

To: Priests, deacons, PLCs.
From: Marriage Policy Committee
Date: August, 2007
RE: Review of Diocesan Policy on Marriages Outside a Catholic Church

The Marriage Policy Committee offers the following conclusions and recommendations with the approval of the bishop:

Conclusions

1. The current diocesan policy of not allowing Catholic weddings outside of a Catholic church without the permission of the bishop (*see appendix 1*) should be continued.
2. Regarding Catholic weddings outside of a Catholic church, Canon Law grants the bishop authority to make pastoral judgments about such requests.
3. Regarding Catholic weddings outside of a Catholic church, there needs to be a standard of consistency in the practice of priests and deacons who officiate at weddings in the diocese.

Recommendations

1. Reminder of the policy and clarification of the proper steps for requesting permission for a wedding outside of a Catholic church.
 - a. New Form: "Request for Permission to Celebrate a Marriage Outside of a Catholic Church" submitted from priest or deacon in charge of the marriage preparation to the bishop asking for the permission, with reasons why, in their estimation, permission should be granted for the request.
 - i. Letters from brides, parents, etc., will be referred back to the priest/deacon in charge of the marriage preparation.
 - b. Review of policy with priests/deacons, in order that there is a consistency in practice.
 - i. In almost all cases, permission to deacons and priests to officiate at weddings will not be granted for:
 1. Weddings outdoors, i.e. backyards, parks, etc.
 2. Weddings in private homes or hotels, etc.
 - ii. Permission to deacons and priests may be granted by the bishop for weddings outside a Catholic church for:
 1. Holy Angels Parishioners due to size of their church
 2. Alumni and/or staff of the University of Evansville in Neu Chapel
 3. Alumni and/or staff of Vincennes University in Mariah Creek Chapel
 - iii. Permission to celebrate Mass will **not** be granted for weddings outside of a Catholic church for two baptized Catholics

- iv. Dispensation from Canonical Form is available for weddings of mixed religion and disparity of cult if sufficient reason is proposed by the deacon or priest who is making the request:
 1. Deacon/priest may not officiate at such weddings in any way
 2. Deacon/priest may, if invited by the presiding officiant, may participate in a subordinate role

Appendices

1. Current diocesan policy as stated in the *Faculties and Policies for the Administration of Sacraments (1994)*

Appendix 1

From *Faculties and Policies for the Administration of Sacraments (Diocese of Evansville 1994) Chapter 6, Section C, paragraphs 1-2*

C. The Wedding Ceremony

1. Time of Wedding: The choice of the day and time for wedding celebrations is left to the prudent judgment of the pastor. Consideration for others will compel the faithful not to schedule weddings on days or at hours that would be detrimental to the service rendered to the whole parish community.
 - a. A wedding ceremony may licitly be celebrated on any day of the year unless it is prohibited in the liturgical books approved by the Church.
 - b. Ritual Masses (the liturgy for wedding Masses) are prohibited on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter season, on solemnities, on days within the octave of Easter, on All Souls, on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week.
 - 1) The ritual for a wedding ceremony outside of Mass may be used on these days if marriage itself is not prohibited.
 - 2) If the marriage is celebrated with Mass on a Sunday or solemnity, the Mass of the day is to be used with the nuptial blessing and, where appropriate, the special final blessing. However, on Sundays of the Christmas season and on Sundays in Ordinary Time, in Masses which are not parish Masses, the wedding Mass may be used without change.

2. Place of Marriage
 - a. Marriages are to be celebrated in the parish where either of the contractants has a domicile, quasi-domicile or month-long residence. Marriages can be celebrated elsewhere with the permission of the proper ordinary or pastor. (Canon 1115)
 - b. Marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic party is to be celebrated in a parish church; with the permission of the local ordinary or the pastor, it can be celebrated in another Catholic church or oratory. (Canon 1118 §1)
 - c. The local ordinary can permit marriage to be celebrated in some other suitable place. (Canon 1118 §2)
 - d. Marriage between a Catholic party and a non-baptized party can be celebrated in a church or in some other suitable place. (Canon 1118 §3)
 - e. In the Diocese of Evansville, permission of the Ordinary should be obtained for a wedding outside of a Catholic church. Serious reasons would be required if the marriage is to take place in a private residence. It is the policy of the Diocese that permission is not granted for weddings in public parks, halls, etc.