

# A Check-Off List for Your Wedding Plans

□ Visit your parish priest at least six weeks before your intended wedding date. Do not arrange reception, vacation, etc., until you have confirmed your date with the priest.

□ If you share floral expenses with the other couples being married on the same day, it will save costs and avoid confusion between weddings.

□ Inquire about the manner in which the organist or other musicians are contacted and the customary offering.

□ Instruct the photographer to consult the priest on what is permitted.

□ Impress the necessity of promptness on the part of the wedding party for both the rehearsal and wedding.

□ It is suggested you and the members of the wedding who will be receiving Holy Communion, go to confession beforehand.

□ The Eucharistic Regulation: No solid foods or liquids for one hour before Communion; water and medicine may be taken at any time. The bride and groom may re-

ceive Communion under both species.

□ Each parish has its own regulations for the conducting of weddings. You will be expected to follow these rules. If you are not sure of the customs, ask the priest with whom you are making your arrangements.

□ A Protestant clergyman or a Rabbi may participate in the wedding ceremony. Arrangements for this should be made in advance with the priest marrying you.

□ The marriage should take place in the parish of the bride; for a justifying reason, it may take place in the groom's parish. Permission must be obtained from the pastor of the bride or groom to be married in another church.

□ A baptismal certificate issued not more than six months before the wedding must be presented to the priest by both bride and groom.

□ The following is the schedule of offerings: Low Nuptial Mass \$15; Sung Nuptial Mass \$20; wedding without Mass \$15.

□ Applicants for a marriage license must present physician's statement certifying to a pre-marital blood test, signed by physician and applicant.

□ For minors (males under 21, females under 18) consent of both parents or guardians is required, either in person or notarized statement. All persons under 21 must present proof of age.

□ The fee for the marriage license varies from place to place. The license is valid for 60 days from the date of issuance.

□ Marriage may take place 24 hours after the issuance of license, providing that 3 days have elapsed between date on which the blood specimen was taken and the date of the license.

□ License must be filled out by the officiating priest and signed by the two witnesses. A copy will be sent to you. A marriage certificate may be obtained from the church at which you are married.

## The Rules on Mixed Marriages

At the beginning of 1971, new regulations went into effect regarding mixed marriages.

The regulations were issued by Pope Paul VI and were implemented by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops at their November 1970 meeting.

The new legislation states that Catholics may, for serious reasons, be dispensed from the obligation of marrying before a Catholic priest.

The promise that was required for the non-Catholic partner, to baptize and raise the children as Catholics, has also been re-

worded and is now required only of the Catholic spouse.

The reasons cited by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops which could dispense a couple from marrying before a priest include the following: to achieve family harmony, to avoid family alienation, to obtain parental agreement to a marriage, to recognize the significant claims to relationship or special friendship with a non-Catholic minister, and to permit the marriage in a church that has particular importance to the non-Catholic.

At the same time the bishops

stressed the list of reasons serve only as guidelines and are not intended to be exhaustive.

The Catholic in a mixed marriage, according to the new regulations, must promise to do all in his or her power to share the Catholic faith with his children. He must have them baptized and reared Catholics.

The priest's role has also changed. Previously, a priest, in submitting a dispensation, would sign a statement that read in part: "I declare that from my knowledge of the parties, I am morally certain that these promises will be faithfully kept."

The priest now signs a statement which reads: "I am morally certain that the declaration and promise (of the Catholic party) have been sincerely made."

It is still required that both parties accept marriage as permanent, open to children and requiring faithfulness.

Ministers and rabbis may now offer prayers at a Catholic wedding, when a dispensation has been received; and a priest may do the same at a non-Catholic ceremony. Dual ceremonies,

however, in which a priest and minister or rabbi co-officiate, or successive ceremonies in which the marriage vows are performed twice, are still not permitted.

Catholic priests, with approval, may perform the Catholic wedding in a Protestant church.

The new regulations are not retroactive. However, marriages that have already taken place outside the Church may be validated provided the Catholic party makes the promise to baptize and educate his children in the Catholic faith.

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