



Concerning Issues: The Pre-Nuptial File

Documents Needed in the Pre-Nuptial File

The Church has the pastoral obligation to assist couples in making prayerful and mature preparations for marriage. People have the right to expect that all of the canonical preparations will be made; therefore, ministers have a pastoral responsibility to prepare a complete pre-nuptial file which is the permanent record of the marriage. It includes:

1. Completed M-A Form with any needed permissions or dispensations and/or signed delegation if the priest or deacon is not assigned to the parish.
2. For Catholic parties: current baptismal certificate (within six months) with notations or a Certificate of Reception into the Full Communion with the Catholic Church.
3. For a baptized, non-Catholic party: a baptismal certificate. If not available, proof of baptism from the party's parents or two close relatives using M-B Form (Section 1).
4. For a non-baptized party: establish non-baptism from testimony of both the party's parents or two close relatives using M-B Form (Section 1).
5. Proof of freedom to marry using M-B Form (Section 2) for:
 - A) a non-Catholic party;
 - B) a Catholic party for whom a current baptismal certificate is unavailable or the sacramental notations on the current certificate are missing;
 - C) a Catholic party if he or she is personally unknown to the priest or deacon.
6. For a party who is under the age of 19: testimony from the party's parents or from close relatives using M-B Form (Section 3).
7. For a couple who is pregnant: testimony from both sets of parents or close relatives using M-B Form (Sections 3).
8. FOCCUS cover sheet and certificate.
9. Certificate of completion of marriage preparation program (*i.e.*, Engaged Encounter, Pre-Cana or Nova).
10. Completed portion of the civil marriage license.
11. If the priest or deacon is from outside the Diocese of Erie, a testimonial letter from his bishop or religious superior with a copy sent to the Erie Chancery.
12. Any written observations which the priest or deacon thinks are noteworthy. The results of any required counseling evaluations are NOT to be included in the file but should be shredded once the decision to proceed with the wedding is made.

Additional Documents

If one or both of the parties had a previous wedding of any kind, proof of their freedom to marry must also be included in the pre-nuptial file.

- ◆ If one or both of the parties have been widowed, include the death certificate of the former spouse.
- ◆ If the former spouse of one or both of the parties is still living, the freedom to marry is determined by the Tribunal Office. The official decree of nullity and letter from the Tribunal Office must be included in the pre-nuptial file.
- The parish priest or deacon can assist the couple by determining the type of case that is needed and providing the party with the appropriate petition.
- If a *vetitum* or *monitum* is placed on one or both of the parties as part of the decree of nullity, it must be lifted before proceeding with the marriage. The letter from the Tribunal Office lifting the *vetitum* or *monitum* must be included in the pre-nuptial file.
- *N.B.* No date may be scheduled for a wedding until the matter has been *fully resolved*.
- ◆ For a convalidation of marriage, include a copy of the original marriage license.



Sr. Jean Celebrates 70th Year as a Sister of St. Joseph

Sister Jean Baptiste DiLuzio is celebrating her 70th year as a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Sr. Jean entered the community on February 2, 1944. She served in the Diocese of Erie as a grade school and high school teacher for 7 years, at Cathedral Preparatory School in Erie for 25 years, and at Villa Maria College in Erie for 8 years. Sr. Jean has spent the last 30 years as an Auditor in the Office of the Tribunal and has recently announced that she will begin a well-deserved retirement at the end of this year. Multos Annos, Sr. Jean! ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

Often Asked Canonical Question

Must a Catholic be confirmed before getting married in the Church?

Baptized Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation should be encouraged to do so prior to marriage. However, failure to be confirmed is not a cause for denying or delaying a wedding. Canon 1065 states "Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience."