

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Celebration of Marriage – Restriction on Officiating in Civil Capacity

RESTRICTION OF CATHOLIC CLERGY FROM OFFICIATING AT MARRIAGES IN ONLY THEIR CIVIL CAPACITY

Clergy may not celebrate marriages in only their civil capacity.

The Diocese of Dallas does not give permission for any clergy, deacon or priest, to celebrate a marriage only in his civil capacity. Any marriage celebrated in the Diocese of Dallas, or involving clergy of the Diocese of Dallas, **MUST** be under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

The conduct of a ceremony outside this diocesan parameter is unauthorized. Clergy who perform marriage ceremonies in their civil capacity only are in violation of particular Church law and may be subject to ecclesiastical sanction.

Thus, particular law for the Diocese of Dallas does not permit any Catholic priest or deacon to celebrate any marriage in only his 'civil capacity'. That being said, if a Catholic priest or deacon is approached to receive the marriage vows by a couple who has civilly divorced but never received a declaration of invalidity and now wishes to marry civilly, special permission might be given by the Bishop or his delegate. In such circumstances the priest is to contact the Tribunal for direction.