

PRENUPTIAL INVESTIGATION FOR CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Form E-2 Episcopal prohibition of the celebration of a marriage.

Form E-2

EPISCOPAL PROHIBITION OF THE CELEBRATION OF A MARRIAGE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS: The prohibition of a marriage in the Church for persons who are not excluded from marriage by an impediment to that marriage is a most serious matter. Canon law reserves such a decision to the Diocesan Bishop or his Vicar who is a local ordinary. He may temporarily prohibit a marriage in a special case (canon 1077, §1).

1. If a pastoral minister feels that the Church ought not to witness the marriage of a couple, but the couple is unconvinced and determined to marry, after consultation with the local pastor, the matter is to be referred as soon as possible to the Diocesan Bishop or his Vicar.
2. "In such circumstances, the pastoral minister will inform the couple that their marriage preparation process may have to be extended. In a gentle and pastoral way, he should try to enable the couple to appreciate the reasons why he is making a referral and urge openness to more extended preparation if it is the eventual recommendation for them." (*Pastoral Policies and Guidelines for Marriage Preparation*, p. 5)
3. "When a referral to this *process* is made, the pastoral minister will be clear with the couple that what is occurring is a consultation and not necessarily a conclusion as yet. The Church is not saying to the couple, 'You cannot marry!', just because some serious question is under investigation. But, if after the consultation, the decision of the local Ordinary is to prohibit the marriage at least temporarily (c. 1077, §1), the couple should be urged to accept that advice and cooperate with whatever recommendations are offered..." (*Pastoral Policies and Guidelines for Marriage Preparation*, p. 5)
4. In every case it is presumed that the procedures of *form E-1* in the evaluation referral process for special circumstances has been undertaken and that the results are attached.

The date that this referral was received by the Diocesan Bishop or his Vicar: ____ / ____ / ____

Name of the Pastoral Minister: _____

Parish: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Proposed date of the marriage (if a wedding is already scheduled): ____ / ____ / ____

Church where the wedding is to be held: _____

I hereby submit to the Diocesan Bishop or his Vicar the question of whether temporarily to prohibit the marriage of concern.

SIGNATURE OF THE PASTORAL MINISTER: _____

DATE: _____

1. The difficulty and outcome of the evaluation process of *form E-1* (copy attached) are:

(A more detailed explanation should be provided as an attachment to this form.)

2. The determination made by the Diocesan Bishop or his Vicar:

SIGNATURE OF THE DIOCESAN BISHOP (OR HIS VICAR): _____

DATE: _____

3. The date of the communication of this decision to the couple: _____

Name of the Communicator: _____

4. The response of the couple to the decision rendered:

SIGNATURE OF THE PASTORAL MINISTER: _____

DATE: _____

(A copy of this completed form is to be returned to the Office of the Diocesan Bishop.)

Religious indifference by a couple may cause a grave concern. Yet, if a couple approaches the Church for marriage, Pope John Paul II noted: "They have thus already begun what is in a true and proper sense a journey toward salvation, a journey which the celebration of the sacrament and the immediate preparation for it can complement and bring it to completion, given the uprightness of their intentions." (*Apostolic Exhortation on the Family*, no. 68)

The "uprightness of their intentions" refers to a commitment to enter a permanent marriage in faithfulness to each other. Whenever two Catholics demonstrate such an uprightness in regard to their marriage intentions they should be commended to practice their faith in a more regular way *but should not be excluded from a church marriage for their failure to do so*. In the case of a mixed marriage, the Catholic party must also provide the affirmation of his or her faith and practice (a commitment of which the other party must be made aware).