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A Time for Dialogue

By REV. JOSEPH M. CHAMPLIN (Associate Director of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy)

(NC News Service) Who really calls the shots in

courtship and, later, in marriages: the man or the woman? Or maybe the question ought to be: Who ought to? There

you can get a real dialogue

My own observation—that of a celibate priest who has spent a dozen years talking with couples about love and marriage-is that in their hearts most women want the man to lead, assume ultimate responsibility and issue the final judg-

ment on significant matters. Betty Friedan, author of "The Feminine Mystique," and the leaders of the feminist movement would certainly dis-

But maybe that's the wrong question, too.

What matters these days is not, who makes them, but how the decisions are made. And with rare exceptions they follow a period of discussion, persuasion and mind-changing that is usually given the title of

Here, hopefully, even the most outspoken feminist will agree that this is so—and will argue right along with me that

this: The earlier the dialogue

before a couple begins planning a wedding. But that planning may well provide the first major test of their ability to make decisions together.

The new marriage liturgy, which goes into effect after Palm Sunday, goes a long way toward acknowledging this sharing—and gives young lovers— and older one—a new opportunity for communication.

Instead of insisting on a narrowly restricted pattern for the wedding service, this revised ritual contains multiple readings, prayers and blessings with a rich variety of optional pro-

It presumes a couple will sit

down with the priest and plan

their ceremony, selecting those texts and alternatives which both college graduates, both in

their early twenties, after dating steadily for a year become engaged at Christmas. They call the parish priest almost immediately to reserve

sonal visit to discuss details. Steve, from a Methodist family, feels a bit uneasy about this encounter with a Roman Catholic clergyman; Jane, while

license, organist, pre-marriage classes, the priest suggests some possibilities open to them for the wedding ceremony it-

• Would you like a nuptial Mass or a service without the Eucharist?

• Which of the 28 scriptural readings would you prefer? Which of these prayers, blessings and consent formulas do you find most desirable?

 Care to compose your own prayer and read it after the ceremony or following Com-

• How about your parents, a member of the wedding party, a relative or a friend reading the first two scriptural read-

• Would you like an offer-

tory procession with a token

gift for the poor, the sign of peace, a different entrance procedure involving your parents more actively? • Do you want to memorize the vows, read them from the

ritual or recite your promises Jane's church for an early June wedding. He asks both of them after the priest? to stop at the rectory for a per-Steve and Jane look at one another, they are momentarily overwhelmed at the many choices they must make. But

State Marriage Laws

Each applicant must present physician's statement certifying to a pre-marital serologic (blood) test and physician's examination, duly signed by physician and applicant. The statement must show the date on which the blood specimen was taken, date test was completed, date of physical examination, and name and address of laboratory making test, but the

Serologic tests must be made in laboratories recognized by

shown on certificate.

The blood test certificate expires 30 days from the date on which the specimen was taken and cannot be used thereafter.

The marriage license expires 60 days from the date of issue. Both parties must appear in mony.

Minors (males under 21 years and females under 18) must be accompanied by both parents, if living, or by guardian if parents are deceased, whose consents to the marriage are required.

All applicants under 21 years of age must present proof of

Licenses issued in New York result of the test must not be State may be used anywhere in

No period of residence is required for out-of-city or out-ofstate applicants.

The wedding may take place 24 hours after issuance of license, provided, however, that three days will have elapsed between the date on which the blood specimen was taken and the date of the marriage cere-

Gifts for Wedding Party

A traditional custom of the wedding is the gift presented to each bridesmaid and usher by the bride and groom respectively. A token of affection and appreciation for their part in making your big day, the gifts are usually small items which can be worn or carried during inwardly they are flattered by the fact the decisions are theirs the ceremony and reception.

also suitable for engraving.

If the wedding party is large, a slightly different gift should be chosen for the maid of honor and the best man. The flower girl and ring bearer also should be remembered.

Gifts are usually presented at the rehearsal supper or at a



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