

Previous Marriages and RCIA

Policy No. 749

Policy Statement: Pastors and those members of the faithful responsible for welcoming potential inquirers to the RCIA are to ensure that their marital status and history of any previous marriage bonds are identified before confirming their formal admittance to the RCIA.

Intent of Policy: To avoid those situations where people begin their RCIA journey only to realize that it must be interrupted due to the effects of a prior bond of marriage. This situation may be aggravated by the fact that the candidate/catechumen intends to marry a Catholic upon completion of the RCIA process.

Definition: Irregular marital situations that must be resolved before celebrating the Rite of Acceptance for those who are not baptized, or the Rite of Welcoming for those who are validly baptized, include the following:

- the applicant for RCIA was previously married, is now remarried, and the former spouse is still alive
- the applicant is married to a person who was previously married and divorced, and whose spouse is still alive
- the applicant is currently in a marriage with a Catholic where both parties were free to marry but their wedding was celebrated outside the Catholic Church

Procedure: Refer to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Form — Appendix 612A. The marriage information questions are designed to bring to light potential issues that require attention because of previous marriage bonds.

Refer to Appendix:
612A Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Form