo Central City)

Deacon Thomas Carone

Historic St. Patrick Parish - Toledo
419.243.6452

Mr. Maynard Porter
St. Martin de Porres Parish - Toledo
419.241.4544

Sr. Rosellyn Thiessen, SND
St. Martin de Porres Parish - Toledo
419.241.4544

Our Lady of the Lake Deanery (on Lake Erie)

Deacon Bill Burch
St. Mary Parish - Sandusky
419.625.7465, ext 15

Deacon Maury Hall
Immaculate Conception Parish - Port Clinton
419.734.4004

Our Lady Queen of Peace Deanery (Northwest region)

Deacon Ralph Dominique
Sacred Heart Parish - Montpelier
419.485.5914

Sr. Regina Smith, OSU
St. Patrick Parish - Bryan
419.636.1044

Precious Blood of Jesus Deanery (Tiffin region)

Ms. Nancy Kimmett
All Saints Parish - New Riegel
419.595.2567

St. Agnes Deanery (West Toledo)

Deacon Robert Beisser
Christ the King Parish - Toledo
419.475.4348

Dr. Beverly Bingle
Blessed Sacrament Parish - Toledo
419.472.2288

Deacon Timothy Etue
St. Pius X Parish - Toledo
419.535.7672 / 419.244.6711

St. Francis of Assisi Deanery (Central region)

Ms. Patricia A. Eingle
St. Michael Parish - Findlay
419.422.2646

Ms. Lorie M. "Shellie" Gabel
St. Wendelin Parish - Fostoria
419.435.6692

Ms. Mary Anne Nopper
St. Wendelin High School - Fostoria
419.435.8144

St. John Neumann Deanery (Huron County region)

Ms. Linda M. Salmons
St. Anthony, Milan and St. Mary, Norwalk
419.668.2005

Ms. Patricia Ulmer
St. Paul Parish - Norwalk
419.668.6044

St. Juan Diego Deanery (Southeast region)

Deacon Vincent Foos
St. Francis Xavier Parish - Willard
419.935.1149

Ms. Judy Hess-Pompei
St. Mary Parish - Mansfield
419.589.5464

St. Katharine Drexel Deanery (South Toledo and northern Wood County)

Deacon Philip Avina
St. Aloysius Parish - Bowling Green
419.352.7555

Sr. Regina Fisher, SND
St. Patrick of Heatherdowns

Toledo
419.381.1540

Ms. Judy Warntz
St. Joan of Arc Parish
Toledo
419.866.6181

St. Luke Deanery (Western Lucas and eastern Fulton Counties)

Sr. Joy Barker, OSF/S
Holy Trinity Parish - Assumption
419.644.4014

Deacon Anthony J. Pistilli
St. Joseph Parish - Sylvania
419.283.0130

St. Maximilian Kolbe Deanery (Defiance, Henry and Paulding Counties)

Ms. Sue Hoeffel
St. Mary Parish - Defiance
419.782.5144

Ms. Connie Moffitt
St. John the Evangelist Parish - Defiance
419.782.7121

Deacon James Schortgen
St. Mary Parish - Holgate
419.264.3321

Mr. George Joseph Tumeo
St. John Parish - Defiance
419.784.5035

St. Philomena Deanery (Ottawa and Sandusky Counties)

Sr. Gemma Fenbert, OSF/T
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish - Genoa
419.855.8159

Please refer any other questions or concerns to the Tribunal at 1933 Spielbusch Ave., Toledo, Ohio 43604-5360. Our phone number is 419.244.6711, and any of the staff here in Toledo would be happy to discuss particular issues. You may e-mail us at tribunal.toledodiocese.org

The Diocesan Tribunal Toledo in America

Formal Case Instructions Petitioner Materials

Welcome to the Toledo Diocesan Tribunal and its web-centered documents section. We read in Sacred Scripture:

We should not dare to class ourselves or compare ourselves with any of those who put forward their own claims. How careless they are to measure themselves by themselves, to find themselves their own standard of comparison. If a man must boast, let him boast of the Lord. Not the man who recommends himself, but the man whom the Lord recommends.

II Cor 10, 12, 17

The Catholic Church believes that any of the seven sacramental signs of Jesus' bidding presence are administered for the common good, and always according to the plan of God, not that of any individual or group. Thus, the Church retains the right to establish the rules by which one is declared free to marry in the Church, according to universal standards established in Scripture as codified in the Canon Law of the Church. For most applicants seeking a declaration of freedom to marry, the Formal Case will be the required process to resolve the simple question: According to the Catholic rules of the sacrament of marriage, am I now free to celebrate that sacrament and exchange consent to marry?

In order to begin the process the Petitioner, or the party who is seeking a declaration of freedom to marry, is responsible for gathering together the documents and testimonies which, when taken together, provide an overview of the moment of consent to a marriage the Petitioner believes did not meet the test of those rules. You'll find a check list of required documents, please read it through carefully and provide all the required documentation. You'll note that there must be both civil and Church documents, make sure you request the proper ones from either the County Court where you obtained your marriage license and termination, and from the parish where you and a former spouse were baptized. Your Procurator/Advocate will be happy to assist in this part of the process. You may send in either originals (we will make copies and return them) or you can send in copies, but make sure that all legal stamps, certifications, dates and protocol numbers are clear and legible on the copy.

Please take the time to read through the entire package of materials before beginning. And when you do start, be sure to fill in every space where a response is called for. Where a name is requested, give it in full, *no initials*, and make sure to provide all maiden names where applicable. Be sure to give all dates fully, e.g., January 6, 2006. As you fill in the Fact Sheets for the Formal Case, remember that all the information requested is to assist in efficiently handling your petition, so if things are missing and we have to send it back, the delay could have been easily avoided.

Signatures on all forms are important. If your handwriting, or that of your Procurator/Advocate, is difficult to read, please be so kind as to print your name as it is written. This is to help you get your case done more effectively.

Since any examination requires more than a he said/she said sort of background, it is necessary that you provide the names of some people who 1) know you and can attest to your character and 2) have some insight into the time of consent or the marriage itself. You will note that there is a space for you to tell us that all witnesses have been contacted and have agreed to assist you. Since witness testimony often takes the longest period of time to get to the Tribunal, it really helps if the witness knows that he/she will be getting a questionnaire and that you have authorized him/her to answer the questions to the best of their ability. Witnesses also want to be kind to the parties and often are not quite sure how to respond. Please let them know that if they have questions they can call the Tribunal, or send an e-mail, and we will be happy to assist.

Professional Counselors, physicians, psychologists and some others are prohibited from offering their insights without a formal release from all parties with whom they counseled. If both you and a former spouse did so, then both must sign those releases. Forms will be forwarded to you if you include the names of any professionals.

Please do not merely fill in these forms and send them to the Tribunal. Consult with your Procurator/Advocate and review the materials to make sure the proper documentation is included before returning anything to the Tribunal to avoid lengthy additional questioning or the necessity of returning forms so you can fill in a blank.

Both you and your former spouse retain certain rights throughout, including the right to know who is testifying, and to know what each of the witnesses might have said as well as to respond. You will be notified when a review is pending. You also retain the right to appeal from the Tribunal or from a disposition which may be rendered by it or by any subsequent appeal to another grade of trial. These rights can be discussed with your Advocate or feel free to call or e-mail the Tribunal for further information.

Before writing anything about your former marriage, take time to do two things. First, pray that your recollections will be accurate, complete and appropriate to what this process seeks to accomplish. Second, give serious thought to one simple question: *What was wrong the day of consent* (the wedding) that would have prevented you and your former spouse from building a permanent, faithful and genuine partnership of all of love and all of life? This consideration lies behind each of the general questions posed in the Petitioner Questionnaire. To assist you in this reflection, there is a page on the site (see "Grounds of Nullity Explained") which goes over the general reasons consent may not have bound a particular couple. If nothing was wrong, then the theology of marriage, and its attendant sacramental sense, binds you forever to that former spouse.

Now that you have prayed and thought things through, take up the questionnaire and read through the bold-faced general questions without looking at the more detailed guideline points included with each. The questionnaire seeks to do a couple of things, both beneficial to you.

- Information is being assembled to shape a 'profile' of the two parties to an act of consent to marriage in light of their preparedness, thoughtful reflection/evaluation, and

actual intentions which went into both asking and then accepting a proposal of marriage. This information provides a 'look' at the relationship on which a decision will be rendered. Therefore, the more detailed the recollections, the better served will be the Petition.

- The parties are going back to examine their own capacities and desires at a time when emotions were high and hopes were golden. As part of the healing process in dealing with a separation and subsequent divorce, as well as to assist in preparing to enter into a subsequent new marital relationship, this kind of reflection can be useful in assessing how best to prepare, learn and then decide about marriage.

Having read through the Master Questions, begin to look at the guideline points. It is not necessary to individually address each of the points; however, most people like to do it to flesh out the facts. Be thorough. Your case will be severely weakened if you give short, one word or one brief sentence replies. Provide examples and detail that you think will explain the situation better.

The form is interactive, so you can download it and fill in your responses right on your own PC. If using a provided hard copy, be sure to use black ink only as other colors do not copy well and may result in your testimony being illegible. If providing answers on separate sheets, be sure to leave a margin of an *inch and a half on the left*. All materials you submit are bound and if the examiners cannot read something, this may weaken your case. If writing in long hand, please do so legibly.

When you have completed the questionnaire, review it thoroughly with your Procurator/Advocate. These Tribunal personnel are highly trained to help recognize and follow-up on areas which may be helpful to your petition. A good Procurator /Advocate can often add a couple of questions which will make the case move along more expeditiously and not require a lot of back and forth to get additional information. This step may also save you a trip to the Tribunal. Ordinarily, your Procurator/Advocate will send your materials on as he/she will want to add his/her own preliminary statement to the case.

At the Tribunal, your submission will be reviewed by an intake officer who has been specifically trained to make sure everything you need for a formal case is included and current. Your case will then be assigned to a 'turnus', a Latin term which refers to the division of cases among the various Judges so that there is reasonable protection against bias or favoritism. You will be notified as to the personnel assigned to the disposition of your Petition and can contest any of them if you, perhaps, know somebody and don't want that person to be on the panel. Once the panel has been set in place, things begin to move along through the various steps required by the Church's Procedural Law.

Please remember that the underlying Law of the Church is that all human persons are endowed by God not only with the right to get married, but with the necessary intellectual and volitional acumen to do it properly. In order to establish that somebody did not have the right, or the ability, requires proofs according to the established Law of the Church and it is the responsibility of the party seeking a declaration of freedom to marry to provide those proofs by means of true facts. If the Petitioner cannot, will not or does not provide adequate factual and detailed information the Tribunal will find it extremely difficult to accept a case let alone make an objective determination.

The Diocesan Tribunal Toledo in America

Petitioner's Preliminary Questionnaire

Before beginning this form, be sure to thoroughly read all the directions. Please leave a 1.5" margin (the same as on this page) at the left so that these pages can be bound, and be sure to return this entire questionnaire with your responses.

It is necessary that the Tribunal hear the truth. Do you promise, in the sight of God, to tell the truth and only provide true and objective answers as you complete this Preliminary Questionnaire? If yes, please sign your name here:

-
- 1. What is your full name (first, middle, surname)? If a woman, be sure to include your maiden name.**
 - 2. What is the full name (first, middle, surname) of your former spouse? If a woman, be sure to include the exact maiden name.**

My son, observe your father's commands and do not reject the teaching of your mother; wear them always next to your heart and bind them close about your neck;

Pr

ov. 6, 20-21

- 3. As Scripture reminds us, children are often influenced by and very loyal to the 'teaching' provided by the family of origin. Please give the Tribunal a profile of your family, and its influence on your understanding of marriage. You may find it helpful to organize your responses around the following issues of family:**
 - a) How many brothers and sisters did you have and where do you fit into the mix? How well did your parents relate to one another as husband and wife called to live out an equal partnership? Did either of your parents seem to be more 'in charge' and how did this shape the partnership they modeled for you and your siblings? Describe the way your parents recognized problems and then went on to resolve them. How well did your parents help you gain a wholesome attitude toward getting along with immediate and extended family? With friends and co-workers? What abnormal behaviors were present while you were a child or young adolescent (for example, alcoholism, gambling, infidelity, any kind of abuse (physical, emotional, mental, sexual), divorce which impacted the way you thought about yourself, others or marriage) Describe the pattern and duration of any such behaviors. Were you unusually shy, bashful, backward or awkward as a child or young adolescent?
 - b) To the best of your ability, answer those same questions about your former spouse and her/his family. If you do not know, why not?

- c) Were you close to anyone other than your parents, perhaps an aunt, uncle, grandparent, neighbor, teacher, friend, who influenced your attitudes and understandings of how to relate well to others? What was the general influence (good or bad) and why do you say that?
- d) Answer the same question about your former spouse and if you do not know, why not.
- e) Did you experience the untimely death of a family member, friend or classmate during childhood and early adolescence whose death significantly changed your own understanding of life and living or which impacted you in some particular way? If so, how old were you at the time and how did that death change your outlook on life?
- f) Answer the same question about your former spouse.

Can a fig tree, brothers and sisters, produce olives, or a vine fig? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Jas 3, 12

4. The personality and character of a person can be fleshed out by looking to the various developmental stages in her/his life. Please describe your later childhood and adolescence. You may wish to use the following points to help frame your response.

- a) Describe your personality as you entered your teens by sharing with the Tribunal how you got along with your parents, siblings and extended family. How well could you interact appropriately (or not) with peers, adults, teachers, employers, etc. If you include terms such as 'typical', 'ordinary', 'wild', or some other generic term, please explain *exactly* what you understand that word to mean and give an example or two.
- b) Answer the same for your former spouse and if you don't know, why not?
- c) Tell the Tribunal a little about your academic progress from childhood to adulthood. Did you like school, find it difficult or too easy, were there behavioral issues at play. While in school, were you ever diagnosed with or treated for a developmental disorder and if so, what was it? Were you active in extracurricular programs and, if so, which ones? Were you able to get along with both boys and girls or did you find it difficult to mix and mingle with the opposite gender? Were you truant or miss class regularly and, if so, why? Were you a member of a particular clique, gang, group while in school?
- d) Answer the same questions about your former spouse.
- e) Since academic achievement and career are part and parcel of personality, please consider the following points as regards your own academic performance and goals. Where did you go to school? What was your report card like? Were you pleased with your grades? What did you want to be 'when you grew up'? Did you pursue education of any kind after high school? If you went to college, did you fall into any sort of crowd, partiers, studious types, sleep-in-late crowd, etc? What, if any, terminal degree(s) do you hold and did your marriage plans in any way interfere with your career goals or did those goals interfere with your marriage plans?
- f) Answer the same questions about your former spouse.

Your love is more fragrant than wine, fragrant is the scent of your perfume, and your name like perfume poured out; for this the beloved loves you. Take me with you, and we will run together.

Sol. 1, 2b-4a

5. As Scripture reminds us, dating and courting are important aspects of ‘learning’ about marriage and its romantic appeal. However, dating and courting are equally important in framing the way one considers marriage and its numerous obligations and responsibilities. Please tell the Tribunal about your own dating/courting experience and organize your response around these issues:

- a) When did you yourself begin to date? Until you met your former spouse, how many people did you date and were any of those persons people about whom you thought of as potential marriage partners? Had you ever discussed marriage with any of your boy/girlfriends? If you were ever engaged prior to your engagement to your former spouse, what happened to end that relationship?
- b) Answer the same question about your former spouse.
- c) Often, young people become sexually active before marriage, did this occur in your own dating experience and, if so, how old were you when you became sexually active? How do you think the high emotion of sexual activity changed your perception of yourself, others or marriage? Prior to meeting your former spouse, had you lived with anyone in a marriage-like relationship and, if so, for how long [if you cohabited with anyone, please download the supplemental questionnaire on cohabitation and submit the answers with this Application so that the Tribunal can expedite your case]?
- d) Answer the same question about your former spouse.
- e) What were the circumstances which led you and your former spouse to meet and what was it about that person that made you feel attracted and desirous of furthering the relationship? What was the date you first met and how long after that did you become exclusive? Who pursued the relationship after you met? Were you sexually active with your former spouse while dating and, if so, how soon did this begin? Who suggested it? Was there any resistance or discussion about the emotional bonding which occurs with sexual intimacy? Did you live with your former spouse prior to the marriage, and if so, at whose suggestion? [be sure to download the supplemental questionnaire on cohabitation and include the answers with this Application]
- f) While dating your former spouse, what sorts of things did you do which enhanced your capacity to learn more about the personality and character of your intended? What did you do on a typical date, who chose the activities and did the choices seed any resentments or lead to arguments?
- g) Thinking back to the period of courtship, what problems do you now see which were present and never got properly addressed or resolved and which then carried over into the marital relationship? Did either of you break off the relationship and, if so, who departed and why did the courtship become rekindled? How were the underlying problems which led to any breakup during courtship resolved?

Jacob had fallen in love with Rachael and he said, ‘I will work for seven years for your younger daughter Rachael’. Laban replied, ‘It is better that I should give her to you than to anyone else; stay with me.’
Gen 29, 18-19

6. The process of getting married, as Scripture reminds us, is a period of working at better understanding the person of the intended, as well as disclosing one’s own person to the

beloved. Please describe the period leading from engagement to the wedding. You may find these issues helpful in preparing your response:

- a) Did either the courtship or engagement meet with any objection(s) and, if so, who was opposed, why, and did they apply any significant pressure on you or your former spouse to break off the relationship? As you look back, was their advice sound and ought you or your former spouse to have taken it? If so, what prevented you from paying attention to some good advice?
- b) After the engagement, to what extent did you and your former spouse discuss your expectations or hopes for the marital union? To what extent did the two of you understand and/or discuss the obligations marriage would bring regarding fidelity, permanence and an openness to children?
- c) While courting, and even during the engagement, did either you or your former spouse also 'date' others? If so, how did this lead to arguments, resentments or separations which were not fully resolved? Were either of you flirtatious during the engagement, or did either of you wish you had the freedom to explore other relationships?
- d) Who proposed and what were the circumstances? Was the acceptance immediate and, if not, why?
- e) Between the engagement and wedding, did either of you entertain serious 'second thoughts' about the upcoming marriage or discuss with your former spouse or anyone else the possibility of or desire for calling off the marriage or the chance that it might not work out? If you had such thoughts, or talked about these issues, how do you think that shaped your own mind as to the potential of a divorce in the future? While you were engaged, did any of your friends or family go through a divorce and, looking back, why were they justified in breaking up?
- f) Was there any significant pressure from outside to get married, perhaps the pressure of parents who wanted to be grandparents, friends all getting married, alleviation of loneliness in a new location or even an unexpected pregnancy? How did any such pressure make you fearful of delaying or calling off the marriage, or even of rushing into something for which you felt ill prepared?
- g) If you were involved in some premarital counseling, perhaps Pre-Cana or/and Engaged Couple's Day or Weekend, after attending, what did you and your former spouse talk about that you either learned or resented about these sessions? What problems, if any, did the counseling reveal which did not 'go away' before or during the marriage?

'Sirs, it is true that the king is great, men are many, and wine is strong, but who rules over them? Who is the sovereign power? Women, surely! A man will desert his father who brought him up, desert even his country, and become one with his wife. He forgets father, mother, and country, and stays with his wife to the end of his days. A man loves his wife more than his father or mother.'

E

sdra, 4: 14, 20, 25.

7. **Throughout Sacred Scripture, marriage is consistently described as a partnership in which the husband and wife become a single entity. The Church, in her official documents, refers to marriage as a partnership of all of life and all of love. Consider how your own marriage came into being and whether it rose to the plateau of a genuine partnership of equals sharing all of life and all of love. You may find these following points helpful:**

- a) One more time, please make note here of the date when you and your former spouse met, the date of any engagement, and the date of the marriage. Looking at that time span, was it adequate to 'get to know' one another well enough to covenant all of life and all of love? If you answer 'yes', why do you say that if the two of you were not then able to fabricate such a timeless and equal union? What do you wish now that you or your former spouse had known the day of the wedding that rose up to prevent the formation of a genuine partnership that would endure all things? What did you know on your wedding day which you did not heed that warned the marriage might not work?
- b) Who planned the wedding ceremony and how important did the event become in contrast to the life long partnership to which you were to give your consent? Were there any unusual circumstances at the rehearsal? What was the wedding like? Were there problems or did either of you tell anyone, seriously or not, that the wedding was a mistake? Did any family or friends refuse to attend because they thought the wedding was a mistake?
- c) Where did you go for your honeymoon? Who chose that location? Was that a happy decision for both? Did anything unusual happen on the honeymoon that made you or your former spouse think you ought not to have married? If you did not enjoy a honeymoon, did either of you harbor resentments because this traditional aspect of marriage had to be avoided?
- d) As you settled into marriage, in what way did the relationship either become or not become an equal partnership in which there was mutual respect and care? As you worked yourself into this partnership, how well did the two of you collaborate on important issues and if the relationship became one-side, why did that occur? How well were the two of you able to cooperate and compromise your own self-interest, goals and tastes to that of the mutuality created by consent to marriage? How well did the two of you communicate as both speaker and listener when problems arose?
- e) What 'little problems' were never resolved during the courtship and then carried over into the marriage? How did the two of you raise up these problems for conversation and resolution? What particular skills were missing which prevented the two of you from openly solving problems?
- f) How soon did the ordinary problems any couple faces in a marriage become insurmountable problems which drive the two of you apart? What specific problems were you not able to resolve and when did they first show up in your relationship?
- g) When did the possibility of or threat of divorce, even if not serious, first arise? If it occurred to either of you before the marriage that a divorce might arise, why did you then get married? Who first mentioned a possible civil termination of the marriage? Did anyone in your family or among your friends get a divorce while you and your former spouse were having problems and who then advised you to go through a civil termination and, if so, what did you think of either their own divorce or their advice?
- h) What were the high points, the best moments of the marriage and when did they occur? What were the low points and when did they occur?
- i) If there was any kind of abuse (verbal, emotional, mental, physical) or the abuse of alcohol, drugs or other behavioral situations, who exhibited those behaviors and to what extent? Were any of these present before the marriage and, if so, why were they overlooked or not resolved? Were any of these behaviors connected to or the result of a mental condition either diagnosed or for which either of you was under treatment or counseling at any time in your

life, either before or during the marriage? If a diagnosis was made, when did that occur? If a medical therapy was prescribed, was the regimen followed faithfully?

- j) Share your work history during the marriage as well as that of your former spouse (jobs, ability to get along with co-workers and supervisors, unusual friendships or work requirements that might have led to resentments). To what extent did work, career, or goals for future employment affect the quality of your marriage?
- k) When did really serious problems arise which actually led you or your former spouse to consider 'seeing a lawyer'? Describe the problems and why they could not be resolved by turning to a trusted friend, professional counselor or clergy.
- l) What was the place of children in the marital relationship? How many did you have (and please list here again their names, birth dates and, if applicable, the date of adoption) Were there children from any other relationship present in the marital household? Did the children in any sense create resentments, problems or difficulties for the primary marital relationship? Were both of you good parents and, if not, what was the difficulty? To what extent did either of you lack parenting skills or, on the other hand, believe that being a parent outweighed the other obligations owed to a spouse and partner in all of life and all of love?
- m) Were both of you faithful to one another during the marriage? If there was any infidelity, how did it spring from an attitude which was present before the wedding? How do you know? Briefly outline the occasion(s) of infidelity as to when they began, who started them, how long they occurred and how they ended.

But you, God's chosen, must shun all this, and pursue justice, and piety, and fidelity, love, fortitude, and gentleness. Run the great race of faith and take hold of eternal life. For to this you were called; and you confessed your faith nobly."

1 Tim. 6: 11-12.

8 The end of a marriage is traumatic and painful. However, the dynamic of the disruption and termination can be helpful in establishing not only the state of mind at the moment of consent, but can perhaps even reveal the inexorable will of God being worked out between the partners in a failed relationship. Please consider the final days of your marriage around these issues:

- a) Before the end came, were there any temporary separations, who initiated them, how long did each last, and why did the two of you reconcile? Was there any kind of counseling involved either before, during or following any of those separations and, if so, what sort of counselor did you see and was it individually or as a couple? Why did counseling fail to bring about a permanent resolution to your problems?
- b) What convinced either you or your former spouse that the marital problems were irreconcilable? When was the actual decision made to leave the marriage, not the official decision which was hallmarked by somebody departing the marital dwelling? How did having children affect your decision to end the marriage? Who got custody and was this an amicable decision or did the two of you argue over who ought to have custody?
- c) Looking back, if either of you thought the marriage might fail on the day of the wedding, did you reserve the right to leave it 'just in case'? As you think about marriage, are there any reasons a couple ought to have the right to divorce and move on? What might those reasons be and did they apply to your own former marriage?
- d) As you think back, was there something you or your former spouse wanted from marriage that either you or your former spouse just never gave or could give, or some expectation that

went unfulfilled? If so, when you or the former spouse realized you were not going to get that expectation, how long did it take to decide to leave the marriage?

- e) Since the divorce or dissolution, have you met the obligations of any parent toward his or her children in terms of presence, emotional and financial support? Have either you or your former spouse neglected to support your children in their own development as God's children relative to their emotional and spiritual well being, their career and academic goals? Have either you or your former spouse 'used' the children in any way or sense as a weapon to 'get at' the other spouse or have you spoken ill of a former spouse in front of your children to alienate them from the other parent?

Be always joyful; pray continually; give thanks whatever happens; for this is what God in Christ wills for you.

1 Thess 5, 16-18

9 If you are a Catholic who originally married 'outside' the Church and subsequently had your marriage 'blessed' by the Church, please respond to these three brief points:

- a) How long was it between your original marriage and the subsequent blessing of the Catholic Church?
- b) Who suggested that the marriage ought to be blessed and why? Was it this desire in any way an attempt to repair some problem which could not be resolved?
- c) Did both parties believe that such a blessing was necessary and did both participate fully in the religious aspects of the ceremony, or did one or the other (which one?) openly state that it was not necessary?

10 If you are now planning to marry or are engaged to remarry, please give the full legal name of that person:

Has the person ever been married before and, if so, provide the name of the previous spouse, when that marriage occurred, why it ended, and when the civil termination occurred:

Has the freedom of that person to marry in the Catholic Church been addressed and, if so, where and when?

11 An annulment means that consent to marriage was faulty, and it applies to both parties. Have you either given the current name and address of the former spouse, or provided the appropriate reasons why that name and address cannot be given (see pages 3 and 6 of this Application) yes no. If no, please give the name and address here:

12 If you were married before the marriage whose consent is being examined here, have you provided the appropriate information as requested elsewhere (see page 5)? Yes No. If no, please list here the name(s) of any previous spouse, their current address and all other

information regarding the date and place of the marriage and the date and place of the civil termination. What went wrong in that marriage?

We pray that you may bear fruit in active goodness of every kind, and grow in the knowledge of God. May he strengthen you, in his glorious might, with ample power to meet whatever comes with fortitude, patience, and joy; and to give thanks to the father who has made you fit to share the heritage of God's people in the realm of light.

Col 1: 10-12

Please, review your answers with your Procurator/Advocate so that you can be positive you have said all you want to and enough to 'make your case'. If you do not understand any of the questions, please consult with your Advocate or call the Tribunal (419.244.6711). Return the entire Application packet with your responses. Be sure to include all other required documentation with the Application in order to expedite your case.

Supplemental Questionnaire – Cohabitation

If you or your former spouse cohabited with anyone prior to the time of your exchanging consent to marriage with one another, please take time to fill out these few additional questions and add them to your Formal Petition. Cohabitation for the purposes of this process is living together with another person in a marriage-like relationship for a period of five consecutive days to any other period of time.

1. If you cohabited with your former spouse, what was the motivation which led the two of you to decide to live together? How long and how well had you known one another before the option of living together was raised and who first mentioned it? How difficult was it for the two of you to arrive at that decision (was either of you initially opposed and why)?
2. Had either of you lived with anyone else in a marriage-like relationship and if you did, how many persons and for what periods of time did each last?
3. If you cohabited with anyone else than your former spouse, what led the two of you to depart those other relationships?
4. If you cohabited with your former spouse, what was the length of time the two of you lived together? Who suggested marriage and was there any delay in accepting and then moving forward to get married because one or the other of you was quite happy to remain in the uncommitted relationship? To what extent did parents, grandparents, siblings or friends force you to get married?
5. As you made the transition from cohabitation to marriage, what serious discussion about the difference between merely living together and being married occurred?
6. What significant problems were covered up or hidden during the period of cohabitation with your former spouse or anyone else because you feared that party might depart?
7. If you cohabited with your former spouse, what little problems present during the period of cohabitation later became big problems the two of you could not resolve?
8. To what extent did the ease of departure associated with cohabitation remain in your thoughts the day you got married?
9. During the break up of the marriage, which of you referred to or blamed the cohabitation for problems which arose after consent?
10. If children were born during the period of cohabitation, to what extent were they the primary motivation to consent to marry? Would you have married had there been no children involved?

(issued July 2009)

The Diocesan Tribunal Toledo in America

Formal Case - Financial Covenant

Remember: sparse sowing, sparse reaping; sow bountifully, and you will reap bountifully. Each person should give as he has decided for himself; there should be no reluctance, no sense of compulsion; God loves a cheerful giver. And it is in God's power to provide you richly with every good gift; thus you will have ample means in yourselves to meet each and every situation.

II Cor. 9, 6-8

Protocol/case number: _____

Parties: _____

The Toledo Diocesan Tribunal is a pastoral ministry of the diocesan church and, like any other ministry, requires people who do the work and must be specially trained, offices where the work can be done, utilities and insurance. As a matter of justice, those petitioning for this very specialized ministry should be willing to assist in the normal expenses of processing the petition. Given the costs incurred for staff salaries, insurance, office expenses and the like, the ordinary 'cost' of an annulment is \$800. Thanks to the generous support of the People of God whose donations to the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) fund the work of the diocesan church, approximately \$550 of that amount is met from the diocesan fund. Petitioners are encouraged to assist with the remaining \$250, and a nonrefundable deposit of \$50 is expected with the filing of the petition.

If you cannot assist, or can only assist in a small way, your case will still be processed without regard to this covenant. No person will ever be denied the Justice of the Church for an inability to assist in the Ministry of the Tribunal.

Please complete the following:

Total amount Petitioner wishes to offer \$ _____

Amount included with the Petition \$ _____

Remaining amount to be billed \$ _____

If you cannot assist in this ministry, or if you have moral reasons for not assisting, please indicate here your reasons:

Please Note: If you cite a professional and the Tribunal is billed for her/his time and services, you are assuming the responsibility and obligation for those costs.

Date _____ Signature of Petitioner: _____

Signature of Procurator: _____

The Diocesan Tribunal Toledo in America

Appointment of Procurator/Advocate for the Petitioner
This is an official document which affects your rights, please read carefully

Protocol/Case Number _____

I, the undersigned Petitioner in the above captioned matter now pending before the Tribunal of the Diocese of Toledo, mandate the appointment of the Pastoral Minister whose name appears at the bottom of this form as my Procurator to represent me, with the full faculty of performing in my name all useful and necessary acts in the processing of my case before the Court of the First Grade, the Diocese of Toledo, and in all other grades of Trial.

I further certify that I have contacted all my witnesses and they have agreed to participate openly and objectively. I understand that I am not to discuss the facts of the case or the possible questions and answers with these witnesses or any others who might be called upon to testify. I understand, and have informed all witnesses, that my former spouse has the legal right to review anything they might have to say.

I have kept a copy of all the materials I am submitting.

I now swear before God to the truthfulness of everything I have written in my Petition and in response to the Preliminary Questionnaire.

Date: _____ Signature of Petitioner: _____

Acceptance of the Mandate of the Petitioner

I, the undersigned pastoral Minister, have carefully and thoroughly reviewed the Petition and Preliminary Questionnaire with the Petitioner, and have explained the meaning and importance of each of the forms contained in the Formal Case packet. All required documents are enclosed. I have retained a copy of all materials and testimonies for my personal records so that I may faithfully discharge the obligations of the Procurator and Advocate.

I assure the Tribunal that the Respondent may be contacted without further notification, unless I have indicated in the appropriate section of the Petition (p. 6) some special consideration(s) which require that the Respondent not be contacted. Witnesses may be contacted by direct mail and are expecting to be contacted.

I herewith accept the Mandate of the Petitioner and Appointment by the Tribunal to serve as Procurator for the Petitioner. In assuming this function, and agreeing to assist as Advocate, I understand that it is my obligation in Law to regularly contact the tribunal on the progress of this case.

Date: _____ Signature of Procurator/Advocate: _____
Print name of Procurator/Advocate here: _____

The Diocesan Tribunal Toledo in America

419.244.6711

e-mail: tribunal@toledodiocese.org

The Lord spoke to Moses and said, Say this to the Israelites: These are the rules for anyone who inadvertently transgresses any of the commandments of the Lord and does anything prohibited by them
Lev. 4, 1-2.

Checklist for Submitting Your Application for a Formal Annulment Case

Please make sure that all of the materials required to process your case are properly submitted together. Use this checklist to make sure you have included everything.

1. Documents and Papers requiring signature of Petitioner and/or Advocate

- Formal Petition
- Fact Sheets
- Appointment of Procurator/Advocate
- Witness form
- Financial Covenant
- Preliminary Questionnaire (be sure to return the entire questionnaire)

2. Required Civil and Ecclesiastical (Church) Documents

- A recent baptismal certificate or proof of Profession of Faith for the Petitioner and/or Respondent if she/he was Catholic or joined the Catholic Church. When applying for this document from your parish of baptism, please be sure to ask for “notations” to be included.
- Civil Application for Marriage License (ask specifically for this form from the county where you obtained your marriage license) with attached Certificate of Marriage.
- Catholic Marriage Certificate for anyone married in the Catholic Church
- Civil Divorce/Dissolution Decree (which must include the official stamp showing the filing date)
- Complete Separation Agreement
- Legal change of name if not documented in the civil termination papers
- Signed Advocate’s Initial Intervention or deferral

No case will be accepted until *all* required signatures and/or documents and forms have been submitted to the Tribunal. Return this checklist with your application. Be sure to duplicate any document you may be submitting for any other former marriage.

Please Note: It is imperative that every item on this page be completed for both you and your former spouse. Be sure to include all names, maiden names and other required information. If you do not know, please say so.

| you | | the former spouse |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| _____ | complete name | _____ |
| _____ | maiden name | _____ |
| _____ | street address | _____ |
| _____ | city | _____ |
| _____ | state, zip code | _____ |
| _____ | telephone/cell | _____ |
| _____ | birthdate | _____ |
| _____ | place of employment | _____ |
| _____ | position or type of work | _____ |
| _____ | religion when married | _____ |
| _____ | religion of baptism | _____ |
| _____ | parish of baptism | _____ |
| _____ | address | _____ |
| _____ | city, zip code | _____ |
| _____ | date of baptism | _____ |
| _____ | current religion | _____ |
| _____ | parish now attending | _____ |
| _____ | complete name of father | _____ |
| _____ | address | _____ |
| _____ | complete name of mother | _____ |
| _____ | mother's maiden name | _____ |
| _____ | address | _____ |
| _____ | city, state, zip code | _____ |

Facts of the Marital Consent Being Examined:

1. Indicate the exact date of the marriage: _____

Church or place of the marriage: _____

Complete address: _____

witnessed by Priest/Deacon other religious minister civil magistrate

If the ceremony was not in a Catholic Rite, was it ever blessed or validated by the

Catholic Church Yes No If yes, where and when? _____

If a dispensation was required for a marriage to be held outside the ordinary form, or for a Disparity of Cult, please ask your Advocate to contact the parish where the marriage file is retained in order to get the dispensation protocol number and enter it here _____¹

2. In what city, state and county did you obtain the license? _____

Please copy from the *Application for Marriage License* the file number _____
(file number, volume and page, or other identifying number)

3. How long did you date/court before you married? _____

4. If you were engaged, how long was the engagement? _____

5. Once married, how long did you live together as husband and wife? _____

6. Who obtained the civil divorce dissolution: I did the respondent did

From the file stamp on the decree, give the date the decree was filed: _____

From the decree, provide the file number: _____

In what county and state was the decree filed? _____

7. How many children were born to the union? _____ How many were adopted? _____

Give the full name and birth date of each child born and the birth date and date of adoption of any children adopted:

8. Who was awarded principal custody? I was the former spouse other

9. Has child support assessed by the Court been fully met? yes no (explain):

¹The parish is generally the territorial parish of the parties or that where the non-Catholic place of marriage is located.

10 Who has primary custody now? I do former spouse the children are now adults

11. Was this your first marriage? yes no; for your former spouse? yes no

If you answered no for either, please give the following information and be sure to repeat it for any other marriage you or your former spouse may have entered:

Name of my my former spouse's first marital partner: _____

Was this person ever baptized? yes no If yes, denomination _____

Date and place of previous marriage: _____

Date and place of civil termination of previous marriage: _____

What made this marriage fail?

Has the consent to that previous marriage ever been declared null by the Catholic Church? yes no

If so, when and where (which diocese): _____

Was the previous spouse married prior to the marriage? yes no

12. My present marital status is single engaged remarried

If you are now engaged or remarried, please provide the following information:

To whom: _____

Street Address of this person: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Is this person a Catholic? yes no

If yes, to what parish does he/she belong _____

Was this person ever married before? yes no

If so, how did it end death of the spouse civil divorce or dissolution

If by civil termination, was a Catholic annulment ever sought? yes no

If you answered yes, please indicate the diocesan tribunal, the case number, and the date a declaration of freedom (annulment) was granted:

Substantiation of Whereabouts Unknown or No Contact

A declaration of freedom to marry affects two people, you as the Petitioner and your former spouse. Both of you have rights in the process and ought to be actively involved. If you do not know the whereabouts of your former spouse, please indicate here the steps you have taken to attempt to find that person.

On this date: I took this action: With this result:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Signature of Petitioner: _____

Signature of Church Notary or Advocate: _____

Date: _____

If you have a good cause that the former spouse not be contacted, proofs must be provided. Normally, these proofs are in the form of legal papers issued by a Court or some other civil magistrate (police or sheriff department) with the authority to require that no contact be made. If you have such orders, or such orders were issued by a public official, please submit them with this application or indicate the date of issuance, the civil jurisdiction (city, county or state) and the underlying reason the order was issued:

Witness Form

The examination of consent in a Formal Case requires the submission of witnesses who can vouch for the integrity of the parties and perhaps shed a little light in the period at and around the time of consent. Since it is consent that is being examined, think back to the time of the wedding and consider several names which come to mind. These can be the family of either party, friends, members of the wedding party, co-workers with whom the wedding plans were discussed, etc. Contact at least four of those people, invite them to honestly and objectively share what they recall (please be sure to give them permission to speak their mind) and list here the names of those who agree to assist. After providing the names, sign this form below.

Name: Name:
Address: Address:
City, State, Zip: City, State, Zip:
Telephone: Telephone:
Relationship: Relationship ship:
indicate whether the person is related to you or your former spouse

Name: Name:
Address: Address:
City, State, Zip: City, State, Zip:
Telephone: Telephone:
Relationship: Relationship ship:
indicate whether the person is related to you or your former spouse

I certify that I have personally contacted each of the above named witnesses and have obtained their agreement to assist in arguing my case. Each of them expects a short questionnaire and has agreed to return it promptly.

Petitioner's signature

You may wish to submit the name, address and phone number of any professional you consulted regarding the marriage. If you do, a release of confidentiality will be sent to you before we contact the professional(s) listed:

Name: Name:
Address: Address:
City, State, Zip: City, State, Zip:
Telephone: Telephone:

A few points about marriage in the Catholic Church

M-22 First: Why does the Catholic Church have all these rules about marriage? Isn't it just a way for me and my spouse to celebrate our love?

A. Well, yes, and at the same time no. The consistent theology of the Catholic Church since at least the beginning of the second century (see the letter of Ignatius to the Romans) is that marriage is a sacred encounter with Jesus. Over time this developed into the theology of the sacraments and marriage, as a sacrament, becomes part and parcel of the life of the Church. As such, the sacrament belongs to the whole Church, not just to couples who marry. As a sacrament, then, marriage has certain rules intended to make sure that the fullest possible grace of the sacrament are offered to its celebrants, the husband and wife. The rules are rather simple. As with any sacrament, they are supposed to take place where the sacramental community gathers to celebrate itself as a sacramental community – that's why the Code of Canon Law states that Catholics are to marry in a Church – that's where all seven of the sacraments have their central focus and celebration. If a couple were free to marry as a natural right, they could, of course, marry anywhere. But once they commit themselves to the Catholic Church by either baptism or a profession of faith they agree to all of the rules and regulations intended to provide the fullest measure of the riches God has entrusted to the Church. Those rules protect the dignity of the sacrament, the truth of the theology, and the rights of the couple as part of the praying/celebrating community. Sometimes, to assure the parish and the Church that we respect the dignity of all seven sacraments, we are asked to refrain from the celebration of one while there is a question about another. This is the case with marriage where the Code of Canons asks couples marrying to be confirmed first. It's also the case where the Eucharist is involved and a questionable sacramental marriage arises. These are not a way to punish people, but to allow them to show respect for the whole gamut of sacraments by stepping aside until some question is resolved.

M-23 Second: Why can't I get married to whomever I want, wherever I want?

A. Well, you can. But as a Catholic, the Church expects you to follow the rules which protect the dignity of marriage. Our consistent theology since Jesus himself (and he was only building on an even older theology which he traced back to God's original covenant with Adam and Eve) suggests that no one, not the Church, not the State, not even the couple can take apart what God has joined. As a constituent part of our human nature, marriage is of God. We may think that "love brought us together," or "Destiny made us meet," but the theology of the Church has always taught that it is God himself who summons couples to marriage and then seals it with his covenant of love. Again, no one, not even the spouses, can undo that bond. If such a bond exists, the person is then called to live a life of committed marriage without a partner. The late John Paul II wrote a lot about this state of life and suggested that while it is a great sacrifice, it is also a great sign of love for God, for marriage, and for the dignity of a community whose foundational teaching insists that marriage is a one time event. Catholics are urged, as a sign of their belief in the sacramental dignity of marriage, to respect that one time reality and not marry those already married in the eyes of God. And, while the Church has established a 'form' for marriage (enacted after the Council of Trent to protect women who had been married in 'secret' rites so there were no records from a spouse who walked away later and

assumed no responsibility for the wife and kids) the Church does not have a hard and fast rule about where you get married, beyond the request (which seems reasonable for a sacramental church) that it be celebrated in a sacred space. Because the Catholic marriage must be recorded, the Church does like to know if a Catholic is being married in a non-Catholic sacred space, but it's an easy thing to take care of and given with some regularity for those marrying non-Catholics.

- M-24 Third:** But divorced people know that God couldn't have wanted them in that marriage! Why can't the Church just let them decide?
- A. In a sense, letting people decide whether God sealed their relationship makes the people more important and god-like than God. And, while we are in fact in God's wonderful image and likeness, we are not God. All too often, people tend to think of themselves as the arbiters of all that is right and wrong, in their lives and those of others. This seems to be a much greater problem today than ever before because of a tendency toward placing the individual above and beyond any real participation in the community. The Church is the ultimate community, in fact, so closely aligned with one another that St. Paul referred to it as the Body of Christ. In his references to the Body, Paul often pointed out that a certain part of the body cannot make decisions for the rest without affecting itself. For instance, he talks about the toes deciding to go elsewhere, leaving the body unable to walk. Modern America seems to be willing to let the toes go and then fumble along as if they weren't important, and increasingly individual rights trump the common good even among Catholics. But our consistent theology, and particularly since the dawn of the 20th century, has been that all of society is built of the living cells of the families which are fabricated in marriage. John Paul II (see *Familiaris Consortio*, *Gravissimam sane* and a host of other documents throughout his tenure) remind us that marriage, as the building block of society, must be protected above all other social contracts or society will crumble. That means enforcing the rules of the Church which have their roots in the early Church Fathers. Among those rules, and in part because marriage is, for Catholics, one of the seven sacraments, Catholics cannot marry those already bound by marriage and no human person can decide on his or her own whether God did or did not bind them.
- M-25 Fourth:** Why does the Church demand that a Catholic who has not been married before force his/her intended to go through a lengthy annulment process?
- A. As a sign of love. Citing the lengthy and consistent teaching of the Church regarding marriage, no human relationship will demand more sacrifice of the self to another than does marriage. In fact, at consent each party to marriage gives over his or her entire self to the other. For Catholics, as for all human persons, marriage is never a fifty-fifty deal, its one hundred percent and nothing less. Unfortunately, in our contemporary and highly individualistic society, many people marry for what they can get out of it and never stop to think what they ought to be putting into it. If real love has brought two people together, and remember for Catholics love and God are practically synonymous, then each party to any act of consent would be willing to do anything and everything for the beloved, both God and the person he/she intends to marry. Among those many gifts handed over at consent is the absolute assurance that the person is not bound to another by a similar covenant formed by God. The annulment process is that assurance, a sign of love and freedom, of willingness to give over the whole self.

M-26 Five: Why does the Church poke its nose into my business and make me go through this process?

A. Because the business of marriage is the business of the Church, so its nose only pokes in far enough to make sure that its role in marriage can be properly represented. The Church loves marriage and wants to share the joy of them with all who seek to marry. That's why the Church has enrichment programs for those planning to marry, and an entire ritual surrounding its happy and joy-filled celebration. It also has a process which allows those who question the validity of a prior moment of consent to assure themselves through an objective and impartial examination that God did not, to the best of our human ability to intuit God's will, bind them to that previous consent. The Church did not come up with the annulment process as a way to punish people, but to help them. You can find the roots of the annulment process in the Gospel of Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles, Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (which are the oldest written resources of the Church), and in every instance these sources remind us to go to the Church for the reassurance of God's abiding love and presence. That's why the annulment process leads to a "declaration of freedom" and not to some sort of ecclesiastical jail. We are in the business of opening up the treasury of God's compassion, not closing doors. Thus, the entire tribunal system exists, and has existed for much of the Church's long history, as God's way of extending the arm of compassion.

M-27 Six: But aren't those Tribunal Judges just ordinary people making decisions that affect the lives of others?

A. Indeed, they are. But they are also highly trained in a number of areas. They have an extensive background in the theology of the sacraments, of the community of faith which relies on those sacraments, on the dynamics of human behavior and finally, on the nature of consent as a human act subject to all sorts of pressures. The process employed by the Tribunal isn't just a human event, it's a prayerful encounter with the living God in which the tribunal personnel entrust their minds and hearts to God so that his will can be accomplished for the common good. They use their training, their faith, and their love of the Body of Christ to examine and then declare on behalf of marriage. Sometimes that makes people happy, sometimes it does not. But in the end, the sacramental dignity of marriage remains in full vigor.

M-28 Seven: Well, if the Church thinks everybody ought to go through this fine process, why does it charge so much?

A. It doesn't. Oh, the Church will share with couples that a Tribunal consists of real people with real families with real bills to pay. The Tribunal also has real offices which use real electricity to make sure the staff doesn't go blind trying to work in the dark. As the Director of the Tribunal I oversee a staff of several people and have to make sure their insurance premiums are current, that retirement is being planned for, that the workplace is safe and efficiently run. All of that requires money. In large part, the Tribunal, as a service of the Church, is underwritten by the Annual Catholic Appeal. However, the Appeal cannot entirely fund the Tribunal because there are other programs of equal and perhaps even greater value which need to be paid for and, more importantly, people in the pew tend to 'vote with their pocketbook' and

have, over the years, not been able to see up close and personal the many programs and ministries being provided by the diocese so have underfunded them. With a shortfall in the ACA, the Tribunal must come up with the funding to make sure the service can continue to be provided, so we ask each priest, deacon or other trained person in the field to go over the financial picture here at the Tribunal. Many of those people don't like talking money – people tend to get upset when anyone else wants some of theirs, so they avoid that particular page of the packet. However, we want people to know that heat, light, salaries, retirement, insurance, rent and more cost, on average, about \$800 for each case we handle over the span of a year. We then remind people that “thanks to the participation of the good people of the dioceses through the ACA” a certain percentage of that has already been provided by the diocese. We urge each field advocate to go over an offering/stipend, donation of \$250 to help meet expenses not covered by the ACA, but that does not represent a payment to get an annulment (since at least the time of the Acts of the Apostles, paying for spiritual things one receives from the Church has been reprobated). In fact, many of the people who want to abide by the rules cannot afford to “pay” more than a few dollars and their case is not rejected or slowed down on that account. A few do offer a stipend which covers the entire ‘cost’, but even if somebody came and dropped ten thousand on the table to get an annulment there would be no rush to pick it up and stamp a big YES on a paper! Those who render the decisions are not those who turn to the financial agreement page! In the end, the Tribunal exists to serve and would happily do so without any recompense for those seeking the services. We only ask that the person applying for an examination provide the Tribunal with some reasonable request for waiving the stipend.

FAQ's

“It should be kept in mind, as with all things in the Church, that her processes spring from and are dependent upon our faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ” (Key Note – MCLS convention, 2009)

M-29 Why does the Church go through this process?

- A. If your brother offends you, go to him and take up the matter between yourselves and if he listens to you, you have won your brother over. If he will not listen, take one or two others with you, so that all the facts may be duly established on the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church. (Mt 18, 15-17)

If one of your number has a dispute with another, has he the daring to take it to pagan law courts instead of to the community of God's people? It is God's people who are to judge the world; surely you know that! If therefore you have disputes, how can you entrust jurisdiction to outsiders, men who count for nothing in our community? Can it be that there is no single wise man among you able to give a decision in a fellow Christian's cause? (I Cor 6: 1-2, 4-6)

At least since the time of St. Paul, the Church has trained up men and women of wisdom to assist in settling ecclesiastical disputes, among them the relative freedom of particular persons to marry according to the rules and regulations of the sacraments of the Church. St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing around the year 110, already speaks of the divine nature of marriage and suggests that its proper celebration ought to be governed by the Church, and over the centuries since he shared his initial reflections, a rich theology of marriage as among the seven sacraments of the New Dispensation has developed. That theology leads the Church to believe that marriage is 'sign and symbol of God's ever faithful love for his people'. As one of the sacraments, and to assure that sacramental graces redound to their celebrants, as well as to assure the continuing common good of the community of believers, where there is a dispute over the proper celebration of the sacrament of marriage, the Church maintains a system of courts whose work is to examine, as Matthew reminds us, the testimony of one or two witnesses so that a disposition can be made. The process is ancient and seeks to bring to life the words of scripture and the words of those who regularly proclaim that "I believe. . ."

M-30 Isn't a Catholic annulment really just another way of saying a couple got a divorce?

- A. To the married I give this ruling, which is not mine, but the Lord's: a wife must not separate herself from her husband [...] and a husband must not divorce his wife." (I Cor. 7, 10-11)

Even before Paul penned those words, Jesus himself reminds us that from the beginning of time God intended marriage as a permanent, equal partnership of man and woman, and that such a bond cannot be set aside by anyone: not the couple, not the civil government, not even the Church. A divorce or dissolution of marriage obtained from a civil court has absolutely no effect on the sacred nature of a marriage first reported in the Book of Genesis, regardless of where that sacred rite may have been celebrated. The Church understands marriage to be part and parcel of being a truly human person, and that therefore every man and every woman has a

natural right to marry according to the rules of nature. The Church also exists in the framework of civil society, so often and in some ways defers to the right of the State to define the purely civil requirements for and effects of natural marriage. However, the Church also believes that Jesus the Christ wanted all marriages to share in his manifold blessings so that the consent of any man and woman in marriage binds them to the natural ends of marriage, among which are the three famous architectonic goods or *bonae* of marriage (defined at the end of the fourth century of the common era): permanence, fidelity and an openness to sharing in the natural and mutual acts by which future generations of humanity are brought into being. Once such a relationship has been validly crafted, no power on earth, not even the civil state, not even the unhappy couple which failed to advance the goodness of marriage and family, can entirely proclaim that sacred marriage to have ended. What a Tribunal process examines is the moment of consent to determine whether the necessary rules were followed, individually by each party to an act of consent and mutually by the couple, which would forever bind them to marriage. What is not brought into being according to the rules can be declared to be so and the result is a declaration of freedom to go out and try to follow the rules.

M-31 Why does a non-Catholic whose church does not believe in this process have to go through it?

- A. ‘We are free to do anything,’ you say. Yes, but is everything good for us? ‘We are free to do anything,’ but does everything help the building of the community? Each of you must regard, not his own interests, but the others’. (I Cor. 10, 23-24)

Paul reminds us that each human person is possessed of genuine freedom of action. Yet he can easily see some limits to that freedom raised up by our faith in and love for Jesus the risen Lord and the community of believers who live in his presence. Essentially, no non-Catholic need ever come to the Church seeking a declaration of freedom to marry as the Laws of the Church apply only to members of the Church. However, among the rules for Catholics is one which states quite clearly that no Catholic may ever marry a married person. Since civil and public documents can be produced which prove a civil marriage, or even a religious marriage on the part of the non-Catholic, that makes the Catholic incapable of marrying someone he or she may love completely and sincerely. In order to declare the Catholic party free to marry the non-Catholic, the former or first act of consent of the non-Catholic must be examined to determine whether it was celebrated validly. In a more romantic sense, the non-Catholic would submit a petition for a tribunal process because he or she loves the Catholic party enough to show respect for both the beloved and the beloved’s own faith.

M-32 This whole thing looks like the Church is snooping into a lot of personal stuff. Why?

- A. A direct quote from the gospel of Luke, 15, 11-32, would be far too long here. But the Parable of the Lost Son certainly reveals a lot of personal information, information which sets the stage for the tragic renunciation of family made by both the sons, based on personal want as opposed to the needs of a relational community.

Marriage requires people to undertake what might be called the Big C’s: Collaboration, Cooperation, Communication, and Compromise. The way people learn that Big Four arises

from family modeling, adolescent socialization and then, in a more specified way, from dating and courting where both self-disclosure and curiosity provide the background information which will be weighed, reflected upon and evaluated by the parties to an act of consent. These, as identified by numerous Church and secular sources, are the developmental stages where relational skills take root and grow. The way a particular couple actually live out the Big Four is in a marital relationship. Therefore, it would seem that some insights into family dynamics, how a young person learned to get along with others, and then how a couple met, courted and behaved in a marital relationship reveal whether they could or did exchange a valid act of consent at the wedding. While that may all seem ‘personal’, little of it remains that way so that our family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, fellow parishioners and many others are almost as familiar with what we say and do as we ourselves might be. Our lives touch and affect many others, and those many others are often quite willing to assist us in rectifying wrongs and restoring ourselves to a wholesome and happy future which is why, after all, we call them friends.

M-33 Does my ex get to read all this stuff?

- A. ‘Sir’, said the woman, ‘give me that water, and then I shall not be thirsty, nor have to come all this way to draw.’ Jesus replied, ‘Go home, call your husband and come back.’ She answered, ‘I have no husband.’ (Jn 4, 16-17a)

Yes. Just as Jesus told the divorced woman to share the facts of the water of life with her former spouse, and perhaps all five of them, the Church believes that we ought to share the facts of an examination of consent - even with a non-participating former spouse. Most former spouses don’t read the accumulated facts; however, since an examination of an act of consent would yield a declaration affecting two people, the other party to any act of consent ought to be notified and have a chance to participate. Only where there is a clearly indicated reason not to make contact (usually a civil restraining order or its equivalent) would the Tribunal not contact a former spouse. Both the Petitioner and the Respondent (the former spouse) are invited to read the various statements made by themselves and the witnesses so that in justice each may add to or comment upon the evidence before the final examination takes place. They are also invited to read the disposition of the matter in order to better understand the canonical basis for the decision and, if desired, prepare an appropriate appeal.

M-34 What if I’m unhappy with the results of a Tribunal process?

- A. He who has been wronged should meet with righteous judgment, of whatever religion he may be. It is necessary to examine the character of the petitioners [who] first lay their charges before the bishop [then] all the bishops of the Province. (Canon VI, Council of Constantinople, 382)

From the time of St. Paul, who insisted on the right and obligation of the local Church to maintain its own system of courts, the notion of an appeal has been a central facet of all Church processes. Because the Church takes marriage so seriously, there is always and ever an automatic appeal of every case to a special review panel; however, either party to a process can make a formal appeal, adding evidence as he or she thinks might be necessary. Ordinarily, this

appeal is made to a specific Tribunal which has been assigned to handle such appeals; however, there is also always an option to appeal a specific case to the Tribunals of the Roman Rota (somewhat like our own Supreme Court).

M-35 This Questionnaire looks awful long – how much do I need to say?

- A. Put all your trust in the LORD and do not rely on your own understanding. Think of him in all your ways and he will smooth your path. (Proverbs 3, 1-2)

Before saying anything, it is a wonderful idea to enter into prayer, to speak to and then listen to the Lord so that, as Jesus himself once said, your tongue will have the words of the Spirit. Then, in preparing the answers, be sure to say enough to provide adequate factual insights into how you came to make a decision to marry based on three general areas of concern: 1) did you know what you were doing, 2) did you want to do what you were doing, and 3) did you have the personal capacity to do what you wanted to do. If each of the major questions is answered along these lines, you will provide adequate information from which a determination can be rendered. By the same token, in order to prove that consent rose to the test of validly, these same three points need to be proved by actual facts although Law presumes that most human beings after the age of 18, 16 with their parents permission (in the civil statutes of the State of Ohio) know what marriage is, want to marry according to its own nature and have the natural ability to make one work, even if and when problems arise. It is not, then, necessary to go on and on, or submit every possible bit of information which may come to mind. This can create confusion and where there is confusion, there can be no certain conclusion.

M-36 I received a witness questionnaire – what should I say and who gets to see what I write?

- A. No one lights a lamp and puts it in a cellar, but rather on the lamp-stand so that those who enter may see the light.” (Lk 11, 33)

Be humble always, and gentle, and patient too. Be forbearing with one another and charitable. Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace and unity which the Spirit gives. (Eph. 4, 1-3)

As a witness you have been asked to assist a friend, relative, employer/ee in a Church related process which has no civil effects whatsoever. That person has placed his/her trust in you to do as Paul suggests: answer a few questions with forbearance, gentility and charity, and above all that truthfulness which is inspired of the Holy Spirit.. Witness testimony seeks two fundamental pieces of information, the first is simply your assessment of the integrity and honesty of a party to a Church related process. The second is, by means of some very general questions, to corroborate some facts, which the party him/herself provided, of a situation leading up to and proceeding from an act of consent to marriage as understood by the Catholic Church. The Tribunal does not go into specifics because there is no desire to ‘lead’ a witness, and an honest appraisal as you recollect a period in time is quite adequate. Please, however, go a little bit beyond ‘it was none of my business’. The party who submitted your name does not believe that to have been the case, so if you don’t know how to respond to some aspect of the witness questionnaire, tell us why in a bit of specific, for example, “he was just so quiet he never spoke of that,” “she was so secretive she never shared that with me,” “I was living across

town and they didn't mix a lot with us while courting." Remember, someone is counting on your charitable, kind answers to assist him or her in a time of transition, so the key to any answer is not to let them down in that hope. The second part of the question, who gets to see what you send back, is rather simple – to protect the right of defense, something both Church and State guarantee in their own legal processes, both parties to a questionable act of consent, their representatives, the Tribunal staff and Appeals Tribunal would be reading through your submission. Please note that the questions are sufficiently 'general' that most witnesses need not worry about whether a particular answer (the light Luke reminds we have to shed on the truth) would trouble or vex a particular party. Can you ask for confidentiality? In general, this should be a last-chance option since the right of defense is paramount and your testimony is otherwise not useful for a party to move forward with a Church related process. However, yes, you may ask to have certain parts of your testimony kept confidential by so marking them as you respond. The Tribunal hopes that this would be necessary minimally. The answers seek the truth, not accusations, blame or an assessment of guilt, so any answer you provide, if read by either party, should reflect something about which he or she is already aware. By the way, no party and no Church or Tribunal personnel should coach you in what to reply and if he or she does, you might want to make a note on your response that you were, in fact, asked to provide ready-made responses.

M-37 What does the Catholic Church, and a bunch of unmarried guys, know about marriage?

- A. But in the beginning, at creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be made one with his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. It follows that they are no longer two individuals; they are one flesh. (Mk 10, 6-8)

In the quote above, Jesus is actually citing Genesis, and since that ancient book was first passed around as camp fire stories by the People of the Covenant, the Church, both its men and its women, has had an intense interest in marriage. So the answer to this question is simple: A lot. Tribunal staff, whether male or female, whether married or single, are highly trained individuals who form a community of capable and knowledgeable experts far beyond 'giving an annulment'. In fact, most of the priests, and all other staff, which includes married people, who work on a diocesan Tribunal will have studied human nature, human psychology, and the dynamics of consent and communication, as well as ordinary interrelationships which mark us out as civilized and good people. After a few years of work with the processes of an ordinary tribunal, those same staff may well have 'lived' with hundreds of troubled couples who endure failing and failed marital relationships and can bring to bear not only the technical material learned in a class, but the reality of many relationships which have floundered. The work of the Tribunal should be seen as part and parcel of a much larger process which is often called Pastoral Counseling in as much as one of the goals of the Tribunal Staff is to assist parties to a failed marriage better understand what went wrong so that the same difficulties do not arise in future.

M-38 How long does this take?

- A. Happy the man who listens to me, watching daily at my threshold with his eyes on the doorway. (Proverbs 8, 34)

Patience is the companion of wisdom. (Augustine)

An ordinary examination takes as long as it takes and may well require some serious watching and waiting on the part of a Petitioner anxious to remarry. In a formal case there are some built in waiting periods so that people have time to pray, reflect, think and only then to respond. These waiting periods are a requirement of the Law. However, it is not uncommon that some party or witness requires even more time to prayerfully reflect upon and then respond to the various issues raised about a specific act of consent, so a formal case should begin with the expectation that it may require anywhere from nine months to a year, and even longer if a witness who was not informed that his/her name was being submitted puts the interrogatory on top of the refrigerator and forgets that it is there. On the other hand, length of the process can be greatly compressed if a petitioner works closely with the Procurator/Advocate and other parties involved so that all involved parties make their responses in a timely manner. Some dioceses may take longer, or might be able to do it more quickly. An appeal ordinarily must be completed within sixty days of its acceptance, and a Rotal appeal may take several years since it must go back and forth between Rome and the Petitioner's diocese. Parties to a Tribunal examination should also be aware that the entire process is time sensitive to unnecessary and lengthy delays and at certain points a case will move forward even if one party or the other has failed to respond within a fixed time frame.

M-39 What is the status of children born to a marital consent which the Catholic Church says was invalid?

A. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, for fear they may grow disheartened. (Col 4, 21)

Children are and always will be the children of their parents whose obligations of love, nurture, support and training up in the ways of the Lord are not lapsed by the unfortunate occurrence of a divorce. No process of the Catholic Church ever attacks the legitimacy of children or in any way waives the responsibilities of a parent toward his or her children regardless of the status of a failed marital relationship. In fact, a declaration of freedom to marry must also include a clear reminder to a remarried parent that he or she has not and cannot abandon a child born to any other relationship. Children are a gift from God and a blessing to parents, family and community, and the Church believes and teaches that they ought to be treated as such by their parents, even when the parents cannot treat one another well.

M-40 What is the cost of a Tribunal process?

A. The laborer is worthy of his hire. (Mt 10, 10)

This question is asked in many ways, or forms the basis of many complaints; however, the answer is rather simple. Yes, if you ask the Church to undertake an examination of consent, it will 'cost' something. The financial aspect of that cost is determined by looking at the ordinary budget of the Tribunal which maintains offices (rent, utilities, phone, duplicating and records), has a staff (salaries and wages, insurance, retirement) and must therefore pay its bills. Based on the assistance made possible by generous parishioner support of the diocesan Annual

Catholic Appeal, and support from various endowments established so that these services can be offered at a reduced rate, there is a reasonable fee for each of the various processes. Everyone at the Tribunal hopes that the fee is low enough that no one cannot afford it; however, where need is shown, there are various grants and reductions which can be made in specific cases. Since each process requires a different time scale and records, please see the applications for any of the processes where the specific fee is clearly indicated. A second aspect of the question often asked with regard to a fee is whether the Tribunal will go faster if a large donation accompanies the application, or whether the Tribunal will not act at all if no fee is paid. The Law of the Church forbids the acceptance of anything other than the required fee, so if a check for several thousand dollars were to accompany a particular case, the check would be considered as a donation and deposited to the general funds of the Diocese while the case was processed in accord with the Law itself. No case is ever delayed or rejected because somebody cannot afford the fee or believes in conscience that the Church ought to provide this service gratis; however it is helpful if the Petitioner mentions this on the fee page of the application to avoid unnecessary further communication and billing.

M-41 What on earth does whether I lived with somebody have to do with exchanging valid consent?

A. While the psychological dynamic which makes cohabitation ‘do’ what it does is relatively unknown, the evidence is in that the mere fact of living together for a period of as little as five continuous days leaves behind serious interior wounds which make a subsequent marriage nearly always fail (in fact, some longitudinal studies have found a ‘divorce rate’ of nearly 100%). It seems that there are at least two, and probably many more, mental activities going on which lead to that tragic result. First, all human beings have a tremendous natural inclination to marry according to human nature, that is, in a permanent, faithful, childbearing (therefore man and woman) union. In order to ‘live together’, that natural urge has to be forcibly set aside, and that requires a choice made within the intellect and will. Since the choice to cohabit is at odds with our humanness, such a choice requires a tremendous effort of the will which drains the electro-chemical reservoir and leaves behind a stunted capacity to follow our real and very human desires. Weakened human nature has become further weakened. And that weakness plants within the mind the actual object of the choice made when one decides to cohabit, to avoid a permanent relationship by retaining a clear and present ‘open door’ to depart at will. The mind now has at its core a deeply seeded sense that leaving a marital relationship is among the options retained at consent. The second serious flaw with regard to cohabitation lies in the uneasy sense that anything could set off the other party and lead him or her to depart. That unease tends to mask open and objective communication, in a sense letting fear replace openness so that problematic behaviors, bad habits, and a host of other serious issues are either swept under the carpet or avoided at any cost. This means that issues normally faced and surmounted during a normal courtship lie in wait until license or marriage certificate allows them to be brought up, often with disastrous results since resentments and memory intrude to prevent resolution. Cohabitation comes with tremendous risks which can, and unfortunately often do, vitiate consent to marriage.

M-42 Oh, come on! Everybody’s been having premarital sex since Adam and Eve! What difference can it possibly make?

- A. The teaching of the Catholic Church has held from the beginning that sexual intercourse should be part and parcel of the marital union, and sexual expressions should wait until a couple have been married and are united in a permanent, faithful union. And, since the beginning, people have paid little heed to that regulation since human beings are endowed with emotional and hormonal qualities which make sexuality a powerful and almost irresistible force. However, while we now live in what is perhaps as licentious an age as any in the past, with sexuality used as a product, an enticement to undertake certain actions (like buying a car or a bar of soap), and an easily acquired internet ‘habit’, the expectation placed upon us by the Church seems to make a lot of sense, as if maybe Jesus and the Holy Spirit (who guides the Church in its pronouncements) more than we do!

Human sexuality has three (and no doubt many, many more) powerful markers which we now know point to its best potential being exercised in a permanent and faithful union. One of these is its extremely overwhelming emotional valence so that sexual activity is immediately fixating. That means that while we may hop from bed to bed, motel room to motel room, or person to person, the first experience of our sexuality becomes the benchmark we will consistently attempt to recreate as it has left behind an extremely strong emotional memory. Because this memory is so strong, sexual expression becomes unconsciously habituating. That means that the physical interior systems brace themselves to repeat the same pattern (think about any bad habit, or good one, and you should see the connection – habits are so automatic we don’t even think about them before we find ourselves deep into them) and this automated repetition removes the truly human aspect of the intellect and soul from the equation. Finally, human sexuality has been shown to be among the most internally oriented activities anyone will ever experience. That means that as an act, sexual intercourse is self-satisfying (which leads to the moral dilemma of the person who has fixated on and habituated to self-stimulation or some other form of inappropriate sexual expression including internet addictions) and, again unless we exercise serious intellectual and spiritual supervision and control, the community aspect (what the Church would refer to as respect for the dignity, desires and will of our partner) is easily set aside in favor of pursuing sex for self gratification.

Premarital sex may well be something everybody does, but that does not mean that in individual cases it does not occur without serious consequences for a future marital union.

*Citations are to the Code of Canon Law [c.] and/or
the General Instruction *Dignitas comubii* [Dc], the official procedural handbook for marriage cases.
If you have specific questions or concerns, please contact the Tribunal at www.toledotribunal.org*

Supplemental Note on Jurisdiction

- M-43** Just as in the civil forum, a tribunal is only permitted by the Law to conduct business appropriate to that particular tribunal. As regards marriage, there are some basic ‘rules’ by which jurisdiction to consider a petition is obtained.
- M-44** The diocese where the original exchange of consent occurred always has the competence to take up a petition regarding that act of consent. Regardless of whether the marriage took place in the Catholic Church, another faith community, or a courthouse or back yard, the location of the wedding determines which Tribunal has the first obligation to consider the matter.
- M-45** Because people move from place to place for any number of reasons, the second Tribunal with jurisdiction is where the Respondent (the non-petitioning party) to an act of consent maintains her/his ordinary residence (called a domicile by the Church). Since the Law presumes that the Respondent, even one not participating, has the full right of defense, it seems appropriate that the closest Tribunal that can serve the needs of that Defense should have a natural obligation to render assistance.
- M-46** Because parties often move apart after a divorce, the third Tribunal that can obtain jurisdiction is where the Petitioner maintains his/her ordinary residence. This is not a natural jurisdiction, but is surrendered to that Tribunal by the residential Tribunal of the Respondent, and for much the same reasons as outlined above. This permission can only be granted if the parties both live in the same Episcopal Conference, which generally means the same nation.
- M-47** Finally, the fourth Tribunal which can be granted permission to take up jurisdiction is that where the greatest number of proofs can be gathered. Perhaps a couple dated, courted, and prepared for marriage on a college campus where most of their witnesses still reside. Then, with few family still there, the couple, for sentimental reasons only, returned to a distant diocese to marry where Grandma or Grandpa married. In such a case, and again only with the permission of the Tribunal of the Respondent, that place where the couple met, wooed and agreed to marry can be given jurisdiction.
- M-48** If the whereabouts of the Respondent cannot be determined, it is often best to submit an application in the tribunal of the territory (diocese) where the original marriage took place.

Supplemental Note on Divorce and Status in the Church

- M-49** The question is often asked by Catholics, I recently got a divorce, am I now prohibited from celebrating the other sacraments of the Catholic Church? The answer to that is rather simple: A simply divorced or separated Catholic may celebrate any of the Church's sacraments. No one is prohibited from celebrating the sacraments unless and until you remarry without first obtaining a declaration of freedom to marry from competent Church authority. It is not the separation of the spouses that affects the respect one ought to show the sacramental life of the Church, but the remarriage without getting that all-important declaration of freedom. Unfortunately, many very good Catholic people who got caught up in a very messy attempt to build a lasting marital union and find that this cannot be done, get a divorce and then erroneously believe that the separation makes them outcasts or not good enough for the other sacraments of the Church. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and often it is the sacraments which assist those wounded by failed marriages to come to grips with the reality of moving on into a new life with new directions and new opportunities. The Church would never want to restrict access to the life-giving sacramental celebrations which build up both the individual and the body of Christ.
- M-50** On the other hand, when a Catholic who got a divorce remarries without an annulment, the Church asks that that person reverence the sacramental life of the Church by refraining from celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper while there is an open question about the sacramental marital status. All too often, Catholics forget that when they marry there are two simultaneous events taking place, a sacrament whose rules and regulation have been entrusted to the Church, and a civil ceremony by which the parties agree to abide by the civil law regarding the civil effects of marriage. When they obtain a civil decree of dissolution or divorce, they incorrectly presume that the other celebration of the original ceremony, that binding them to the rules of the sacraments, has also been dissolved. This is not the case. The State can only undo what the State did, and it is for the Church to examine the consent exchanged in light of the sacraments. Church Law recognizes that the parties to a failed marriage may well know that that failed marriage was not confectioned with the necessary grace to make it bind forever; but there is still a paper trail in a parish registry (marriage records and baptismal records) which states clearly that a marriage had been celebrated and is presumed to be valid, and until that paper trail has been adequately addressed, the Catholic who remarries without having done so should stand back from the sacraments out of respect for them, not because that person is being punished or excluded. The Church has processes which exist for the sole purpose of looking at the record and the facts and making a determination consonant with the sacramental life of the Church.
- M-51** If you have other questions, please contact the Toledo Diocesan Tribunal, 1933 Spielbusch Ave., Toledo, Ohio, 43604; call us at 419.244.6711, or e-mail the Tribunal at toledotribunal@toledodiocese.org

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