

# Marriage

## Liturgists say lay Catholics to witness more weddings

By Barbara Watkins  
Catholic News Service

ST. LOUIS — The former executive director of the U.S. bishops' liturgy secretariat said he expects a growing number of lay people witnessing weddings in the United States.

"I think marriages witnessed by duly appointed lay persons will be more widespread in the future in this country," said Father Ronald Krisman, a priest of the Diocese of Lubbock, Texas. He spoke recently during a seminar on "Marriage: A Communion of Life and Love" in St. Louis.

The 1990 Rite of Marriage included provisions for permanent deacons to preside at weddings, as well as lay people in special cases, with prior approval of the episcopal conference and the bishop.

Discussing the obligations and meaning of sacramental marriage, Father Krisman referred to the 1969 version of the Rite of Marriage, which stated that the sacrament of matrimony "presupposes and demands faith."

He said the implications of that statement are vast because "the pre-eminent theological, pastoral and canonical conundrum associated with Christian marriage is: How can we state that the marriage of two Christians who have no faith is still a sacrament?"

The rite that existed before the 1969 revision was short and simple, Father Krisman said. When changing it, he explained, the bishops decreed the rite was "to be revised and enriched to clearly symbolize the grace of the sacrament and to impart the knowledge of the obligations of the spouses."

Among the changes were amending the prayer for the bride to remind both spouses of their equal obligation to be faithful and that the sacrament of marriage should take place either within the Mass or the Liturgy of the Word.

Some resolutions approved by the delegates to the Oct. seminar, sponsored by the U.S. bishops' Committee on the Liturgy and the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, dealt with marriage.

It asked the federation's board to request that the U.S. bishops' Committee on the Liturgy prepare an adaptation of the Order of Celebrating Marriage to include rites for engagements, wedding anniversaries, family reconciliations and renewals of commitment.

Another request made was for more pastoral notes to "clearly articulate" the roles of the bride and groom, the presiding ministers, the assembly and other ministers in the new order.

The delegates also took up the issue of liturgical texts awaiting approval.

In one resolution, they said a delay of the Holy See's confirmation of the New American Bible Lectionary using inclusive language "is a matter of sig-

nificant and immediate concern." In 1990 the U.S. bishops approved guidelines on inclusive language for the Lectionary, the book of readings used for the Liturgy of the Word at Mass.

The delegates also urged the bishops to approve at their fall general meeting the first three segments of a whole new English translation from Latin of the Sacramentary, the book containing all the prayers of the Mass. The segments are an action item on the bishops' November agenda.

Last year, the bishops deferred a vote on the first segment of the Sacramentary and asked for more study, citing orthodox concerns.

The need for fuller study and discussion emerged from several hours of public debate by the bishops that showed signif-

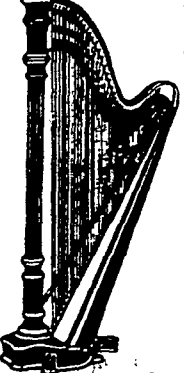
icant differences among them about how Latin liturgy texts should be translated for use in English. The bishops' Committee on Doctrine and Pastoral Practices later determined there were no doctrinal problems with the text.

The bishops then conducted a "study day" on liturgical text preparation in June; it was an extra day tacked to their summer-retreat style meeting held in San Diego.

The resolution from the delegates in St. Louis said that the study day has "subsequently been used by some to delay the process of approval of the segments of the Sacramentary."

Part of a massive project under way for several years now, the revised Sacramentary will not be completed until the bishops deal with four additional segments in coming years.

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