

Minors' Marriage Has Special Rules

Rules covering procedure for the marriages of minors have been in effect since 1971. The following regulations govern the procedure today and apply to all engaged couples under 18 years of age (either partner). The procedure may be used at the priest's option for all engaged couples between 18 and 21 years of age.

* The priest must interview the young man and woman individually, using the diocesan pre-marital questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to inquire as to the couple's awareness of the responsibilities of marriage and to let them express their judgment of their fitness for marriage.

* He then must interview the parents whom civil law requires to give permission for the marriage of their children.

(Before a marriage license can be obtained in this state, written consent to the marriage is required from both parents if the man or woman is 16 or 17 years old. If the parents of both are dead, written consent of the guardians of such minors is required. If the parents' marriage has been dissolved, the consent of the one parent who received

custody of the minor is sufficient.)

* He must then arrange for the couple to attend pre-marriage counseling sessions through the Office of Family Life or regional Family Life Coordinator.

* The priest must put into writing his personal observations and judgment regarding the couple's ability to make a lasting marriage.

* Finally, he must submit to the regional Bishop's Delegate the questionnaires filled out by the couple and their parents along with his own evaluation of the couple's readiness for marriage.

Final approval for the wedding must come from the regional Bishop's Delegate after studying the full documentation on the case. The Bishop's Delegates are: Monroe County, Msgr. Gerard C. Krieg; Wayne County, Father William Barrett; Seneca and Cayuga counties, Father Richard Hart; Ontario and Yates counties, Father William Charbonneau; Livingston and Steuben counties, Father Otto Vogt; Chemung and Schuyler counties, Father Elmer Schmidt; Tompkins and Tioga counties, Father Albert Cason.



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