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of them before the marriage takes place. They are meant to give testimony to the Catholic's understanding of his responsibility before God to live his faith, and do all that is possible to pass that faith on to the children.

CANONICAL FORM

A Roman Catholic must exchange his vows in the presence of a Roman Catholic priest and two witnesses. For ecumenical and pastoral reasons, a couple may obtain permission to be married in a non-Catholic church or synagogue, by a non-Catholic clergyman or rabbi, and their marriage is valid. In some exceptional circumstances it may be necessary that a dispensation be granted so that a civil ceremony may be performed.

Three things are needed:

1. Proper preparation for marriage and dispensation of the Bishop (dispensation from form).

2. Serious reason for requesting dispensation:

- the non-Catholic's relationship with the minister;
- strong family attachment of non-Catholic to his church;
- likelihood of increasing family hostility if marriage took place in Catholic Church.

(This is not a comprehensive list; other pastoral reasons may call for pastoral adaptation.)

3. Must be some public ceremony, preferably a religious ceremony.

When a marriage takes place in the church of the non-Catholic, the official ceremony (rite) of that church is to be used and the non-Catholic (unless the priest has received permission to do so) clergyman is the principal witness to the couple's exchange of vows. The priest may also be present and offer prayers or some word of congratulations. Apart from the Eucharist celebration, the priest may also read from the Scriptures and preach.

LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

The rite of marriage strongly encourages the couple to choose the scriptural readings, the specific prayers and blessings, and the musical selections for the wedding. The couple also needs to decide whether their marriage will be in the context of a Wedding Mass, taking into account the faith traditions of the non-Catholic and his family. Generally, the choice is the "Liturgy of the Word", with the choice of readings and prayers appropriate to the wedding. Because of our general discipline concerning intercommunion, it seems preferable to discourage celebrating interfaith 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 unity and love.

All members of the wedding party need not be Catholic. An invitation may be



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extended to the clergyman of the non-Catholic to take part in the ceremony (this may be the desire of the non-Catholic and his or her family). In appropriate vestments, he may read the Scriptures, prayers, or blessing of the couple. He may address those present with words of congratulations and in this way both clergymen give public witness to a shared pastoral concern for the couple.

The marriage of a Catholic to a member of an Eastern Orthodox Church may be celebrated with a Mass. The Orthodox Party, if he so wishes and his church does not object, may receive Holy Communion with the Catholic party.

A second religious ceremony is not permitted, nor is it permitted for both the Catholic priest and a non-Catholic minister to perform their respective marriage rites within the same ceremony.

IX. SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

All priests and deacons preparing couples for marriage shall observe the following regulations:

1. Hold interviews with the couple to achieve the goals set down in the COUNSELING GOALS (see page 2).

2. Fill out the Marriage Investigation Questionnaire and other required documents where necessary.

3. Require that the couple attend the Pre-Cana Conferences and, where this is not possible, give them equivalent conferences.

4. Prepare with the couple the Liturgical Celebration.

This procedure is to be followed in preparing all couples for marriage. Certain additional procedures are required in the following instances:

A. EXCEPTIONAL CASES

If in the course of the interviews with the couple, the priest or deacon should encounter exceptional cases of doubt about their readiness for marriage (immaturity, pregnancy as prime motive for marriage, escape from a very poor home situation, lack of faith commitment) he shall interview the couple further or refer them to a counseling agency (requesting a written evaluation from the counselor). If his doubts are not resolved, he shall consult the regional bishop's delegate for marriage preparation procedures for resolution of his doubts and a judgment regarding the couple's readiness to contract a sacramental marriage.

B. TEENAGE MARRIAGES

A. If either partner is under 18 years of age, the priest or deacon shall submit a written evaluation of the couple's readiness for marriage as well as the completed Marriage Investigation to

the regional bishop's delegate, after a sufficient number of interviews to make such an evaluation.

B. The parish priest or deacon shall interview both sets of parents of the engaged couple to determine their evaluation of the couple's readiness for marriage. He shall submit this form to the bishop's delegate along with the completed Marriage Investigation.

C. The parish priest or deacon shall refer the couple to the pre-marriage counseling sessions at the Catholic Family Center or equivalent agency, or at homes of trained Teenage Program staff couples.

D. The marriage is not to be scheduled until the priest or deacon has received permission from the bishop's regional delegate for the marriage to take place.

E. Should permission for the marriage not be granted the parish priest or deacon shall endeavor to communicate the reasons for refusal to the couple and direct them to seek the professional help to overcome whatever obstacles impede their marriage.

C. INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

A. The non-Catholic minister of the bride or groom may attend the interviews and preparation for the

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