

**KEY AND GUIDE****DISPENSATION FROM THE OBSERVANCE OF THE CANONICAL FORM OF MARRIAGE  
CATHOLIC PARTY MUST RESIDE IN THE DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA (Old Yellow Form)**

1. A Catholic may be dispensed from the observance of the canonical form, otherwise required for the validity of marriage by Canon 1108. This dispensation cannot be granted except in the case of marriage from which either dispensation from disparity of worship or permission for mixed marriage is both necessary and properly sought. The parish priest or deacon does not grant the dispensation or permission for the Catholic to marry the non-Catholic in this case. The dispensation from canonical form is granted by a local ordinary. Canonical form is not an impediment to marriage but is required for the validity of marriage when at least one principal is Catholic.

2. This dispensation may be sought only if there are serious difficulties in observing the canonical form. It is impossible to give an exhaustive list of reasons that justify petition for this dispensation, but the following are samples of such reasons: "to achieve family harmony," "to avoid family alienation," "to obtain parental agreement to an otherwise prudent marriage," "to recognize the significant claims of relationship or close friendship with a clergy of another denomination," "to permit marriage in a church that has particular importance to the non-Catholic."

3. Ordinarily, dispensation from the observance of the canonical form is granted in view of a proposed celebration of marriage in a religious context, but in some exceptional circumstances it may be sought to permit a civil marriage ceremony. In any case some public celebration, one recognized under the civil law, is necessary for the validity of the marriage. It is not granted in this diocese for the sake of an outdoor wedding. If the marriage is to take place in another diocese, there may be some limitations (e.g. not in a plantation home or reception hall's commercial chapel).

4. The dispensation from the canonical form can be granted only by the diocese of the place where the Catholic party resides. If the actual marriage is to take place in another diocese, the diocese of the place of the ceremony must be consulted by the dispensing diocese before the dispensation can be validly granted.

5. When a dispensation is granted for a marriage to take place in a religious ceremony other than a Catholic ceremony, there is no reason why the parish priest (or other priest for familial or similar reasons) may not participate in the ceremony by saying an appropriate prayer, giving a reading from Scripture, saying other appropriate words, or doing something similar. Canon 1127, §3, however, directs that it is forbidden to have a religious celebration in which a Catholic and a non-Catholic minister, assist together but, following their respective rituals, ask for the consent of both parties.

There are special considerations in a Catholic-Episcopal marriage. See the joint agreement between Louisiana Catholic and Episcopal bishops for marriage ceremonies.

6. The Catholic party who petitions must reside in the Diocese of Alexandria. Records are kept as if the wedding took place in the Catholic party's **own** parish church. The parish priest has all the same obligations for fully **preparing** the couple and doing the paper work. Additionally, the marriage is recorded in the Diocesan Tribunal of Alexandria. Canon 1121, §3 provides the following with regard to the keeping of records of such marriages:

1. The marriage is properly recorded with appropriate notations in the marriage register of the parish of the Catholic party. The following documents should also be placed in the parish file of pre-nuptial documents:

- a. The actual pre-nuptial documents
- b. Baptismal record recently issued
- c. The rescript of dispensation
- d. Any other pertinent documents.

2. The Catholic spouse has the obligation of informing the parish priest who obtained the dispensation of the fact and date of the marriage.

3. The parish priest must also see to the recording of the marriage at the Tribunal.

4. The parish priest also has the obligation of noting the fact and date of the marriage on the Baptismal record of the Catholic party or of sending the information to the parish of baptism of the Catholic party.