

# **404 Style Of Marriage Celebrations**

## **404 STYLE OF MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS**

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### **404.1 Respecting the Rite of Christian Marriage:**

The Catholic experience of celebrating marriage vows clearly conveys the Church's beliefs about the Sacrament of Marriage. The Rite of Christian Marriage needs to be respected in its structure and content.

### **404.2 Considerations in Planning Celebration of Christian Marriage:**

The pastoral circumstances of the couple, including their religious and family background and practice, their language and culture, the available resources of the parish, the liturgical norms, and canon law are to be considered in the course of planning the celebration of Christian marriage. The Rite of Christian Marriage offers a number of legitimate options to meet these various needs.

### **404.3 Appreciating Sacred Character of Marriage:**

Clergy and laity involved in the marriage preparation of engaged couples should help couples appreciate the liturgical nature and the liturgical norms relevant to the Rite of Christian Marriage. Parish ministers should encourage engaged couples to avoid all forms of extravagance that would detract from the sacred character of marriage as a sacrament of the church.

### **404.4 Celebrating Marriage at Mass:**

The Rite of Christian Marriage for two Catholics may take place at Mass. However, this presumes that the couples regularly participate in the Sunday Eucharist and are not strangers to their own faith tradition. In some cases, pastoral ministers may need to respectfully encourage the celebration of marriage outside of Mass.

### **404.5 Communicating Policies for Style of Marriage Celebrations:**

Parish policies governing the style of marriage celebrations in the parish should be clearly communicated and easily accessible for engaged couples. These parish policies should appear at regular intervals in the parish bulletin.

### **404.6 Restrictions on Priest Officiating:**

In the Rite of Christian Marriage, the presiding minister serves as the Church's official witness. A priest or deacon is never permitted to officiate at a wedding in the role of merely a civil official; nor may he officiate at a wedding in which neither of the parties is Catholic, except in the case of catechumens. (Also see Policy §404.8.1 Christian Marriages Involving

Catechumens, herein).

#### **404.7 Assembly Participation:**

As is the norm in all liturgical celebrations, the assembly shall be encouraged to participate in the wedding liturgy by making the proper recited and sung responses.

#### **404.8 Place of Wedding:**

Weddings ordinarily shall take place in a parish church. The Archbishop of Baltimore may permit a wedding between two Catholics or between a Catholic and a non-Catholic or a Catholic and a non-baptized person to be celebrated in another church, oratory or suitable place (canon 1118). While always encouraging the faithful to celebrate their wedding in a place of worship, another venue may be deemed a suitable place by the Archbishop or his delegate.

##### **404.8.1 Parish Churches:**

All Catholics who are baptized and free to marry in the Catholic Church may celebrate their marriages in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. Permission to be married in another parish is to be obtained from either the pastor of the bride or of the groom. It is preferred that weddings occur in the parish church of one of the Catholic parties rather than in any school, university, hospital or other Catholic chapel.

##### **404.8.2 Weddings at a Catholic High School, Catholic University or College Chapel or Other Catholic Location**

###### **404.8.2.1 Who May Marry at Approved Catholic High Schools, Universities, Colleges or other Catholic Locations:**

As a general rule only the alumni, current employees, or others closely connected to the institution are eligible to be married in the chapel at a Catholic High School, University, College or other Catholic location.

1. If these persons are baptized Catholics, they must be in good standing with the Church and free to marry in the Catholic Church to be eligible to be married at the chapel at approved Catholic venue.
2. In other words, every wedding involving a Catholic (practicing or not) must be able to be recognized by the Roman Catholic Church which means it must be able to be witnessed by a priest or deacon.

###### **404.8.2.2 Who May Officiate at Approved Catholic High Schools, Universities, Colleges or Other Catholic Locations:**

Baptized Catholics may be married only by a priest or deacon in good standing and properly recognized by the Church. **No former Catholic priests or deacons** may act as officiants for any wedding on the property, whether in the chapel or not.

### 404.8.2.3 Weddings Between Non-Catholics at Catholic Chapels:

Weddings between two non-Catholics may occur in the chapel with proper liturgical preparation as long as they are alumni, current employees or other closely connected to the institution and the sacramental character of the chapel is maintained during the ceremony.

#### **Procedure:**

How Catholic High Schools, Universities, Colleges or Other Approved Catholic Locations May Host Weddings

### 404.8.2.4 Institutions Who May Apply:

Any currently operating Catholic High School, University, College or other Catholic location within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Baltimore may apply to the Chancery office to allow approved Catholic weddings to take place at its location.

### 404.8.2.5 Application Process:

A [proper application](#) for this permission must be filed with the Chancellor and include all items listed in 404.8.2.6 below.

### 404.8.2.6 Marriage Policy Agreement:

A signed Marriage Policy agreement with the local parish in which the Catholic Institution is located indicating the manner in which the parish and Institution will be working together with couples seeking to be married at the Institution location (for examples, please contact the Chancery).

1. **Freedom to Marry and Preparation:** This agreement must establish who will be responsible for determining the freedom to marry of the engaged couple as well as the proper preparation and liturgical norms that will be observed at the proposed Chapel location. (See [Archdiocese of Baltimore Marriage Policy, 401 et. seq.](#) for more information)
2. **Signatures:** The agreement must be signed by the Institution President or their equivalent and the current pastor.
3. **New Pastor - New Agreement:** A new application must be made when a new pastor is appointed to the local parish in which the chapel is located to assure harmonious relations in this area.
4. **Catholic Institution Contact Person:** The name of the person responsible at the Institution's location for scheduling Catholic weddings;
5. **Instructional Session:** A promise by the Institution that the person responsible for scheduling Catholic weddings will attend the annual instruction session regarding the wedding process held by the Metropolitan Tribunal;
6. **Policy Promise:** That the Institution would comply with the policy regarding Catholic weddings at its chapel in regard to the qualifying couple, suitable clergy and the preparation and execution of all pre-marriage papers including the granting of dispensations and permissions

(see policy below).

7. **Reporting Requirement:** The Institution will send a report to the Chancellor, Judicial Vicar and the pastor of the Parish on or about January 1 of each year that will detail for the previous calendar year:
  1. The total number of weddings held at the site;
  2. The total number of Catholic weddings held at the site;
  3. The number of weddings involving Catholics resident in the Archdiocese of Baltimore married at the site;
  4. A complete list of all Catholic priests or deacons who witnessed weddings at the site and their diocese or religious community of incardination; and
  5. Total amount of income acquired from weddings held at the site.

8. **The Approved Institution's Responsibilities for a Catholic Wedding at an Approved Chapel:**

1. **Freedom to Marry:** The Chapel location will be responsible for making sure any baptized Catholic (practicing or not) is free to marry in the Catholic Church and is marrying according to the requirements of church law as determined in the agreement with the local parish as referred to above.
2. **Parish Notification:** The Chapel will immediately notify the local Parish that there has been a request for a wedding at the Chapel location and will work with the parish in which the couple reside using the approved procedure developed by the Chapel and parish (see above section) in order to allow for good relations between the Chapel and the proper preparation of the couple for the Sacrament of Marriage.
3. **Clergy Suitability:** The Chapel will be responsible for making sure that all Catholic clergy (priests and deacons) from any diocese or religious community have been granted faculties from the Archdiocese of Baltimore (see 5 below). For more information about clerical faculties in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, see <https://www.archbalt.org/clergy-personnel-division/event-faculties/>
4. **Dispensations and Permissions:** All dispensations and permissions must also be obtained from the Metropolitan Tribunal

including the permission for a wedding outside the parish church.

5. **Access to Files:** The Chapel will allow access to its marriage files by the Judicial Vicar, the Pastor or his delegate should any questions arise regarding these matters.

#### **404.8.2.7 Granting of Permission:**

After receiving all information required from the applying entity, the Chancellor will review this information and notify the Catholic Institution of the decision within 30 days of receiving the application. Permission is granted initially for **three years** and can be renewed if a new application is presented. *If a new pastor is appointed during this time, a new agreement with the Catholic location is required for weddings to continue at that site.*

#### **404.8.2.8 Withdrawal of Permission:**

If a specifically approved Institution does not comply with these policies, their ability to continue to host Catholic weddings will be withdrawn by the Chancery Office at its own initiative.

#### **404.8.2.9 Effects of Catholic Chapel Recognition by the Chancery:**

Once approved as a Catholic marriage site by the Chancery Office, the name of the location will be listed on the Archdiocesan policy website. The Judicial Vicar will refer to this list of approved sites in order to grant permission for weddings at these locations. **If the location is NOT on the approved list, proper application must be made to the Chancery office under section 404.8.3 below.**

#### **404.8.3 Weddings Outside the Parish Church Including Indoor or Outdoor Wedding Venues (not at an approved Catholic chapel location)**

**404.8.3.1 These norms apply to the Catholic subjects of the Archbishop of Baltimore who reside (have a domicile or quasi-domicile) within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Baltimore;**

#### **404.8.3.2 Who May Apply for a Wedding Outside the Parish Church:**

Requests for weddings to be held at outside a parish church are to be made by the preparing priest or deacon to the Archbishop of Baltimore through the Chancellor's office **at least six months** in advance.

#### **404.8.3.3 Type of Ceremony Permitted:**

In a ceremony outside the parish or approved Catholic chapel location, a Liturgy of the Word ceremony with Exchange of Consent and blessings is permitted. All liturgical norms for weddings continue to apply ([see Archdiocese of Baltimore policy on the Sacrament of Marriage, 400 et. seq.](#)).

#### 404.8.3.4 Venues:

Wedding venues outside the parish church should be reasonable and in keeping with a religious celebration. The place of the ceremony should establish a prayerful, sacred feeling for the couple and their guests. ***The couple should not irrevocably secure the venue until they have received permission from the Chancery office for the wedding to take place at the proposed venue.***

#### 404.8.3.5 Venues Outside the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Baltimore:

Requests for venues outside those boundaries will require accommodation by the bishop of other dioceses and cannot be guaranteed. The Chancery Office will work with other dioceses to try to secure the requisite permissions.

**Examples of Unsuitable Locations:** Some examples of places not suitable for the celebration of a wedding would be (this list is not exhaustive) on a boat, any place where alcohol is served as a matter of course such as casinos, bars, night clubs or the like. Locations that are deemed unsuitable by the Archbishop will not be permitted.

#### 404.8.3.6 Outdoor Venues:

An outdoor venue must meet the same criteria as is listed above **AND** it **MUST** have an approved indoor venue available in case of inclement weather. Other criteria include:

1. **Same County Requirement:** Both the outdoor and indoor venues must be in the same county to avoid issues related to the issuance of a marriage license for the ceremony (in Maryland the couple must obtain the marriage license in the county or City of Baltimore location in which they are to be married);
2. **Respect for the Sacrament:** All requests must be made in good faith, which would illustrate the desire to maintain a respect and reverence toward the Sacrament of Marriage.
3. **Proper Preparation Required:** The requesting couple must complete the required pre-nuptial preparation for all persons seeking the Sacrament of Marriage within the Archdiocese of Baltimore ([see Archdiocese of Baltimore Marriage Policies, 401 et. seq.](#))
4. **Proper Liturgical Music Required:** The norms regarding Sacred Music are to be observed for the wedding ceremony and properly trained Church music ministers are to be employed at the approved wedding location.
5. **Local Faculties Required:** The preparing priest or deacon must have faculties within the Archdiocese of Baltimore. All priests who reside outside the Archdiocese of Baltimore and wish to witness a wedding within its boundaries must at least acquire Event Faculties well prior to the wedding itself. For more information regarding this process visit this link:  
<https://www.archbalt.org/clergy-personnel-division/clergy-religious/>

#### 404.8.3.7 Procedure for Chancery Approval of Venue:

##### **Submission of Petition:**

A petition to permit a wedding outside the parish church must be sent to by the *preparing cleric* to the attention of the Chancellor via regular mail, email or fax and must be received **at least 6 months in advance**. The [application form](#) is to be utilized for this purpose.

1. **Response to Petition:** Once the petition is reviewed and within 30 days of receiving the complete information, the Chancellor will issue a letter addressing the request.
2. **Granting the Request:** If the request is granted the letter will indicate the proper parish location for delegation and the retention of the pre-nuptial file.
  1. This letter will include the permission required under canon 1118, the name of the parish where the wedding will take place and instructions regarding the proper place for the prenuptial file.
  2. A copy of this letter is to be sent to the requesting priest or deacon, the couple, the Judicial Vicar and the pastor of the parish in which the event is to take place.
3. **Declining the Request:** If the request is declined, the reasons for the refusal will be included in the letter. The decision of the Archbishop of Baltimore is final.

#### **404.8.3.8 Delegation from Pastor Required:**

Any priest or deacon witnessing a wedding outside the parish church must contact the local pastor as identified in the Chancery letter granting the request to obtain local delegation and provide the pastor with the complete pre-nuptial file for review at least 60 days prior to the date of the wedding so he can give informed delegation.

#### **404.8.3.9 Additional Dispensations/Permissions if the Request Is Granted:**

If the request is granted, any additional requests for dispensations or permissions are to be submitted to the Judicial Vicar for proper handling.

#### **404.8.3.10 Chancery Record Keeping:**

The Chancery Office will retain a record of the petitions submitted for weddings outside a parish church that shall include the names of the parties, their baptismal status, their parishes of domicile, the name of the requesting priest, the place of the proposed wedding, the parish where the proposed wedding is to take place, the date of the request, the date of the letter addressing the request, whether the request was granted or not. This information is to be provided to the Office of the Tribunal so it can be preserved with the other records regarding dispensations or permissions concerning marriages.

#### **404.8.4 Dispensations from Canonical Form for Marriages at other locations:**

Dispensation may be granted for:

1. A wedding between a Catholic and baptized Christian where the ceremony will be witnessed by the baptized Christian's minister in a recognized house of worship for that denomination; or
2. For a Catholic - Jewish wedding where the Jewish official will witness the ceremony at a house of worship or other appropriate indoor venue; or
3. For a Catholic - Non-baptized wedding (Mormon, etc.) where the religious official will

witness the ceremony at a house of worship or other appropriate indoor venue.

#### **404.9 Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside of Mass:**

In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, it is expected that the Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass be used. If circumstances justify it and the non-Catholic party agrees to have a Mass, the rite for celebrating marriage within Mass may be used, except that, according to the general law, communion is not given to the non-Catholics.

##### **404.9.1 Pastoral Considerations:**

Celebrating a Christian marriage at Mass may make the celebration awkward for both parties by highlighting their differences in faith traditions. This awkwardness is further accentuated in cases where non-Catholic clergy are invited to participate in a marriage celebrated at Mass.

##### **404.9.2 Distribution of Communion:**

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the distribution of Holy Communion shall not be included in marriage ceremonies celebrated outside of Mass. The only exception to this policy is when a deacon witnesses a marriage ceremony in order to meet the special language or cultural needs of a couple. In such an instance, a communion service, while not encouraged, is permitted.

##### **404.9.3 Communion Service:**

While the Rite of Christian Marriage allows a communion service to be celebrated after the exchange of vows, a sufficient number of priests available to celebrate a wedding Mass in the Archdiocese of Baltimore makes the use of this option of the Rite unnecessary in the Archdiocese.

#### **404.10 Catholic/Eastern Non-Catholic Weddings:**

When a marriage is celebrated between a Catholic and someone of non-Catholic Eastern tradition, only one religious ceremony is to take place. If the marriage is celebrated in the Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic ritual is used and, for the sake of integrity, the rituals of the two traditions should not be integrated into one ceremony.

##### **404.10.1 Questions regarding Marriages Involving Orthodox Christians:**

Questions regarding marriages involving a Catholic and an Orthodox Christian should be directed to the Tribunal or Chancery. The canonical form obligation in such cases is only for lawfulness (liceity); for validity, the presence of a sacred minister from the Orthodox church is required along with the observance of other requirements of Orthodox law (proper exchange of the vows, nuptial blessing, etc.).

##### **404.10.2 Status of Christian marriages entered by an Eastern non-Catholic and another non-Catholic:**

In those cases where an Eastern non-Catholic and another non-Catholic enter marriage



before someone other than an Eastern non-Catholic priest are considered invalid by the Catholic Church, and a declaration of nullity for such marriages can be obtained from the Tribunal in a procedure similar to Catholic Defect of Form cases.

#### **404.10.3 Status of Marriages between Latin Rite Catholics and Eastern non-Catholic Christians:**

Marriage between Latin Rite Catholics and Eastern Non-Catholics entered without a dispensation from canonical form on or after March 24, 1967, before an Eastern non-Catholic priest are considered valid; such marriages between Eastern Catholics and Eastern non-Catholic Christians entered on or after January 21, 1965 (April 7, 1965 for Ukrainian Catholics) are also considered valid.

#### **404.11 Marriage Ceremonies Involving Non-Christians and/or Catechumens:**

Marriages involving a non-Christian (after reception of a dispensation from disparity of worship), shall be celebrated at a Liturgy of the Word and not at the Eucharistic liturgy. (See *The Rite of Marriage*, #8). While recognizing that catechumens are already joined to the household of the church, marriages involving catechumens shall likewise be celebrated at a Liturgy of the Word. Chapter III of the Rite of Marriage is to be followed with allowance for the nuptial blessing in Chapter I, #33 to be used (omitting all references to Eucharistic sharing.) (See National Statutes for the Catechuminate, #10, The Sacraments of Initiation, herein)

#### **404.12 Marriage between Catholics and Unbaptized Persons**

A Catholic priest or deacon with the faculty to witness marriages may witness the marriage of a Catholic and an unbaptized person with the usual dispensation from disparity of cult. The preferred choice would be to celebrate the marriage in the Catholic Church or a chapel or other suitable place on parish property. The Catholic marriage ritual is preferred, modified to include sensitivity to the party of the other religious tradition. Customs of the other party's tradition may be incorporated into the ceremony, unless they are contrary to Catholic teaching.

##### **404.12.1 Exchange of Vows:**

The clergy person of the other religious tradition can be invited to participate in the ceremony, but the Catholic priest or deacon officially witnesses the exchange of vows. (See Policy §404.3., Place of Wedding, herein)

##### **404.12.2 Pastoral Sensitivity:**

In all of the above situations, Catholic priests and deacons should be aware of the sensitive nature of ministering to a Catholic who is engaged to someone unbaptized. Catholic-unbaptized engaged couple. Pastoral care prior to and following the wedding should offer the couple support and assistance. Priests and deacons should not hesitate to get involved in the marriage preparation and celebration of marriage for these couples. (See Policy §404.3., Place of Wedding, herein)

### **404.12.3 Review of Religious Significance of Other Religious Rites:**

The traditional wedding ceremonies in some other religions include rites which in effect would constitute joining another religion (*communicatio in sacris*). For this reason a pastoral minister should inquire carefully into the religious significance of traditional wedding customs before permitting them to be included in a Catholic ceremony. For example, there is no traditional Islamic marriage rite other than the witnessing of the contract and the public transfer of the bride to the house of the groom. Given that this traditional Islamic ritual can include elements foreign to Christian marriage, very careful planning and agreement must precede any dispensation to allow this rite. The traditional form in an Islamic marriage usually requires the partner to make the profession of faith which converts a person to Islam as a prior condition. Since this would constitute apostasy by formal act, it is impossible for the Catholic to participate in such a ritual. It is conceivable though that, with careful consultation, a modified traditional Islamic celebration could be planned which would be acceptable and a dispensation could be granted for this form.

### **404.13 Respecting Liturgical Roles of Participants:**

The wedding couple shall be helped to appreciate their special role in the marriage rite in which they in fact are the ministers, and as such, they confer the sacrament on one another through the exchange of vows. Respecting the liturgical principle that only one role should be exercised at the liturgy by each individual, other members of the family and parish community shall be invited to serve in the marriage liturgy as lectors, cantors, musicians, or ushers

#### **Procedure:**

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can be invited to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion, if needed.

### **404.14 Role of the Couple to be Married:**

While the couple are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage, it is not appropriate for them to serve in any other liturgical role.

#### **404.14.1 Administration of Communion:**

It is not appropriate for the wedding couple to administer Holy Communion to each other or to the assembly.

#### **404.14.2 Eucharistic Prayer:**

It is also inappropriate for the wedding couple to stand on either side of the presider during the Eucharistic prayer as if they were concelebrants.

### **404.15 Admission of Non-Catholic Persons to Holy Communion:**

Admission to Holy Communion to members of non-Catholic churches at Catholic weddings is not possible under present circumstances. Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of

those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law.

#### **404.15.1 Norms:**

Specific norms governing admission are clearly articulated in the policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops which states: "We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us 'that they may all be one' (John 17:21)."

#### **404.15.2 Requirements under Canon 844:**

Catholic ministers may licitly administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and anointing of the sick to members of the oriental churches which do not have full Communion with the Catholic Church, if they ask on their own for the sacraments and are properly disposed. This holds also for members of other churches, which in the judgment of the Apostolic See are in the same condition as the oriental churches as far as these sacraments are concerned" (CIC 844 § 3). Christians in these churches should, of course, respect their own church's guidelines regarding when it would be permissible for them to receive Communion in a Catholic church.

#### **404.15.3 Protestants:**

The circumstances in which Protestants are permitted to receive Communion are more limited, though it is still possible for them to do so under certain specifically defined circumstances.

#### **404.15.4 Danger of Death:**

Canon law explains the parameters: "If the danger of death is present or other grave necessity, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or the conference of bishops, Catholic ministers may licitly administer these sacraments to other Christians who do not have full Communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and on their own ask for it, provided they manifest Catholic faith in these sacraments and are properly disposed". (CIC 844 § 4)

#### **404.16 Integration of Ethnic and Folk Customs:**

Ethnic and folk customs associated with the celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church from other countries are to be respected and may be incorporated into the liturgy. The manner in which these or any other customs are incorporated into the liturgy must always respect the integrity of the liturgy and the universal principles articulated in *The Rite of Christian Marriage* and should not be contrary to Catholic teachings.

#### **Procedure:**

When questions arise regarding the appropriateness of a proposed cultural adaptation of the rite of Christian marriage, parishes are to consult with the Office of Worship and Sacramental Formation (or with the Chancellor).

#### **404.17 Selection of Music:**

Choice of music at weddings must be in accord with all the norms governing music in the liturgy, especially those found in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. (#216-222).

##### **404.17.1 Couple to Choose with Assistance:**

The pastor and/or pastoral musician/liturgist shall assist the couple in selecting appropriate music for the wedding ceremony. Furthermore, the musician shall make an effort to provide a wide range of music selections to the couple, particularly in the choice of music to be sung by the entire assembly present for the liturgy. (*Sing to the Lord*, # 218)

##### **404.17.2 Basis for Judgements:**

In consultation with the pastoral musician/liturgist, the choice and placement of wedding music should follow the three judgments proposed in *Sing to the Lord* (#126). "Judgments must be made together, and no individual judgment can be applied in isolation from the other two." The judgments include: liturgical, pastoral and musical. (See *Sing to the Lord*, #126-136)

##### **404.17.3 Secular Music:**

"Secular music, even though it may emphasize the love of the spouses for one another, is not appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy. Songs that are chosen for the Liturgy should be appropriate for the celebration and express the faith of the Church." (*Sing to the Lord*, #220)

##### **404.17.4 Recorded Music:**

Recorded music "should not, as a general norm, be used within the Liturgy." (*Sing to the Lord*, #93) The use of any recorded music must be approved by the pastor and/or pastoral musician.

#### **404.18 Weddings Occurring in Another Diocese:**

In those situations where a Catholic lives in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and seeks to marry another (Catholic or non-Catholic) in a different diocese (whether in the US or abroad), the parish in the Archdiocese of Baltimore is obligated to assist the Catholic party in preparing for marriage.

##### **404.18.1 Responsibility of Clerics:**

It should be remembered that most couples have little understanding or experience in preparing for a Catholic marriage, therefore, clerics and pastoral leaders must provide

leadership and assistance to them at this crucial time. Priests or deacons in the Archdiocese of Baltimore must assist in any possible way all those who reside in the territory of their parish to assure the wedding is a valid marriage regardless of where the wedding is occurring. The cleric or pastoral leader at the place of domicile must cooperate with the cleric who will witness the union to coordinate the necessary pastoral preparation, document preparation and other items so the couple's wedding may occur without difficulty.

#### 404.18.2 Prenuptial Documents:

If the prenuptial documents are prepared in the Archdiocese of Baltimore for a Catholic residing here, the full prenuptial file is submitted to the Archdiocesan Tribunal so proper permissions and/or dispensations may be granted. These submissions should be made **at least 60 days** before the wedding.

Bride / Groom	Where Catholic Resides	Who Prepares Papers	Who Grants Disp / Permissions
Both Catholic	Both in Archdiocese of Baltimore		Archdiocese of Baltimore only (see table in §404.14.1.)
Catholic/Non Catholic	Archdiocese of Baltimore	Either Archdiocese of	Archdiocese of Baltimore only
Catholic/Non Catholic	Outside Archdiocese of Baltimore	Baltimore priest or outside priest	Diocese where Catholic resides
Both Catholic	1 in Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1 outside Archdiocese of Baltimore		Either Archdiocese of Baltimore or diocese where other Catholic resides
Both Catholic	Neither in Archdiocese of Baltimore		Diocese where either Catholic resides

#### 404.18.3

**Review of Prenuptial File:** The prenuptial file, with the requisite *nihil obstat or visum* is then forwarded to the Chancery of the diocese where the wedding will take place with instructions to forward the file to the local parish where the wedding is scheduled. The preparing cleric or parish minister should include these addresses when submitting the papers to the Tribunal.

#### 404.18.4

**Couple to Receive a Copy of File:** The couple will receive a copy of the prenuptial file from the Tribunal from the Archdiocese of Baltimore to carry with them to the wedding in case the original papers are delayed for any reason.

## RESOURCES

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## Preparation

1. *The Rite of Christian Marriage*, nos. 5 & 7.
2. *A Marriage in the Lord: Preparing for Marriage in the Catholic Church*. Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1999.
3. Joseph M. Champlin, *Together for Life: A Preparation for Marriage and for the Ceremony*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2007 (Several editions including one for Marriage Outside Mass).
4. Joseph M. Champlin, *Juntos para Toda la Vida: Una Preparación para el Matrimonio y la Ceremonia*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2007.
5. *For Your Marriage*. USCCB National Pastoral Marriage Initiative website for engaged and married couples and those who minister to them. [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)
6. *Por Tu Matrimonio*. USCCB Marriage Website in Spanish. <https://portumatrimonio.org/> .
7. Marriage and Family Life Office. Preparation program options and schedule. Archdiocese of Baltimore website, <http://archive.archbalt.org/family-life/marriage-family/marriage-preparation/index.cfm>
  1. Paul Covino, *Ceremony Options*. <http://foryourmarriage.org/catholic-marriage/planning-a-catholic-wedding/ceremony-options/>
  2. Bishops' Committee for Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth, National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage, *An Analysis of Diocesan Marriage Preparation Policies*. 2005 <http://www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/mpanalysis.shtml>
  3. Robert Ruhnke, C.S.S.R., *For Better and Forever: Resource for Couples Preparing for Christian Marriage* (Catholic Edition). San Antonio: Marriage Preparation Resources, 2003. Also in Spanish.
11. Austin Fleming, *Parish Weddings*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1987.
  1. *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 1995.

## Presiders

1. *The Rite of Christian Marriage*, nos. 6, 8, & 9.
2. *The Rite of Marriage, Binder & Ritual Cards* (based on *Together for Life*), Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2002.
3. *A Marriage Sourcebook*, ed. by J. Robert Baker,

- Joni Reiff Gibley, Kevin Charles Gibley.  
Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. 1994
4. *The Code of Canon Law*, Canons 905, 1108 & 1111.
  5. Michael Kwatera, *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, Second Edition. Collegetown: Liturgical Press, 2005, pp. 63-66.

### **Scheduling**

1. *The Code of Canon Law*, Canons 905 & 1118.
2. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, 1988, nos. 8 & 10.

### **Style**

1. *The Rite of Christian Marriage*, nos. 6-11.
2. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Concelebration Guidelines*, 2003.
1. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Sing to the Lord: Music for Divine Worship*, 2007.  
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