



Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

40 North Main Avenue, Albany, New York 12203

THE TRIBUNAL

518-453-6620

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND PARISH LIFE COORDINATORS

FROM: FR. FRISONI, JUDICIAL VICAR **MHF**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2019

RE: APPLYING FOR PERMISSION TO HOLD A WEDDING IN A NON-SACRED PLACE

In our pastoral care of persons who wish to celebrate marriage at a non-sacred venue, this primer is offered to assist you in pondering if you should seek this permission for the celebration. Unlike dispensations for disparity of worship or permissions for mixed religion among parties that are routinely granted in all dioceses of the Province of New York, a petition for permission to hold a wedding ceremony in a non-sacred space is an extraordinary request.

For non-sacramental marriages, the Church observes that marriage can be celebrated outside of a church in another suitable place for just reasons. But since Christ the Lord elevated marriage among baptized persons to the dignity of a sacrament, the dioceses of our Province grant permission for a sacramental marriage celebration in a non-sacred setting only for very serious reasons. Our office assists in weighing whether the circumstances in an individual case suffice for the permission to be granted.

Some questions:

Should I send this request in? As soon as the parties mention to you a desire to hold a wedding in a non-sacred location, you should begin a conversation on whether this setting would be appropriate, accounting for the sacramental or non-sacramental nature of the marriage as well as the reasons for the request. When in doubt, it is best to apply, rather than not apply, for the permission.

When do I apply for this permission? Apply as soon as the non-sacred setting is contemplated, not a few days or weeks before the wedding unless there is an emergency scenario. Sometimes further information or documentation will be sought. It is important for the parties to know the decision sooner rather than later, especially if the permission cannot be granted.

Where do I apply for this permission? You may transmit your documents either to the Bishop's Office or to the Tribunal; applications for this

permission will be forwarded to the Tribunal for review. The answer will be communicated to you, not the parties.

What do I include in an application for this permission?

_____ The Forms for the Prenuptial Investigation (PNI); AND

_____ A signed statement from the parties discussing why permission should be granted; AND

_____ A signed statement from you, agreeing or disagreeing with the request of the parties (your statement will not be shared with the parties).

Hopefully, these points will be of some assistance to you for these applications. Should you have any further questions, or if a sudden emergency arises, always feel free to contact me. Thank you.