



**DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG** Secretariat for Catholic Life and Evangelization

FAMILY MINISTRIES • MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT AND EVANGELIZATION • RESPECT LIFE  
SPECIAL MINISTRIES • WORSHIP • YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Priests  
All Deacons

**FROM:** Reverend Neil S. Sullivan, Director  
Office of Worship

**DATE:** January 13, 2009

**RE:** Revised *Liturgical Norms for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage*

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Attached please find the revised *Liturgical Norms for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage* that become effective in the Diocese of Harrisburg on March 1, 2009. These norms replace the 2000 *Liturgical Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage*. These norms are the result of extensive research, reflection, and consultation with Bishop Rhoades, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Secretariat for Canonical Services and other diocesan staff, the Presbyteral Council, the USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship, and Offices of Worship throughout the Province of Pennsylvania and the United States.

The following are among the elements that distinguish these new norms from previous versions:

- The paragraphs of the document are now numbered.
- Consideration of those with special needs or disabilities was added in paragraph 10.
- Suggestions/options for the incorporation of the “traditional procession” into the liturgical entrance procession were added in paragraph 11.
- The instruction to include directions about the reception of Holy Communion to printed programs was added in paragraph 27. The optional announcement by the priest celebrant was added in paragraph 28.

- The Liturgical Music section was completely reworked by deleting repetitions and reordering items for better clarity. References to *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* were added.
- Options and instructions for flowers to be presented to the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary were added in paragraph 54.
- The prohibition of the use of the Unity Candle at the church is given in paragraph 55.
- Information on the *arras*, *lazo*, and *velacion* was added in paragraph 56.
- Rewording of the directives for Convalidations and Marriages that follow a Decree of Nullity is found in paragraph 58.
- Two appendices were added:
  - **Appendix A:** *Guidelines for Mixed Marriage Celebrations and Preparation between Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics in Central Pennsylvania.* (This document is being reformatted and the appendix will be available shortly.)
  - **Appendix B:** Prayer Service for the Unity Candle for use at the wedding reception.

Over the course of the next eight weeks, the following will take place:

- Presentations at Deanery Meetings for Priests and Deacons.
- Regional Information Sessions for music ministers, mentor couples, and parish wedding personnel.
- Publication of the norms in pamphlet form for distribution to couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. The Office of Worship will supply initial copies to all parishes.

The norms are also available on the Office of Worship section of the diocesan website located online at [www.hbgdiocese.org/worship](http://www.hbgdiocese.org/worship).

Thank you for your cooperation in the implementation of these norms. Please contact me with any questions, concerns, or clarifications. I may be reached at 717.657.4804 x353 or at [frnsullivan@hbgdiocese.org](mailto:frnsullivan@hbgdiocese.org).

Be assured of my prayers and best wishes for you and for those whom you so faithfully serve.