

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Marriages With Those of Other Faith Expressions

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As of November 17, 2011

While many of the following points concerning marriages of baptized Catholics with those of other faith expressions already have been communicated in one way or the other, a quick summary with a little further in-depth explanation might be helpful.

Catholic/Baptized Christian: Marriages involving a Catholic with another baptized Christian are considered valid and sacramental, as long as they are under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

- For liceity, permission for mixed religion is required. If there is any doubt about the validity of the non-Catholic person's baptism, an *ad cautelam* dispensation from the impediment of disparity of worship also is granted.
- The usual promises regarding the practice of the faith and intention to share that with children are to be obtained from the Catholic party.
- All such papers must be sent to the Tribunal and the permission and the *ad cautelam* dispensation granted by the Tribunal.
- The wedding is celebrated without Mass (c.1119), using the appropriate rite in the ritual book. Under certain circumstances the wedding may be celebrated with Mass. Such permission must be obtained from the pastor of the parish where the wedding will occur.
- The wedding may be celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form, normally in the church of the non-Catholic party officiated by his/her minister. A location other than a church (hotel, garden, etc.) is not permitted as is generally true in other Texas dioceses.
- Once the wedding is celebrated with the necessary permissions/dispensations, it is presumed to be a valid, sacramental bond.

Catholic/Unbaptized person: Marriages involving a Catholic with someone who is not baptized are considered valid and good and natural (not sacramental), as long as they are under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

- For validity, a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of worship is required.
- The usual promises regarding the practice of the faith and intention to share that with children are to be obtained from the Catholic party.
- All such papers must be sent to the tribunal and the dispensation granted by the Tribunal.
- The wedding is celebrated without Mass (c.1119), using the appropriate rite in the ritual book.
- The wedding may be celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form, normally in the church of the non-Catholic party officiated by his/her minister. If the unbaptized person is observant in another faith and a non-church setting is more suitable for pastoral reasons, the location requires the approval of the Tribunal as delegated by the Bishop.
- Once the wedding is celebrated with the necessary dispensations, it is presumed to be a valid, but not sacramental, bond. For the sacrament of marriage to occur, both parties must be baptized Christians. If the non-baptized becomes baptized in the future, the marriage becomes sacramental with no further ceremony or action required.

For any marriage occurring in the Diocese of Dallas or involving subjects of the Diocese of Dallas appropriate diocesan approved marriage preparation is required. Likewise, all prenuptial paperwork is to be completed and submitted to the Tribunal for all required permissions/dispensations.

If there are any questions, please call me (214-379-2840) as I will be glad to talk with you any time to be as supportive as possible to you and your people.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Gillett
Assessor