

Rules for Mixed Marriages

At the beginning of 1971, new regulations went into effect regarding mixed marriages, i.e., marriages of Catholics to non-Catholics.

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

The 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 reworded and is now required only of the Catholic spouse.

The reasons cited by the NCCB which could dispense a mixed couple from marrying before a priest include: to achieve family harmony, to avoid family alienation, to obtain parental agreement to a marriage, to recognize the significant claims for 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 partner.

The bishops simultaneously stressed that 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 as 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.

Keep Calm

When his mother doesn't have her guest list ready on time, or when the bride wants the groom-to-be to look at the same piece of furniture for the fifth time, keep your cool. You are both under strain and need each other's

understanding and support. There are going to be last minute jitters which may start six weeks ahead of the event. Plan some regular "quiet times" together you'll need them.

A few moments spent in church can provide such pauses and be precious reminders of where your priorities are just what this is all about.

THE RING PLEASE!

Beware letting friends "try on" your wedding rings. Many a best man, who slipped the rings on his pinkie for safekeeping before the ceremony, has become permanently attached to them because he couldn't get them off when the priest said, "The rings, please."

Sally Wallace
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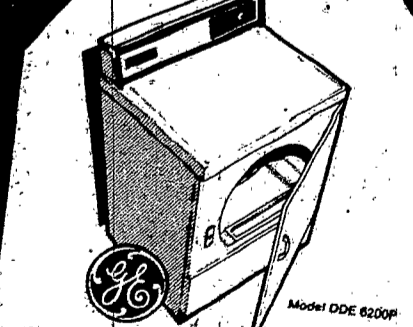


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