

DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
P.O. BOX 1730 - 76 ELLIOT STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01102-1730

March 1, 2017

Dear Monsignor/Father/Deacon:

In the fall of 2016 a proposal was placed before the Presbyteral Council regarding the possibility of granting permission for weddings to take place outside of a church or chapel. This permission has been granted as a courtesy to interfaith couples in the past, such as when a Catholic seeks to marry a member of another world religion, but has not been granted when both parties are baptized Christians.

Bishop Rozanski has indicated his willingness to consider a petition from a couple, both of whom are baptized, to hold their wedding service outside of a church or chapel. This petition could be on behalf of a couple both of whom are Catholic or a couple where one party is Catholic and the other party a baptized non-Catholic. It is understood in such instances that the marriage celebration would not include the celebration of Mass.

The place of marriage should be suitable for such a sacred occasion and not every location would fit this requirement. Priests and deacons who are approached with such a request should be prepared to explain this to couples and consult with the Chancellor's Office or Bishop's Office prior to agreeing to prepare the petition. When such a petition is formulated, as is the custom in this diocese, the entire pre-marital file should be submitted to the Chancellor's Office in a timely manner.

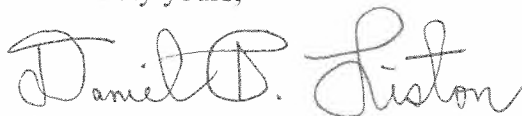
It is understood that any priest or deacon must receive delegation from the pastor of the parish where the place of marriage is located. The marriage ordinarily must be recorded in the sacramental register of the parish of the place of marriage and the file stored there.

Any priest or deacon who does not reside within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts must obtain, as well, permission from the Office of the Secretary of State in order to officiate at any marriage ceremony within the state. All priests and deacons not currently serving within the Diocese of Springfield must submit a Letter of Suitability for ministry from their diocese or religious community.

Priests and deacons should keep in mind that this policy provides for an ad hoc consideration of such a petition, that a church or chapel remains the normal and preferred location for a wedding and that such a consideration only applies to ceremonies within the Diocese of Springfield.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



Rev. Msgr. Daniel P. Liston
Chancellor

DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

August 16, 2018

Marriage Dispensations – Permission for Place
(Weddings Outside the Church)

This consideration applies only to ceremonies WITHIN the Diocese of Springfield.

The Petition should be on behalf of:

- A couple, both of whom are Catholic or
- A couple where one party is Catholic and the other party is a non-Catholic, baptized or unbaptized.
- It is understood in such instances that the marriage celebration would not include the celebration of Mass.
- The Petition and/or questions should be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor.

The Place of Marriage should be:

- Suitable for such a sacred occasion and not every location would fit this requirement.
- Must be an Approved Venue (It is recommended that this be done before any further Marriage Prep.)
- Priests and deacons who are approached with such a request should be prepared to explain this to couples and consult with the Chancellor's Office prior to agreeing to prepare the petition.
- The Approved Petition along with the entire Pre-Marital File should be submitted to the Chancellor's Office in a timely manner (3-4 weeks before the wedding).

It is understood that any priest or deacon must receive Delegation:

- From the pastor of the parish where the place (location) of marriage is located.
- The marriage ordinarily must be recorded in the Sacramental Register of the parish of the place of marriage and the file stored there.

Any priest or deacon who does not reside within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts must obtain, as well, Permission from the Office of the Secretary of State in order to officiate at any marriage ceremony within the state. All priests and deacons not currently serving within the Diocese of Springfield must submit a Letter of Suitability for ministry from their diocese or religious community.

Priests and deacons should keep in mind that this policy provides for an ad hoc consideration of such a petition and that a church or chapel still remains the normal and preferred location for a wedding.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,
Rev. Msgr. Daniel P. Liston
Chancellor