

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

The Sacrament of Marriage has been confiscated by the government. The couple desiring to marry is required to obtain a license from the local magistrate with the completion of the ceremony recorded in court records. This is primarily for the protection of the public, to assure through blood tests the absence of venereal disease. It is also a pre-caution against bigamy. An exception of this is in nations where a man may legally have more than one wife, but the normative practice is one man, one woman in Holy Matrimony. The International Communion of The Charismatic Episcopal Church does not recognize the legitimacy in those countries where a man may legally have more than one wife.

Some nations require a Civil marriage performed by a person appointed by the government. If a religious ceremony is desired, it would follow the required legal service. The United States of America does not have this requirement.

My personal opinion is the United States of America should require a civil ceremony performed by a judge or justice-of-the-peace for every couple. This fulfills the legal requirements intended to protect the couple and prevent fraudulent marriages. Then if the couple wishes Divine Blessing they arrange with the clergyman for a ceremony to be held in the Church. I have performed too many marriages where the Church was a necessary stop off on the way to the Country Club Reception. The religious ceremony was performed because in some way, to the couple or their families, it was “the thing to do”. No matter how much pre-marital counseling they received, the ceremony lacked the spiritual quality a marriage should have. This is only my personal opinion and you do not have to agree with me.

Holy Matrimony is a Union between one man and one woman. In the United States of America there is a growing move toward homosexual and lesbian unions being called “same sex marriages”. I will not dignify this perversion by calling it a “marriage”; “same sex unions”, but not marriages because marriage is a union between one man and one woman. Neither do I believe the Church should appear as approving such a union by blessing the couple and their commitment to each other.

A sacrament is defined by the Book of Common Prayer as an “outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace”. Jesus blessed the sanctity of marriage by His first miracle at Cana in Galilee.

In Holy Matrimony the couple make their vows before God in the Church with the intent of a life long union, and receive the Blessing of the Church and God whereby grace is given to enable them to fulfill the vows they exchange.

Pre-counseling should be required for all couples, and covering such subjects as spiritual covenant, Christian example in the home, finances, sexual relationship, expectations of both parties, plans for children, employment, resolution of conflicts, and relationship with in-laws. In the course of the counseling, other subjects may arise. Every couple enters

into marriage with the belief theirs will last forever but the statistics say otherwise. Before the ceremony is the time when this fact should be realized, and how conflicts might be resolved without an attorney's involvement be thoroughly discussed. I would ask the couple to promise me that when conflicts occur that they go to a clergyman for counseling before they consider an attorney. Of course they always promised me but never did one come to me, and some marriages did not continue forever.

Marriage is considered one of the seven catholic sacraments making the clergyman the person in charge of every aspect of the ceremony and service within the church facilities. Wedding consultants, florists, ceremonial directors, photographers and any other outside person are subject to the clergyman and the policy of the Church, and should be expected to comply accordingly. Every aspect of the ceremony should be dignified and sacred, giving glory to God, acknowledging that He has brought together this man and this woman for a lifetime commitment.