

4. **Interfaith Marriages:** This is a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic person. Some interfaith marriages are between people who are baptized but from another Christian faith Community. Some interfaith marriages are with people who have never been baptized and are from faith communities that have nothing in common with Christian faith beliefs like Hindus, Muslims and members of the Jewish faith. In either case, none of these situations prevent a valid marriage in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Special dispensations are sought from our Bishop to allow for the solemnization of these unions in the Catholic faith tradition. As a matter of fact, it is permissible for a Minister or Rabbi to participate with the Priest or Deacon in the Church ceremony. It is also permissible, with proper dispensation, for the marriage to be celebrated in the Church of the non-Catholic partner. (Generally speaking only when a baptized Catholic marries someone from the Jewish faith will the wedding be permitted to take place in a structure other than a church, chapel or oratory). If this is the case, please let the Priest or Deacon know early on in the preparation process
  
5. **The Celebrant:** Ordinarily, one of the priests (or deacons) of this parish will witness the marriage. If a couple would like a particular parish priest (deacon), please ask for him when making the initial arrangements. A visiting priest or deacon is welcome to witness the marriage of the bride and the groom but special permission must be sought in advance from the Bishop for that clergyperson to administer sacraments in the Diocese of Paterson. If the priest is from another parish in the Diocese then they automatically have this permission unless barred for some serious reason.

#### **B. REQUIRED PREPARATIONS:**

1. **Meetings with the Priest:** One of the parish priests will meet with you several times (usually 3 times) as part of the overall marriage preparations. In the first meeting the parish priest will set the date with you for the Wedding. The purpose of these sessions is meant to help you as a couple prepare well and to explore areas of your relationship.
  
2. **Instructional Sessions:** In accordance with the Common Policy of the dioceses of New Jersey, there are three dimensions to the instructional preparations. All three **MUST** be fulfilled:
  - a) **Pre-Cana:** Pre-Cana Conferences attempt to cover the spiritual and practical aspects of marriage, and are meant to give each couple serious "food for thought" about the special relationship they are about to enter, as well as the Sacrament they are to receive. After meeting with the priest every couple is responsible to schedule their instructional session at least a full six (6) months prior to the Wedding date. This is usually done in the local parish or a neighboring parish. We have been graced over the years to send our couples to St. Mary's Parish in Pompton Lakes for this. The priest/deacon will give you information on how to go about this.