

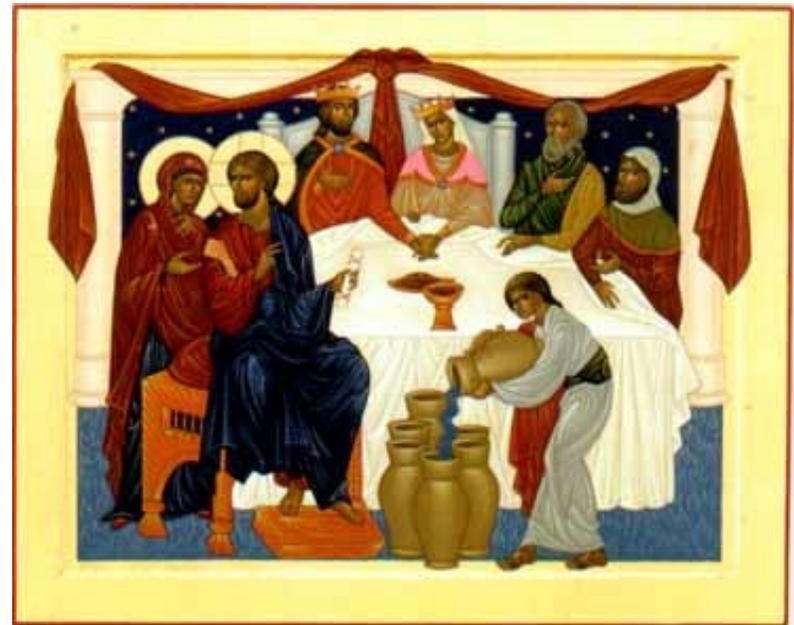
OTHER RESOURCES:

United As One: A Musical Resource the Celebration of the Christian Rite of Marriage. CD available from Oregon Catholic Press.

Don Y Promesa: Customs and Traditions in Hispanic Rites of Marriage. 2nd ed., Oregon Catholic Press.

El Amor Nunca Pasara: A Collection of Mariachi-Style Music for the Catholic Rite of Marriage. CD available from Oregon Catholic Press.

Celebrating Marriage: Preparing Roman Catholic Wedding Liturgy. A workbook for engaged couples, by Paul Covino with Lawrence Madden and Elaine Rendler-McQueeney. 3rd ed.



Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise Marriage Regulations

June 2016

WELCOME BY BISHOP PETER F. CHRISTENSEN

Preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church is one of the most important times for a couple and for the Church. Pastors and lay ministers in the Church have the ability to engage and challenge those who seek to enter into this holy state of life, especially in our age when the secular values about marriage and family life are so different from our Catholic understanding. This time of preparation is one of instruction, conversation, and evangelization as a couple begins to understand fully the many aspects of life that flow from this life-long commitment.

While canon 1064 certainly obliges all, and especially pastors, to make proper preparation for marriage a reality in every parish, there is more to this requirement than mere duty. There needs to be a strong desire to support couples who will build healthy families which are a blessing and good for our Church and society. I strongly urge those who are involved in marriage preparation to study these regulations and implement them in your pastoral practice. These regulations are to be applied respecting each person's dignity and worth in God's eyes always seeking to safeguard their personal salvation as a member of Christ's body.

Know that my prayers and thanks are with you as you undertake this important work. Strong families the foundation of the church. Proper preparation for marriage is crucial in our culture today.

These norms were re-promulgated in April 2001 and are hereby reauthorized as of June 3, 2016.



Most Reverend Peter F. Christensen
Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise

7. **Visiting Clergy:** If the couple wishes someone other than the pastor, parochial vicar, or deacon in the parish to witness the marriage, proper delegation and permission must be obtained.
8. **Music:** Since marriage is a part of the Church's liturgy, the music should be the same kind as used on Sunday. The words of the songs must reflect the spiritual meaning of marriage. The wedding music chosen should invite and enable everyone assembled to participate in the liturgy with full mind, heart, and spirit. **USE ONLY SACRED MUSIC IN A CATHOLIC WEDDING.** Sacred music is prayer and invites everyone to a deeper commitment to God and faith. Couples have a wide variety of music from which to choose. Please refer to *Sing to the Lord* for general guidelines regarding music in Catholic liturgy, especially pages 216-224.

Couples should refer to the music director at the parish for appropriate selections. Some questions to ask a couple when considering a piece of music for a wedding are:

 - Is the music prayerful?
 - Do the words refer to Christian love between a man and a woman and/or the love that comes from God who is Love?
 - Does the musical text enhance the spoken word from Scripture and *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 2nd edition*?
 - Popular music, love songs, or show tunes may be very beautiful and have some personal meaning; however, they often do not embody the Christian meaning of marriage. They may be appropriate at the reception and/or rehearsal dinner, but not at the wedding liturgy.
 - Please discourage the use of “The Bridal Chorus” from Wagner’s opera *Lohengrin*, and “Wedding March” from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Both pieces serve as accompaniment to illicit sexual scenes in these dramatic works. Further, both pieces place undue emphasis on the bride whereas in a Catholic marriage, both the bride and groom are the primary ministers.
 - Please inform music ministers in local parish communities about the diocesan regulations and the need to comply with them.
9. **Photographers/Videographers:** Guidelines regarding videographers, and photographers during the liturgy must be communicated to the presider and couple based on each parish’s policy.
10. **Symbols:** Discourage the importing of symbols and practices from popular culture and other traditions into the wedding liturgy. Essentially, we discourage you from practices not found in the ritual book.

**MARRIAGE REGULATIONS FOR
CLERGY AND PASTORAL MINISTERS
PREPARING COUPLES FOR
MARRIAGE**

C. WEDDING CELEBRATION

Great care must be taken to see that the prayer for this special moment be reverent, graceful, and beautiful. The prayers, scripture, and music chosen for wedding celebrations must embody Christian values and follow the liturgical norms of the Church and the Diocese of Boise as described in *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 2nd edition* (promulgated 2016).

The couple should begin reflection and prayer on their marriage ceremony very early in the process so that they may make appropriate choices. Some key principles to keep in mind:

1. **Date and Time:** When scheduling weddings, parishes and couples must abide by the instructions for this ritual Mass regarding appropriate dates and times as outlined in the Ordo and in the ritual book, *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 2nd edition*.
2. **Place:** The normal place for a wedding celebration is the parish church of the bride or groom unless there are extenuating circumstances. The bishop must give express permission for the sacramental celebration of marriage outside a church or oratory.
3. **Participation:** Catholic worship requires the full, active participation of the assembled community. Accommodations must be made for various language groups who will be present at the wedding. The use of liturgy aids is encouraged. The celebration should invite and enable the guests to pray and sing so that they are not just spectators, but active participants in the wedding liturgy.
4. **Scripture:** the proclamation of the Word of God is an essential part of a wedding liturgy. There are many appropriate scriptural selections from which a couple may choose, listed in the ritual book but also in the USCCB's publication, *Book of Readings on Marriage*, and in the preparatory book *Together for Life*. Use only Scriptural selections during the wedding ceremony. Poetry and other readings are not appropriate at Mass but can be recited at the reception or another place.
5. **Prayers:** *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 2nd edition* provides several choices for each part of the wedding ceremony. Encourage the couple to choose prayerfully from the various options there.
6. **Environment:** Remind the couple that the church is the worship place of the local parish community. Additional flowers and candles should be simple yet beautiful. Any additional decorations should be placed where they do not hinder the movement of the ministers. Primary consideration should be given to the liturgical concerns of the worship space.

The preparation period for every marriage is a minimum of four (4) months, beginning after the completion of pre-nuptial inquiry, and has three (3) stages: Pre-Nuptial Inquiry, Marriage Preparation Program, and the Wedding Celebration.

Each parish should develop guidelines for marriage according to the local needs and customs (e.g., on the use of flowers or on the incorporation of Hispanic customs).

A. PRE-NUPTIAL INQUIRY

Do not set a firm date for a wedding until completion of the pre-nuptial inquiry. An inquiry may consist of interviews with the couple by the person arranging the marriage. During this inquiry the necessary papers are given and explained, answered and signed, and the proper permissions and delegations are obtained. In certain cases, such as annulments or questions regarding citizenship arise, time may be a factor in obtaining proper documentation

When a couple seek to marry in a parish in which neither resides, they should be made aware of any fees, expenses, guidelines, requirements, etc., of the parish in which they wish to marry. The parish minister should consult with the pastor of the parish where one or both reside before setting a firm date for the wedding.

The pre-nuptial inquiry must address the following areas:

1. **Faith:** ***Discuss why the couple wants to marry in the Catholic Church as opposed to marrying simply through the civil law of the state.*** If Catholics are not actively living the faith (through attendance at Eucharist and celebration of the sacraments) give them the special time and attention needed to encourage their faith life. Catholics who explicitly reject the teachings of the Church about marriage and the sacramental process, of which marriage is a part, place an obstacle to marriage in the Church, and the marriage must be postponed until the obstacle is removed. (See *Familiaris Consortio*, 68)

2. **Freedom:** Determine if either party has ever been married before or lived in a common law union and whether either is under pressure to marry. If there is a previous marriage, a process with the Tribunal of the Diocese of Boise must be completed **before** a firm date is set.
3. **Maturity: Each party should be at least twenty-one years of age.** Individuals under the age of 21 must undergo special preparation to ensure the ability to make and carry out a life-long commitment before they may marry in the Church. The Diocese recommends that this special preparation include at least a consultation with a mental health specialist to assess maturity or to identify any other special issues for the couple. It should also include any needed follow-up meetings with the Pastor for his assessment of the couple's readiness.

If they are under 18 years of age, parents must also give consent. The Bishop must give permission before such a marriage may take place. Prior to this permission, in addition to parental consent, professional psychological counseling may be requested in order to establish the couple's ability to make and carry out the serious commitments of marriage.

Further inquiry into maturity may use appropriate parts of the "formal case" questionnaires from the Tribunal.

4. **Compatibility:** The couple must take the *Pre-Marriage Inventory*, *FOCUS*, *Perspectives of Marriage*, *Engaged Couple Inventory*, *Prepare, Fully Engaged* or a similar instrument. The couple should receive adequate explanation of the results.

When only one is Catholic, the non-Catholic party is encouraged to attend special instructions in the Catholic faith. This instruction would include a review of the major theological, spiritual, and moral teachings of the Church. These instructions are intended to help the non-Catholic understand the faith of the Catholic party. The Catholic party should also seek to know more about the faith of the intended spouse. If possible, the distribution of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is encouraged.

5. **Special Circumstances:**
 - a. Pregnancy is not a good reason for marrying and does not shorten the preparation time of four (4) months, but does require additional professional counseling for the couple.
 - b. When the couple is cohabiting before marriage, the pastoral minister preparing them needs to discuss this behavior with them.
 - c. The validation of civil marriages in the Church **requires** preparation appropriate to the couple based upon the assessment of the clergy overseeing preparation.
 - d. The person arranging the marriage should address other circumstances that may limit the couple's freedom and knowledge (e.g., alcohol, drug abuse, pornography, or any mental health or behavioral issues).

B. MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

1. Each couple must participate in a program of individual marriage preparation with the pastor or other appropriate parish minister. The parish should provide the necessary formation sessions.
2. Local parishes may employ marriage preparation programs such as: Engaged Encounter, parish-based programs, or suitable online programs. Per Tribunal recommendations, documentation regarding the results, outcome, or any other pertinent information regarding the couple's participation in the program, should be included in the couple's marriage file.
3. Preparation programs should include in-depth presentations on the following areas and be presented by competent and qualified presenters:
 - Christian meaning of Love
 - Commitment
 - Communication in Marriage
 - Decision Making
 - Finances
 - Spirituality
 - Importance of Religion in Marriage
 - Sacrament of Marriage
 - Sexuality and an Introduction to NFP
 - Responsible Parenting
 - Family Issues and Dynamics