MEMORANDUM

Date: November 7, 2019
To: Priests and Deacons
From: Monsignor Steven Callahan
Subject: Weddings – a Couple Things

There are a couple things about weddings that I would like you to be aware of, if you are not already:

1. Celebration of Marriage within Mass and without Mass (#36, Order of Celebrating Matrimony)

When a Catholic marries a baptized non-Catholic, the rite for celebrating Matrimony without Mass should be used. If, however, there is good pastoral reason for doing so, the rite for celebrating Matrimony within Mass may be used, with the consent of the local ordinary (diocesan bishop, auxiliary bishop, or vicar general). In the Diocese of San Diego, priests and deacons with diocesan faculties have been delegated the authority to give this consent (Pagella of Faculties, #9).

When a Catholic marries a catechumen or a non-Christian, the rite of Matrimony is not to be celebrated within Mass. Canon law makes no provision for the local ordinary to make an exception and give permission for celebrating Matrimony within Mass.

2. Celebration of Marriage outside a Catholic Church or Catholic Chapel

A marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized party can be celebrated in a church or in another suitable place (canon, 1118, §3). The marriage is to be recorded in the parish of the place where the marriage is celebrated. In the Diocese of San Diego, what is or is not a suitable place has not been specified as a matter of policy, but is left to the good judgment of the officiating priest or deacon, with the understanding that the beach is not a suitable place!

If two baptized Catholics or a baptized Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic wish to be married in a suitable place other than a Catholic church or Catholic chapel, permission of the local ordinary is required. The practice in the Diocese of San Diego for many years has been for me to receive these requests from the officiating priest or deacon and grant them on behalf of the diocesan bishop. Couples making requests directly to the diocese are referred to their parish priest or deacon. When receiving a request from a priest or deacon I collaborate with him to ensure all necessary documents are completed and to ensure the marriage is recorded in the parish of the place where the marriage is celebrated.