

CANON AND CIVIL LAW REVIEW

DEPARTMENT FOR CANON AND CIVIL LAW SERVICES
DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

Canonical Services 412-456-3135
Civil Legal Services 412-456-3126
Matrimonial Concerns 412-456-3076
Tribunal 412-456-3033

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A. PARISH RECORD ASSISTANT TRAINING SESSIONS

Over two hundred people attended the training sessions held last fall and spring for parish record assistants. The program was very well received since most of the attendees had already been involved with parish sacramental records and had excellent questions and observations to share.

The program will be repeated on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 at Domenec Hall (Room 210) Saint Paul Seminary from 12:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Every parish is encouraged to have trained staff to assist the clergy in recording sacramental information in the parish registers, preparing sacramental certificates and helping with the marriage preparation documents and affidavits. The cost of the program is \$5.00 per person. Please call the Department for Evangelization for registration: 412-456-3048.

For the parish clergy it is important to know what was covered and in particular some issues that surfaced.

The basic canons were reviewed regarding the keeping of sacramental records as well as diocesan policies. The point was made that the pastor or administrator is ultimately responsible to see that the sacraments are recorded properly and that certificates are issued correctly. Information was provided to help pastoral assistants, secretaries or volunteers who have been entrusted with these tasks to do them well. **Although only a priest or deacon may sign a sacramental certificate**, well trained staff persons can save the clergy a great deal of time in preparing the documents.

Beyond entering information in the sacramental registers and preparing certificates, **the Diocese of Pittsburgh has expanded its policy to include assistance from Parish Record Assistants in the difficult and time-consuming task of marriage preparation.** While it is still true that only a priest or deacon may interview the couple in terms of the canonical questions regarding their freedom to marry and only a priest or deacon may execute the affidavits with his signature and the parish seal, time can be saved by having the staff person work with the couple in gathering the required documents and basic background information before the priest sits down with them to review the documentation, address the canonical questions, and sign the affidavits.

Each priest will have his own approach to preparing couples for marriage. To take advantage of assistance from parish staff persons, the following recommendations were discussed:

The priest or deacon should meet with the couple to determine their religious and sacramental background, inquire as to any prior marriages, review the basic understanding of marriage in the Church, review the meaning of the vows, exclude the possibility of a prenuptial agreement, explain the need for prenuptial instructions, explain the diocesan and parish policies regarding weddings and the documents and affidavits required to complete their application to be married.

The priest or deacon may then choose to turn the couple over to the Parish Record Assistant to begin completing the background information on form MA. The staff person may begin to gather addresses and phone numbers, dates of birth, places of baptism, names of parents and how to go about getting baptismal certificates (authentic and recent ones in the case of Catholics) and decrees of nullity or death certificates (in cases of prior marriages). *Some specific training is needed in order to ascertain the question of "rite" (Roman or Eastern) for Catholics since the ritual church of baptism is not always determinative of the "rite" in law.* **The Parish Record Assistant may not ask questions 1 through 14 on the MA, request the signature of the bride or groom or sign in place of the priest or deacon.**

(With regard to the MB witness affidavits, the priest or deacon may elicit the help of the Parish Record Assistant in gathering the information from the family of the bride or

groom, but the priest or deacon should sign the affidavit indicating that the information was acquired according to diocesan policy.)

When all the documents have been gathered, including certificates of prenuptial instructions and MB witness affidavits when required, the priest or deacon can meet again with the couple, review all the documents, ask the canonical questions (1 through 14), and finally sign and seal the affidavits. This may afford an opportunity to review details of the wedding ceremony as well.

As previously stated pastors may choose to involve Parish Record Assistants in the documentation phase of the prenuptial process if they wish. This expanded role is in keeping with the philosophy of “Envisioning Ministry” and an effort to lend assistance to parish clergy.

B. PARISHES AND GAMBLING

Under Pennsylvania law, religious organizations such as parishes are permitted to sponsor two forms of gambling. The permissible forms of gambling are bingo and small games of chance.

Before any parish engages in either form of gambling, it is necessary to secure the appropriate license from the Office of the Treasurer of the County in which the parish is located. The frequency with which the parish wishes to conduct bingo will determine which bingo license is required. The “Bingo Law” has a number of restrictions with which the parish is required to comply. Similarly, the parish should discuss with the Office of the Treasurer the games of chance to be offered when applying for the license to operate small games of chance. It should be remembered that local municipalities could choose not to permit small games of chance within their territory.

Small games of chance are limited to punch boards, daily drawings, half and half lotteries, and weekly drawings, raffles and pull-tabs. As set forth in the Small Games of Chance Act, “no such games shall be played by or with the assistance of any mechanical or electrical devices or media other than a dispensing machine or passive selection device”. Also the chance taken by the buyer in any small game of chance may not be contingent upon the winning of any other contest.

It is important to note that the Small Games of Chance law does not authorize slot machines, video poker or any type of card games. Despite their popularity and any misconceptions that may exist, *Texas Hold ‘Em* games or tournaments or any other type of card games are not authorized or permissible under the law.

Before any parish participates in offering any form of gambling, the appropriate person should contact the Office of the Treasurer in the County in which the parish is located to determine whether the game is permissible and what license must be obtained before offering that form of gambling.

C. PRENUPTIAL FILES ARE PERMANENT RECORDS

Diocesan policy requires the affidavits and documents for weddings to be kept in a permanent file. Catholic baptismal certificates, decrees of nullity and marriage licenses need to be retained in their original form. Other certificates may be photocopied.

Given the permanent nature of these files, the diocesan forms (MA, MB, ME, etc) are printed on document paper. If you are running out of forms, please call the Judicial Center 412-456-3033 and request an additional supply. **Please do not photocopy the affidavits.** Faxed or photocopied forms are not acceptable for the permanent file.

Priests and deacons are reminded to type or print clearly the information on the prenuptial affidavits. The priest or deacon functions as a notary in asking the questions and recording the response. **The affidavits are never to be given to the bride and groom to complete.**

D. BAPTISMAL RECORDS AND CERTIFICATES

Several issues surfaced in the training sessions for Parish Record Assistants regarding parish baptismal records and the issuing of baptismal certificates that indicated the need for a review of canonical requirements and diocesan policy.

Although it is permissible for a parish to keep a computer record of baptismal information, that is an option that may be exercised **in addition to the parish baptismal register required by canon 535.** The parish sacramental registers are normative. The computer sacramental records are optional and are not considered official documents. It is important for pastors to be certain that their staff is aware that all prescribed notations must first and foremost be entered in the baptismal register: confirmation, marriage, declarations of nullity.

Pastors need to be certain that office staff is aware of fundamental principles in preparing certificates. All listed information needs to be included on new certificates **except for the fact of adoption** (see national and diocesan norms). If a prior marriage is listed as well as a notice of a declaration of nullity, both notations must be made. If there are no notations regarding Confirmation or Marriage the certificate should list “No notation”. **Only a priest or deacon may sign a baptismal certificate.** The secretary may not type the pastor’s name in lieu of a signature. The certificate must show a date of issuance and have attached the raised seal of the parish.

E. PROFESSION OF FAITH RECORDS AND CERTIFICATES

It is important to record the fact of entrance into the Catholic Church by a Solemn Profession of Faith. New members of the Church should be able to request

documentation of their membership and status as well as life long Catholics. They should be able to go back to the parish where they entered the Church and ask for a certificate from the information listed in the Baptismal Register. Should they marry or receive a declaration of nullity that information should be entered into the register where they entered the Church.

Those involved in preparing people to be received into the Church by Profession of Faith need to be aware of the importance of gathering the documentation in order to make a proper entry in the parish Baptismal register after the ceremony. A certificate of valid Christian baptism is most important. From that document the name of the person, the names of the parents, the date of birth, the date of baptism and the name and location of the church of baptism should be entered into the register. In the remarks column the notation should be made: "Profession of Faith (date)". In the Confirmation column the same date should be listed. If the person is married the notation should be made: "Married (name) (date) (place)".

Often individuals enter the Church prior to marriage. When it comes to marriage preparation they should be able to contact the parish where they entered the Church and receive an up to date certificate of Profession of Faith. Such a certificate is different from a certificate of Baptism. **Entering some of the information on one of the parish certificates of Baptism is not helpful.** A Profession of Faith certificate should list the persons name and, the names of the parents; the date and place of birth; the date and place of Christian baptism (including the name, location and denomination of the church); the date of the Profession of Faith along with the name and address of the Catholic church. The document should be signed by a priest or deacon and show a date of issuance along with the parish seal. If there are any marriage notations or nullity notices they should be noted on the back. If not, there should be a note: "No marriage notations".

D.P. Murphy Co. Inc., Conception Abbey Press and other vendors have printed Profession of Faith certificates available. It is important to note the difference between certificates that are meant as a memento of the ceremony and those that have the canonical information needed for the purpose of marriage. **A sample certificate is included with this mailing that may be adapted to the individual parish.** You may request an e-mail version of the sample certificate at: pgeinzer@diopitt.org.

F. WEDDINGS AND VALIDATIONS PROHIBITED ON SUNDAYS

The diocesan policy forbidding weddings on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation was confirmed by the Nineteenth Synod of the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 2000. This norm applies also to validations. There was some confusion recently with a text from the Department for Worship that quoted the general norms regarding weddings in the universal Church. Some interpreted that information as change of policy in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. In the same article from the Department of Worship the statement

was made that weddings (including validations) are not permitted in the Diocese of Pittsburgh on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

It is helpful to have a calendar handy while interviewing prospective candidates for marriage to be certain that their proposed wedding date is not a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation. It is also good to keep in mind the liturgical calendar that may make it difficult or impossible to have a wedding: Holy Week, Commemoration of All Souls, Solemnities, etc. The Department of Worship provides a list of difficult dates for two years in advance.

G. WEDDINGS MAY NOT BE SCHEDULED UNTIL A NULLITY DECREE IS OBTAINED

Serious problems often occur when a date is given by a parish for a wedding before a decree of nullity has been received by the priest. It is the policy of the diocese not to establish a wedding date until the nullity is documented. It is very risky to ignore this policy.

Of course, there is pressure from the couple to set a date so that they can reserve a reception site. However, if there is a prior marriage, the priest or deacon must make it clear to a couple that no wedding date can be given until that obstacle is cleared by a final decree of nullity. **This not only applies to formal nullity trials but also to what may appear to be a Lack of Form case.**

If a priest or deacon ignores this caution and sets a date for a wedding before a prior marriage is declared null the Tribunal cannot be responsible for the consequences. In a formal case, it is presumptuous to assume that the judgment of the court will be affirmative. Many things can happen to delay a decision or the issuance of the final decree. The witness testimony may contradict the assertions of the petitioner; the respondent may appeal; pastoral or psychological counseling may be required. A formal decree of nullity is not automatically issued at the end of the formal process. It is only issued to a priest in preparation for a new marriage. **Often the letter announcing the conclusion of the formal process is mistaken for the decree.** The letter clearly indicates that any priest preparing the party for a new marriage must be in contact with the tribunal for the requisite decree of nullity. Sometimes the decree cannot be issued until pastoral counseling requirements are met or the tribunal fees are satisfied.

When circumstances appear to indicate a nullity by reason of a Lack of Form, the tendency is to assume that is the case. **Sometimes that assumption turns out to be false.** In the case of a petition for a Lack of Form Nullity the search may uncover the fact of a validation; if the respondent was the only Catholic party it may be impossible to come up with proof of baptism; our investigation may find that a dispensation from canonical form had been issued. In some cases the priest could have made an error in thinking that marriage in an Orthodox church was eligible for a Lack of Form decree. To send in the application for a Lack of Form Nullity along with the prenuptial papers a few

weeks before the wedding is more than risky. A wedding date should not be set until a final decree has been obtained. That policy applies to apparent Lack of Form cases as well as formal nullity processes.

When couples come to us with multiple marriages in their histories the situation becomes more risky. A simple error on the part of the priest can be a disaster. One could falsely assume that a second marriage of a Protestant did not count since they were married once before. **A decree of nullity from an Orthodox church does not make an individual free to marry in the Catholic Church.** Priests are sometimes surprised to find that a person was married more than once or twice. The bride or groom is equally surprised that there is a problem since they assumed that we were only interested in how their most recent marriage was resolved.

Please do not open up the possibility of having to cancel a wedding because the diriment impediment of prior bond could not be removed.

H. CREMATION PERMISSIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

Cultural changes move quickly these days. Not so long ago burial of the bodies of the deceased was normative for Catholics and cremation was strictly forbidden. Once permission for cremation became a possibility (if the request did not imply denial of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead), a cultural chain reaction began. At first the permission was to be sought from the Diocesan Bishop. Soon that became impractical and pastors were given the responsibility of issuing permission for cremation.

At this point in time the average parishioner is unaware that burial is still the norm for Catholics and that cremation is an exception that needs permission from the pastor. Pastors often discover as a matter of funeral planning that cremation has already taken place or is planned. Although the liturgical norms provide for a Funeral Liturgy with the cremated remains present, this arrangement should not be a surprise for the pastor.

Along with the false assumption that cremation is normal for Catholics has come several abuses. **Permission for cremation may only be given with the understanding that the cremated remains will either be buried in a cemetery or entombed in a columbarium immediately following the funeral.** This is in keeping with the Catholic belief in the sacredness of the human body and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Permission for a Catholic funeral before or after cremation may not be given unless the family agrees to a respectful interment of the remains in accord with our tradition. Permission cannot be given if the family intends to divide the remains, to mix the remains with those of other people (or even pets), to scatter the remains, to fashion them into jewelry, or to keep them for display in the home.

Clearly we have a lot of catechesis to do to return to the basic principles: Burial is normative for Catholics, cremation is an exception that needs permission from the local

pastor; permission for a Catholic funeral before or after cremation is only given if the family agrees to bury the remains in accord with Catholic tradition.

Pastors are encouraged to inform their people of these values in bulletin articles and to address the issues with local funeral directors. **A sample bulletin article is included at the end of this mailing.** You may request an e-mail version of the article at pgeinzer@diopitt.org. Informational booklets are available from The Catholic Cemeteries Association.

I. PERSONS LIVING IN INVALID MARRIAGES ARE INELIGIBLE FOR SACRAMENTS (RCIA)

This issue surfaces each spring as we prepare for the Easter Sacraments. Unless the pastor and the parish religious education staff are alert, individuals begin the RCIA process never being aware that living in an invalid marriage prohibits them from reception of the Sacraments. It is only fair and helpful to those who show interest in becoming Catholics to inquire at the start about their marital status. Sometimes a tactful and early suggestion that their prior marriage could be a problem gives them time to work on a validation or even a nullity process. It is not fair to tell them of the restrictions shortly before Easter. It is dishonest to ignore the issue since it is a part of our church teachings.

We encourage pastors and staff to be proactive in determining which candidates need special care with regard to prior marriages and to counsel them early on as to how to go about resolving the issues.

J. CONFIRMATION SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED FOR CATHOLICS PRIOR TO MARRIAGE

The canons charge pastors with the responsibility of making an effort to see that Catholics receive the Sacrament of Confirmation prior to marriage. Of course, confirmation is not strictly required before marriage and some individuals have not come to the level of personal faith to be open to the sacrament. It is unfortunate if we give in to the minimal approach and fail to offer an opportunity those not confirmed to complete the Sacraments of Initiation before entering the Sacrament of Matrimony. If this offer is made early in the period of marriage preparation prospective spouses can often be confirmed in time. Sometimes, it is more practical to arrange for confirmation after the wedding.

More and more marriage applications come in with Catholics who were never confirmed. We may have missed the opportunity to help many young people complete initiation during the educational phase of their lives. We have a second chance when they come to us for marriage.

K. MARRIAGE RITE IN DISPARITY OF CULT WEDDINGS

It seems we have more requests for disparity of cult weddings these days. Many parents, even some Catholics, simply do not baptize their children. This becomes problematic in some ways when a practicing Catholic seeks to marry a non baptized person. The theological issue becomes a practical problem when it comes to the wedding liturgy. Unless the Catholic party understands that there is a difference between a wedding involving two Christians and a wedding with a non Christian, they will not understand the limitations that result in the wedding ceremony. For example, it is not easy to explain to a traditional Catholic bride (or her mother) why there should not be a Nuptial Mass in these circumstances.

The problem goes beyond rules, liturgical or other. It hits at the heart of who we are as Catholics. At the risk of seeming non inclusive, we need to be honest about what we are doing in the sacramental world. There is a marriage rite specifically written for weddings involving a non baptized spouse. The prayers do not use the word “sacrament”. There is no set of prayers in the Sacramentary designed for a Nuptial Mass with a disparity of cult couple. The challenge is to explain the reasons for the different approach to the ceremony. Simply quoting the rules will not do it.

L. DELEGATION FOR WEDDINGS

Canon 1108 § 1 states: Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the local ordinary, pastor, or a priest or deacon, delegated by either of them, who assist, and before two witnesses according to the rules expressed in the following canons...

Canon 1108 § 2 states: The person who assists at a marriage is understood to be only that person who is present, asks for the manifestation of the consent of the contracting parties, and receives it in the name of the Church.

Canon 1109 states: ...the local ordinary and pastor, by virtue of their office and within the confines of their territory assist validly at the marriages not only of their subjects but also of those who are not their subjects provided that one of them is of the Latin rite.

Canon 1111 § 1 states: As long as they hold office validly, the local ordinary and the pastor can delegate to priests and deacons the faculty, even a general one, of assisting at marriages within the limits of their territory.

Canon 1111 § 2 states: To be valid, the delegation of the faculty to assist at marriages must be given to specific persons expressly. If it concerns special delegation, it must be given for a specific marriage; if it concerns general delegation, it must be given in writing.

Functioning as an official witness at marriages is a quasi-jurisdictional act. Ordinarily it is based on the concept of territory. The local ordinary (diocesan bishop, vicars general, and episcopal vicars) and the pastor of a parish have, by their office, the ordinary power to witness marriages in their territory (the area within the defined boundaries of the diocese or parish). If a local ordinary or pastor should leave office by way of retirement, transfer, etc. they lose the power to witness marriages in that territory.

Parochial vicars and deacons, in their letter of appointment from the bishop, receive jurisdiction to assist at marriage within the boundaries of the parish to which they are assigned.

Pastors, parochial vicars and deacons need delegation to witness marriages outside of their assigned parish.

PRACTICAL POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND REGARDING DELEGATION

- **Delegation** is different from **permission** and is required for validity. A pastor in Butler may give **permission** to a pastor in New Castle to officiate at the wedding in New Castle of a parishioner of the Butler parish. (**Delegation** in this case does not apply since the pastor in New Castle is functioning in his own territory.) The pastor in Butler may give **permission** for a visiting priest to officiate at the wedding of a relative in the Butler parish, but the pastor must also remember to expressly **delegate** the visiting priest (orally or in writing) if the marriage is to be valid.
- Pastors and parochial vicars normally receive delegation to assist at weddings in parishes other than their own from the pastor or parochial vicar of the other parish. (Example: A pastor from a parish outside of the city of Pittsburgh plans to witness the marriage of two of his parishioners at Heinz Chapel. Delegation from the pastor or parochial vicar of Saint Paul Cathedral is necessary for validity)
- Deacons should follow the same procedure as do priests in seeking delegation to witness marriages in places other than their assigned parishes. **Deacons in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are no longer required to seek delegation from the Vicar for Canonical Services.** Deacons normally officiate at marriage outside of Mass when a priest is not present. Exceptions may be made in particular circumstances. Deacons may not assist at marriage if one of the parties is an eastern Catholic or an Orthodox.
- Priests in residence do not have ordinary jurisdiction. They must be delegated for a wedding to be valid. A pastor may choose to give a resident priest general

delegation, for example “for as long as the pastor is in office and the priest is in residence”. In the case of general delegation, it must be in writing.

- Although delegation for a specific wedding may be given orally, it must be recorded. The normal place of recording is the last section of the MA affidavit and in the marriage register.
- For a Roman Catholic priest to have jurisdiction at all, at least one of the parties to the marriage must be a Latin Catholic. If a couple applies for marriage and it appears that the Catholic party may be an Eastern Catholic, contact the Office for Canonical Services **before** setting a wedding date.
- If a priest attends, or even participates in, the wedding ceremony of a couple in a non-Catholic church wherein the non-Catholic minister officiates, the mere presence of the priest does not constitute canonical form. The wedding would be invalid unless, of course, a dispensation from the obligation of canonical form had been obtained. Canonical form would require a “duly delegated” priest to ask for and receive the consent of both parties according to the ritual of our church and in the presence of two witnesses. Delegation would come from the pastor of the territorial parish in which the non-Catholic church is located.

M. NOTICES REGARDING INDIVIDUALS PRESENTING THEMSELVES AS PRIESTS IN GOOD STANDING

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has published notices regarding priests who are not in good standing and do not possess the faculties of their diocese or religious community. Should you be contacted by them please notify the Vicar for Canonical Services immediately.

Fr. Eduardo Aguirre	Archdiocese of Guatemala City
Fr. Luis Jesus Barajas Arias	Order of the Most Holy Trinity
Fr. Francis Quintin Arthur	Cape Coast, Ghana
Deacon Deyre Azcuna	Batanes, Philippines
Fr. Odilio Antonio Largo Betancur	Diocese of Girardot, Columbia
Fr. Reynaldo Bocateja	Diocese of Dumaquete, Philippines
Fr. John Robert Butler	Diocese of Richmond
Fr. John J. Cordaro	Diocese of Scranton
Fr. Nicholas Cudemo	Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Fr. Thomas Delaney	Archdiocese of Monrovia
Fr. Elbert Fadallan	Diocese of Lubbock
Fr. Jesus Alejandro Gonzalez	Archdiocese of San Francisco
Fr. Kazimierz Grzyb	Diocese of Bialystok, Poland
Fr. Jorge Hernandez-Cordova	Archdiocese of Quito
Fr. Joseph Jeyapaul	Diocese of Cookston
Fr. Marian Kencik	Archdiocese of Lublin, Poland
Fr. (Bishop) Roderick J. McRae	American Melkite Catholic Church

Fr. Carlos Martinez-Santos	Diocese of Orange
Bishop Rogelio Miranda	Morelia, Mexico
Fr. Michael Muriithi	Archdiocese of Nyeri, Kenya
Fr. Charles Murr	Archdiocese of New York
Fr. Vijayakumar Nalla	Diocese of Austin
Fr. Julio Navas-Landaverde	Diocese of Chalatenango, (El Salvador)
Fr. Charles Nguobi Nkuo	Archdiocese of Bamenda, Cameroun
Msgr. Eduardo Aguirre Oestmann	Archdiocese of Guatemala City
Fr. Raymond J. Overstreet	Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Fr. Charles Owenja	Diocese of Arua, Uganda
Fr. James Pommier	Diocese of Bismarck
Fr. Gabriel Ramirez Gomez	Diocese of Orange
Mr. Andy Richardson	(not ordained)
Fr. Vidal Antonio Rivas Lima aka (Fr. Vidal Rivas)	Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. K. Joseph Saxe	Diocese of Brooklyn
Fr. Lawrence C. Smith	Diocese of Davenport
Fr. Alfredo C. Sobalvarro	Archdiocese of Washington
Mr. John Tokarick, Jr.	(not ordained)
Fr. Victor Udechukwu	Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
Fr. Benedict Van der Putten	Diocese of Scranton
Fr. Vincent J. Young aka (Fr. Longinus)	Diocese of Scranton

Reinstated: Questions resolved about the good standing of priests-

Fr. Peter McGrath	Diocese of Portland (Passionist)
Fr. Edwin Okey Nwabugwu	Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas

Non-documented Charitable or Relief Organizations:

- Buguruka Orphan & Community Economic Development, Inc. (“BOCED”)
- Charitable Appeal falsely using the name of Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala of the Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda
- Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Diocese of Jasikan, Ghana
- Sr. Agnes Narcho – Community of the Little Sisters of St. Francis of Uganda
- Catholic Family News-Buffalo (Msgr. J. Esposito, Bishop John Cotter)
- St. Joseph Orphanage & Sacred Heart Church, Arakkonam, India Fr. Francis Suresh
- Fraternidad Misionera de Maria (Msgr. Eduardo Aguirre Oestmann)
- Requests for Mass Intentions from Msgr. Daniel M. Vilorio, Capiz, Philippines

Suppressed Order:

Society of St. John, Shohola, PA	Diocese of Scranton
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CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSION OF FAITH

This is to Certify

That _____, child of
_____ and _____

Born in _____

on the _____ day of _____, _____

Baptized in the _____ Church, of
_____ (City), _____ (State)

on the _____ day of _____, _____

Made a Solemn Profession of Faith in the
Roman Catholic Church

on the _____ day of _____, _____ at

NAME OF PARISH
ADDRESS OF PARISH
CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE OF PARISH

In the presence of Reverend

and _____

And was admitted to the Sacraments and Communion
of the Roman Catholic Church

Dated: _____

(Seal)

Signed: _____

Pertinent notations (confirmation, marriage, etc) can be found on the reverse side of this document

SAMPLE BULLETIN ARTICLE: CATHOLICS AND CREMATION

CATHOLIC FUNERAL RITES AND CREMATION

Cultural changes move quickly these days. Not so long ago burial of the bodies of the deceased was normative for Catholics and cremation was strictly forbidden. Once permission for cremation became a possibility (as long as the request did not imply a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead) a cultural chain reaction began. At first, permission for cremation was to be sought from the Diocesan Bishop. Soon that became impractical and so pastors were given the responsibility of issuing permission for cremation for Catholics.

At this point in time cremation is quite common. Parishioners are reminded that burial of the bodies of the deceased is still the norm for Catholics. Cremation is an exception that requires permission from the parish priest. The cremated remains are to be given the same respect as the bodies of the deceased in keeping with our Christian faith.

In planning a Catholic funeral the parish priest should be consulted if cremation is being considered. Cremation may be permitted in conjunction with a Catholic funeral in either of two formats:

A. Cremation may be permitted after the Vigil Service for the Deceased and the Funeral Liturgy have taken place. Then, following cremation, the remains are to be buried in a cemetery or entombed in a columbarium (a vault in a mausoleum with niches for urns containing cremated remains). This format is much preferred and more in keeping with Catholic tradition.

B. Cremation may be permitted before the Rite of Catholic Funeral takes place: Vigil Service for the Deceased, Funeral Mass with the cremated remains present, immediately followed by interment in a cemetery or entombment in a columbarium.

It is important to receive permission from the parish priest in making plans for either format.

Permission for cremation may only be given with the understanding that the cremated remains will either be buried in a cemetery or entombed in a columbarium immediately following the funeral. This is in keeping with the Catholic belief in the sacredness of the human body and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. **Permission for a Catholic funeral before or after cremation may not be given unless the family agrees to a respectful interment of the remains in accord with our tradition.** Permission cannot be given if the family intends to divide the remains, to mix the remains with those of other people (or even pets), to scatter the remains, to fashion them into jewelry, or to keep them for display in the home.