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INTAKE

1. Is the person in question a member of the Latin Catholic Church? (DOB Synod Statute 1)
2. Is the person or family a member of this parish, or do they live in this parish's boundaries? Or have they been given permission to be enrolled in this parish? (DOB Synod Statute 85)

STOLE FEES

No charge is to be made for the administration of any Sacrament, however facility fees may be assessed for the use of church properties for marriages and funerals. (DOB Synod Statute 91 §2)

Whatever the faithful offer voluntarily on the occasion of the administration of any sacrament is known as a "stole fee," is presumed to be given to the parish and is to be deposited in the parish general account. (DOB Synod Statute 91 §2)

The clergy may not require the use of parish envelopes or registration as a condition for the administration of any sacrament. (DOB Synod Statute 91 §3)

Pastors are to instruct the faithful about the reason a "stole fee" is intended for the parish or institution. (DOB Synod Statute 91 §4)

The above applies to all priests and deacons, both active and retired, administering in the Diocese of Bismarck. (DOB Synod Statute 91 §5)

BAPTISM

REQUIREMENTS

Only a person who has never been baptized in any valid Christian religion can be baptized (c. 864). If you have any questions about the validity of a certain religion's baptism or the manner in which the person was baptized, please contact the Chancery. (DOB Synod Statute 103 §2)

Please note that the Church's legislation is biased toward conferring the Sacrament of Baptism as seen in can. 868. The "founded hope" found in the aforementioned canon does not carry the qualifier "well-founded." Canon 868 §1 states: For an infant to be baptized licitly: 2^o there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; 3^o if such hope is altogether lacking, the baptism is to be delayed according to the precepts of particular law after the parents have been advised about the reason.

No cleric may create any conditions for Baptism which are not contained in universal or particular law (synod statutes), such as denying Baptism during the Advent and Lenten Seasons, requiring a specific method of Baptism, the marital status of parents, unwillingness to register

in the parish (though this is preferred), and length of residence and degree of participation in parish life (DOB Synod Statute 97 §2).

Divorced or Unmarried Parents

Although these situations present particular pastoral challenges, baptism is not to be conditioned on the marital status of the child's parents as noted above.

Lapsed Catholics

An infant of negligent or lapsed Catholics may be baptized after reasonable assurance is given regarding the Catholic education and formation of the child. This assurance can be given by persons other than the parents of the child (DOB Synod Statute 98 §1).

Non-Catholic Parents

A child of non-Catholic parents may likewise be baptized if the parents promise in writing to arrange for the Catholic education of the child and it can be reasonably foreseen that such education will be secured (DOB Synod Statute 98 §2).

An infant of non-Catholic Christian parents is baptized licitly if the parents, or at least one of them or the person who lawfully takes their place requests it and if it is physically or morally impossible for them to obtain access to their proper minister (c. 868 §3; Art. 5 *De Concordia Inter Codices*).

Same-Sex Parents

According to the November 14, 2006 U.S. Bishops' Letter on homosexuality, "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care" the baptism of children in the care of same-sex couples presents a serious pastoral concern. Nevertheless, the Church does not refuse the Sacrament of Baptism to these children, but there must be a founded hope that the children will be brought up in the Catholic religion. See section on the recording of baptisms of adopted children below.

Age of Person

An infant, one who has not attained the use of reason (around age 7), is to be baptized when the parents (or legal guardians) make such a request on behalf of their child (c. 867).

An adult, with regard to baptism, is anyone who has reached the age of reason (c. 852).

An adult is to be baptized once the person has manifested the intention to be baptized, has been instructed sufficiently about the truths of the faith and Christian obligations, and has been tested through the RCIA process, according to the due discretion of the pastor (c. 865). The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the ordinary process to be followed by the clergy and laity in the Diocese of Bismarck when ministering to those adults not yet baptized (DOB Synod Statute 95 §1). However, no adult is to be denied entrance into full communion with the Catholic Church solely because of that person's inability or unwillingness to participate in the RCIA process. 95 §2)

GODPARENTS

“There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each (c. 873, DOB Synod Statute 99 §2). If there are to be two godparents, then one must be male and the other female (not two of the same sex). At least one is requested and desirable, though not strictly required. The maximum number of godparents is two.

Parties that Request 2 Sets of Godparents

If, for some reason, two sets of godparents are presented or desired the person making the request is to be informed that only one male and one female can be entered into the baptismal register, while the others are not prohibited from taking an active role in the baptism itself and in the life of the person baptized.

It is at the discretion of the pastor to deal with such a unique request, but it must be made clear that no more than 2 names will be entered into the baptismal register and, in accord with DOB Synod Statute 99 §3, it must be impressed upon the godparents that they have a serious duty to assist raising the child in the faith, hence the importance and honor of their role as godparents.

Requirements for Godparents

The godparent must be Catholic (either Latin Rite or Eastern Rite), over the age of 16, confirmed, and “leading a life in keeping with the function to be taken on” (c. 874 §1). A person of the Orthodox faith may be a godparent as long as there is also a Catholic godparent (Directory on Ecumenism n. 98b; *CCEO* c. 685 §3). The same can be true for a member of the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) who is presented as a godparent so long as in the pastor’s judgment no serious future issues will arise (e.g. the godparent will not be an obstacle to the baptized fully embracing the ordinary form of the Mass).

The Use of Proxies for Godparents

A “proxy,” or one who stands in for an absent sponsor, though customary, is not required by universal or particular law. The presence of a proxy can be noted in the Baptismal Register (DOB Synod Statute 99 §4).

Witnesses

A non-Catholic may be a witness to the baptism but is not a godparent (c. 874 §2). A person who stands as a witness can be noted as such in the baptismal register.

PLACE OF BAPTISM

Baptism of Persons from Another City or Parish

The administration of Baptism is reserved by law to the proper pastor of the person to be baptized. In case of necessity, the permission of the pastor to baptize a person is presumed. In regard to baptismal preparation, the requirements of the proper pastor of the person to be baptized are to be respected and fulfilled, insofar as possible (DOB Synod Statute 94 §1).

MATRIMONY

RECORDING MARRIAGES

All marriages should be recorded in the marriage register of the parish in which the wedding was celebrated. Additionally, the information must be sent to the parish of baptism of Catholic parties (DOB Synod Statutes 168, 170).

Weddings celebrated with a dispensation from canonical form in non-Catholic churches or other places should be recorded in the parish within whose boundaries the marriage ceremony took place (DOB Synod Statute 168 §3).

A convalidation is recorded in the marriage register of the parish where the convalidation occurred and also at the parish of baptism of the Catholic party(ies). The wedding date is that of the Catholic ceremony, although the date and place of the civil wedding may be recorded as well.

The provisions of civil law are to be observed conscientiously to the extent that they are not contrary to divine or ecclesiastical law. Clergy must promptly comply with notification to the proper civil authority after each marriage ceremony (unless it is a convalidation) has taken place (DOB Synod Statute 142 §2).

ANNULMENTS/DISSOLUTIONS

The Office of Canonical Services is available to assist persons who wish to have a prior bond examined for invalidity or possible dissolution. There are several different ways to declare a marriage bond invalid or to have it dissolved. The petitioner should be directed to contact the Office of Canonical Services for a packet to begin this process (701-204-7203).

Pre-marriage files are commonly requested by the Office of Canonical Services as they are a vital component to the annulment process. A copy of the file (complete with FOCCUS results) should be sent upon request of the Office of Canonical Services if possible.

RECORDING ANNULMENTS/DISSOLUTIONS

When a marriage has been declared invalid or has been dissolved, the information is sent to both the parish where the wedding was held and to the place of baptism of the Catholic parties. It should be recorded as **'marriage declared invalid by the Diocese of Bismarck on (date). In marriage nullity cases that have been appealed to the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis and declared invalid after the appeal, please contact the Office of Canonical Services for direction on recording.'**

If the marriage was dissolved by virtue of the Pauline Privilege (marriage between 2 unbaptized persons) it should be recorded as **'marriage dissolved by Bishop (name) on (date).'** If the marriage was dissolved *in favorem fidei* (marriage between a baptized and unbaptized person), it should be recorded as **'marriage dissolved by Pope (name) on (date).'**

If, for some reason, a marriage has not been recorded in either the parish where the wedding was held or in the parish of baptism, the marriage should first be recorded, and then the fact of the annulment or dissolution.

Genealogical Research/Parish Archives

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

On occasion, parishioners and others wish to research their family history. They may approach the parish for **baptismal, marital, or burial** information. Any information deemed to be confidential (i.e. adoption) should never be divulged.

Records over 100 years old may be copied and handed over to the researcher. It is up to the pastor to decide whether the secretary should do the research and make the copies, or whether the record books may be given to the researcher for him/her to do the research and make the copies.

Any information contained in official parish records is to be given **only to those who have a strict right to request them**. Any such records, including but not limited to official sacramental certificates, are to be signed by the pastor only or, in the pastor's absence, the parochial vicar and must include the seal of the parish. **In case of doubt about the person's right to the information, contact the Chancery (DOB Synod Statute 50).**

PARISH ARCHIVES

Each parish is required to have parochial registers, which the pastor maintains, in which the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony, and Holy Orders are recorded (DOB Synod Statute 46). A register for funerals and/or burials (if a cemetery is attached to the parish) is also to be kept. These registers are to be kept in a locked, fire-proof cabinet. Access should be limited to the pastor and parish secretary.

Records of the minutes of the parish finance council and parish pastoral council should be kept and maintained by the secretary of those councils.

Decrees of appointments of new pastors, as well as a record of the taking of the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, should also be maintained.

MASS INTENTIONS

NORMAL MASS OFFERING

In the Diocese of Bismarck, the set amount for a Mass offering is \$10 (DOB Synod Statute 270 §1).

No one may demand or suggest that a higher offering is to be made. A priest who agrees to offer Mass for a specific intention is morally and canonically bound to do so, even if no stipend is offered (DOB Synod Statute 270 §§1-3).

Offerings less than the customary amount should not be refused (DOB Synod Statute 270 §5).

PAYMENT OF STIPENDS

Stipends are not to be paid in advance to individual priests out of any stipend account in a parish. While transactions by individual parishioners can be freely arranged, parish accounts are to pay out Mass stipends only after the attached intention has been satisfied (DOB Synod Statute 271 §3).

Mass offerings and stipends received from parishioners is to be managed by the parish business office. As administrator the pastor is responsible to oversee the payment of bills and may delegate the record keeping authority to a business manager. It is, however, ultimately the pastor's responsibility to facilitate the education of the staff so they can determine when Mass offering stipends are provided to priests and when priests cannot accept stipends for Mass offerings. Because of Mass intentions/stipends related to collective intentions or *Pro Populo* intentions and factors such as limitations in daily stipends allowance (*Missae Per Diem*), the best practice is for pastors and parish priests to report their Mass stipends to their staff at the end of each month for each of the parishes in his cluster (DOB Synod Appendix 18).

Mass stipends received should be managed as "dedicated funds" that a parish temporarily holds for restrictive purposes. The parish should use the established account from the Diocese Chart of Accounts for this purpose which is 8170.00PAD (DOB Synod Appendix 18).

Mass offerings and stipends given directly to parish priests from parishioners must be turned over to the parish staff to deposit into the parish dedicated account for Mass stipends. Pastors and parish priests may also turn over Mass offerings and stipends given directly to them from non-parishioners. *IMPORTANT NOTE: Mass stipends funds received by priests directly from non-parishioners and not turned over to the parish are still taxable income to the priest and the priest would need to include that income on his personal income tax report* (DOB Synod Appendix 18).