

Rules for Mixed Marriage

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.

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

Dispensations from Canonical Form

The legislation states that Catholics may, for serious reasons, be dispensed from the obligation of marrying before a Catholic priest. When there are sufficient ecumenical and pastoral reasons, the Bishop of the Roman Catholic party or the Bishop of the place where the marriage is to occur may dispense the Catholic from the observance of this form. An exhaustive list is impossible, but the following are the types of acceptable reasons for dispensations: to achieve harmony or to avoid family alienation; to obtain parental agreement to the marriage; to recognize the significant claims of relationship, or special friendship with a non-Roman Catholic clergyman; to permit the marriage in a church that has

particular importance to the non-Roman Catholic.

Ordinarily this dispensation is granted in view of the proposed celebration of a religious marriage service. In some exceptional circumstances (e.g. certain Roman Catholic-Jewish marriages) it may be necessary that the dispensation be granted so that a civil ceremony may be performed. In every instance a public ceremony that is civilly recognized for the celebration of marriage is required.

No matter where the couple gets married, a Roman Catholic priest or deacon has the responsibility to be sure that the couple has received adequate preparation for marriage and to see to all necessary documents and permissions.

Religious Education of Children

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 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 the children. He or she 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."

The Marriage Ceremony

Ministers and rabbis may offer prayers at a Catholic wedding, 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. Because of our general discipline concerning intercommunion, it seems preferable to discourage celebrating mixed marriages at Mass. Celebrating the Lord's Supper but excluding half the congregation from communion only dramatizes the disunity of the Church at a celebration which should speak of love and unity. Catholic priests, with approval, may perform the Catholic wedding in a Protestant Church.

What is Pre-Cana?

A Pre-Cana team consists of five married couples, a priest and sometimes a doctor. The team endeavors to stress attitudes, principles and values which govern married life. The methods used are presentations, films, games and discussion. The leader couple helps five engaged couples discover more about themselves and the relationship they can expect to build with their mate. The aim of the team is to show the engaged couple that they are part of God's continuing plan and how they influence each other, the family, the Church and Society.

The Pre-Cana program is open to all interested couples preparing for marriage. In the metropolitan Rochester area, pre-registration is necessary for every Pre-Cana Conference. Pre-registration cards and Pre-Cana schedules are available at every rectory. Engaged couples are asked to fill out the pre-registration card indicating a first and second choice of the conferences they wish to attend. Pre-registration cards are to be sent to the Office of Family Life. The Office of Family Life notifies those couples whose first choice of conferences cannot be honored because that session is full.

A registration fee of \$10 per couple is charged all couples who attend metropolitan Rochester Pre-Cana Conferences. This money supports both the regional

How to Fight

If you have somehow got into a hassle and you're upset with one another... get it out of your system, if you can, during the day, for it is extremely hazardous to a good marriage to go to bed mad.

Holding a grudge can become a slow poison that can actually destroy a marriage, so don't overlook even a seemingly small slight. Each day should be a fresh start on new joys together. Beware bottled-up anger waiting to explode.

"Silence is golden. Speech is silver." Maybe. But not when ill feeling is involved, especially with a newly-married couple.


program and the Office of Family Life.

A certificate of attendance is given to those who attend the Conference. The certificate is to be shown to the parish priest when final arrangements are made for the wedding.

Pre-Cana teams exist in each diocesan region. Regional Family Life Coordinators recruit couples, doctors and priests for the teams and schedule sessions. The regional coordinators for Monroe County are: North Region, Father Bernard Dollen; Northwest Region, Father Robert Bradley; Northeast Region, Father Donald Schwab; Southeast Region, Father Joseph Hart; Southwest Region, Father John O'Connor.

Coordinators for regions outside Metropolitan Rochester are: Livingston-Steuken, Father Richard O'Connell; Seneca-Cayuga, Father Edward Palumbos; Chemung-Schuyler, Father Vincent Panepinto; Tompkins-Tioga, Fathers David Mura and Thomas Watts; Wayne-Ontario-Yates, Father David Gaesser.

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