

Instructions to Complete Prenuptial Forms — Appendix 704A

Form 1A

Form 1A is designed for use with the couple when they come for their initial interview. Its use can elicit all the pertinent information required for the Church, such as the existence of a previous marriage, dispensation or permission required, and any potential difficulties or unresolved issues.

Form 1A must always accompany the documents sent to the Office of Canonical Services.

No date is to be set for marriage until it is determined that the couple is free to marry. This is done by completing Form 1A (and Form 1C, if applicable). This ensures that there are no previous marriages or other impediments that need to be addressed.

Form 1B

Form 1B is the prenuptial investigation form to be completed separately for each of the parties to a forthcoming marriage.

Form 1B is to be filled in after the completion of a marriage preparation course.

Form 1B is not to be filled in by the parties themselves. It is designed to help the priest or deacon better judge the readiness of the couple for marriage. Much can be learned in the dialogue between the interviewer and each party. For this reason, the priest or deacon is to be the one to complete the forms with the couple.

Form 1C

Form 1C is to be completed for each party who has been previously married, or has previously cohabited with someone. In case of prior marriage, consultation is required with the Office of Canonical Services.

Form 2

Canon 1066 states that before a marriage takes place, it must be established that nothing stands in the way of its valid and lawful celebration. The prenuptial enquiry determines the parties' baptismal status, freedom from any impediments and the quality of their consent.

Establishing the legal freedom of the parties to marry is a matter of positive proof, not just a question of presumption or conjecture: in other words, positive steps must be taken to show that the parties are free to marry. The person responsible for the preparation of the couple must be morally certain about that freedom. Hence, the importance of the prenuptial enquiry.

Recent certificates of Baptism do not replace Form 2, since they show only the sacraments celebrated in the Catholic Church, and do not indicate anything about a previous civil marriage or marriage in a non-Catholic church, which one or both parties could have celebrated in the past.

A parent, a sibling, or a close relative, make the best witness (Form 2) regarding the baptismal status and/or freedom of the party in question.

Form 2 is a very important document when submitting marriage papers to the Office of Canonical Services for a *Nihil Obstat*, dispensation or permission.

There is a need for one Form 2 for each person requesting marriage in the Archdiocese, except, if the individual is well known to the pastor, possibly from childhood or as a long-time parishioner, and the pastor is very familiar with the person and knows his or her life history.

Form 3

Form 3 must accompany all requests for marriage permissions or dispensations:

- two copies of Form 3 must be submitted for marriages taking place within the Archdiocese
- three copies are required for all marriages taking place outside the Archdiocese.

When a Catholic living in the Archdiocese wishes to marry in another diocese, a Testimonial Letter is needed in addition to any other permission or dispensation. Form 3 should be completed in triplicate in such cases and, together with all supporting forms and documentation, sent to our Office of Canonical Services for processing and forwarding to the proper jurisdiction. Marriage papers are not to be sent directly to a parish in another diocese.

Notification that marriage papers have been received and forwarded to another diocese will be sent from the Office of Canonical Services to the parish where the papers originate.

Form 4

Form 4 is used to notify the parish of baptism about an individual's marriage in the Church. It is also used to notify the parish of baptism of a marriage that takes place in a non-Catholic church when a dispensation from Canonical Form has been granted. Please see the information in the section on Canonical Form.

It is suggested, as a matter of courtesy, that return postage be attached before sending the Form to Canadian parishes. The return portion is filed with the rest of the marriage papers.