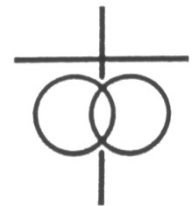


The policy was formulated when Marriage Educators gathered from around the Diocese in 1985. One of the most Immediate needs expressed was for a uniform policy throughout the Diocese - as different regions had varying times of notice. It was also seen as essential the time of notice of intended marriage be extended as educators found it extremely difficult to prepare a couple for marriage a matter of weeks before their wedding.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT YOUR PARISH PRIEST

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON



Diocesan Policy on Marriage Preparation

(Approved April 1986)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION POLICY

Main Points

Diocesan Policy on Marriage Preparation:

- Married couples/priests involved in Pre-Marriage Education (P.M.E.)
- Six months' notice of intention to marry.
- P.M.E. required for all engaged couples.

Pre-Marriage Education

1. Pre-marriage education is normally required for all couples before their marriage.
 - (a) When possible, a variety of programmes should be offered in each area, to enable a couple to select a suitable programme.
 - (b) If an engaged couple refuses pre-marriage preparation by trained marriage couples, it becomes the priest's responsibility to provide such education - which is required even by the Family Law Act. He may even feel it wise to ask the couple to reconsider their decision to marry very seriously
2. It is seen as Ideal that both priests and trained married couples be involved in preparing couples for marriage.

Notice of Marriage

1. Engaged couples should give notice of their intention to marry at least 6 months prior to the date of marriage.
 - (a) Priests should not dispense from this required period of notification except for good reasons
 - (b) Pregnancy or co-habitation by the parties should not automatically be regarded as, in themselves sufficient reasons for dispensing from the time prescribed for prior notification.
2. Couples should be encouraged to avail themselves of pre-marriage education before their formal announcement of engagement.

Areas of Responsibility

1. In places where couples are normally involved in pre-marriage education, it is suggested that as soon as the couple gives notice of their coming marriage, the priest refers them to the coordinator(s) of pre-marriage education in the area. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to ensure that the couple accepts one of the offered forms of education or to refer the matter back to the priest, if they refuse.
2. The priest has special responsibility in such areas as:
 - (a) Preparation of marriage documents;
 - (b) Preparation of the liturgy of the marriage;
 - (c) The theological implications of marriage as a sacrament;
 - (d) The 'obligations of the Catholic party in an inter-faith marriage.