

Bowling, Benjamin F.  
- Mixed marriage...  
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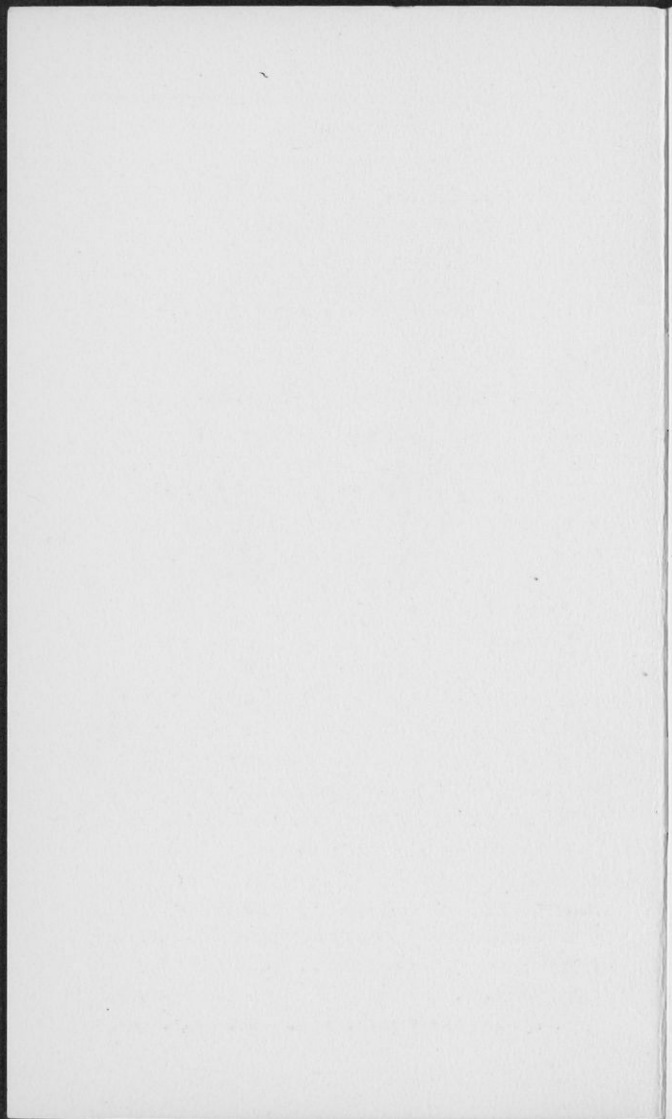
# Mixed Marriage

*Outlines for Instructors*

by  
Rev. Benjamin F. Bowling, C.S.P.



THE PAULIST PRESS  
401 West 59th Street  
New York 19, N. Y.



ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE  
408 North Charles Street  
Baltimore 1, Maryland

October 19, 1954.

Dear Father,

*In the hope that the following outlines of six instructions prepared by the Reverend Benjamin F. Bowling, C.S.P. may be of some assistance to you who, I realize, are frequently called upon to prepare a non-Catholic for marriage with a Catholic, I have had them printed for your reference.*

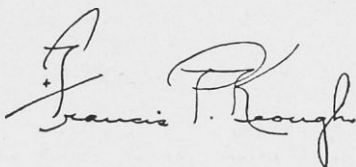
*As an appendix to these outlines, I have added the regulations which are to be observed in the Archdiocese of Baltimore in the celebration of a marriage between a non-Catholic and a Catholic. These modifications of previous custom have been adopted to emphasize the religious character of marriage. It would be disastrous if our Catholic people were to assume that they represent any mitigation of the attitude of the Church expressed in Canon 1060 which in establishing*

*the impediment of Mixed Religion  
"most strictly and everywhere forbids  
marriages between a Catholic and a  
person enrolled in an heretical or  
schismatic sect."*

*I have complete confidence that in  
the observance of these regulations,  
you will avoid this danger while  
achieving the purpose intended.*

*With every good wish and with a  
blessing, I am*

*Sincerely yours in Christ,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Francis T. Keough". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper. The first letter 'F' is large and stylized, with a small cross above it. The name is written in a fluid, connected cursive style.

*Archbishop of Baltimore.*

# OUTLINE OF SIX INSTRUCTIONS FOR MIXED MARRIAGES

REV. BENJAMIN F. BOWLING, C.S.P.

*A few practical instructions to be developed or modified by the individual priest according to circumstances.*

## List of Instructions

*1. Purpose of Instructions - Promises - God - Christ - Church - Faith. 2. Creation - Grace - Fall - Cross - Sacraments in General - Baptism. 3. Confession - Commandments. 4. Blessed Sacrament - Mass - Holy Communion. 5. Marriage - Divorce - Birth Control - Mixed Marriage - Conditions. 6. Externals of Church - Saints - B.V.M. - Suggestions for Happy Marriage - Read Marriage Ceremony.*



*Imprimi Potest:*

VERY REV. WILLIAM A. MICHELL, C.S.P.,  
*Superior General.*

*Nihil Obstat:*

REV. EDWARD A. CERNY, SS., S.T.D.,  
*Censor Librorum.*

*Imprimatur:*

✠ FRANCIS P. KEOUGH, D.D.,  
*Archiepiscopus Baltimorensis.*

*Baltimore die 15 Octobris 1954.*

## Introduction

*First Visit:* A kindly reception of the non-Catholic party. It may be his or her first visit to a Catholic priest or rectory. First impressions often make or mar the instructions to follow. While the perils of mixed marriage should be often stressed in the pulpit and presented to the young couple in a kindly constructive spirit, a tirade on the subject when they actually come to arrange for mixed marriage generally does more harm than good. What is said to the Catholic party is generally relayed to the Protestant and many of them who until this point were favorably disposed have been embittered and have turned away from the Church.

From a long experience we find it is best to stress the wisdom and purpose of the instructions to give the non-Catholic party a better understanding of the obligations he assumes in marrying a Catholic. It is only fair to him, to his Catholic partner, and their future children, that he thoroughly understands the promises before signing them. Explain that there is no obligation of any kind

in taking the instructions, and that he is free to ask questions at any time. Urge both parties to pray earnestly—that God will guide and direct them and bless their marriage.

### **First Instruction**

*Existence of God:* Necessity for First Cause, Who possesses in a perfect way all perfections given to creatures in a degree. Hence, “Infinite Life” (Father), “Infinite Truth” (Son), “Infinite Love” (Holy Ghost). The Trinity.

*Creation:* God sharing His happiness with creatures. Evolution—progression from lower to higher forms of life according to Law. Evolution, therefore, demands a Supreme Being and direct creation of first spark of life and first atom of matter. Man’s soul direct creation of God. The Fall. Promise of Redemption. Chosen People.

*Divinity of Christ:* (1) Fulfillment of prophecy. (2) His direct claims to be Divine. (3) Miracles by His own power and His own name. (4) The Resurrection—Jesus Christ True God and True Man.



*Summary:* Therefore, God gives Divine Revelation through Jesus Christ.

*Church:* Stress the point that just as God taught, forgave and gave His Divine Graces *through Christ*, so Christ teaches, forgives and gives His Divine Graces through the Church. The Church a long distance telephone through which Christ speaks in every age. "He who hears you, hears Me." Reasonableness that Christ left an Infallible Guide to His teaching even as the Founding Fathers left a Supreme Court to interpret the Constitution. Develop parallel. The Church, therefore, not a human and arbitrary dictator, but a Divine Supreme Court, through which Christ still teaches, still forgives, still gives His Divine Life. Petrine Texts. Use charts to show history of Church from beginning through Reformation.

*Reformation:* Admit scandals in Church as there were among the Apostles. Christ guaranteed the teaching, not the conduct, of His followers. The Reformation throw out the Supreme Court of the Church and substituted opinions for dogmas, and for the Divine Compass of Infallibility, the weather vane of private in-

terpretation. The sad result: over 250 conflicting Christian churches today differing on fundamental principles. Explain: Outside the Church, no salvation *for those who know it true and deliberately reject it*. No one will be lost except through his own grave, willful, unrepented sin. Stress the freedom of authority. The Church gives us a well-marked spiritual highway lined with "spiritual filling stations" (the Sacraments) along the way. Any church claiming to be church Christ established must (1) by force of logic be able to trace its history in unbroken line straight back to Christ, (2) give one united system of teachings and Sacraments throughout the world. Therefore, only one. Stress, however, that each Church that broke off from the Mother Church took many beautiful doctrines with them. Unfortunately, they also left many beautiful teachings and help behind them. The Church builds on the beautiful truths in your own Faith and puts them back in the original setting whence they were taken at the time of the Reformation.

## Second Instruction

*Grace—Sacraments in general:*

*Baptism:* God gave divine life of Grace to Adam and Eve. Lost by the Fall. Original Sin. (Example: Father gambles away his wealth. Children come into world not with sin of gambling but without his fortune. So Adam and Eve lost the life of Divine Grace for us.)

*Divine Life* could only be restored by God. Yet since man sinned, man should atone, but atonement had to be Divine. Hence Redemption.

*Diagram:* Divine Grace given to Adam and Eve, lost by original sin, restored by Jesus Christ dying on the Cross and stored up in the supernatural reservoir of Church. *Sacraments:* Seven Divine channels bringing Grace to soul of men. Parallel of Sacraments with stages in life: birth and Baptism, growth and Confirmation, hospitals and Confession, food and Lord's Supper, leaders and Holy Orders (Mayor, Governor, President and Supreme Court compared to Priests, Bishops and Pope, the Supreme Court of Church. Neither Supreme Court can make new teachings

or laws but only clarifies the application of same in every age.) Marriage (civil) and Matrimony (Sacrament). Doctors at death—Extreme Unction. Sacraments give Grace directly. Amount of Grace depends on individual's dispositions and God's Will.

Ceremonies of Baptism. Wonder of its effects. We give them Natural Life at once in Birth. We give them supernatural life at once in Baptism. (Develop) Highlights of ceremonies in Baptism. Why Catholic sponsors. Wonder of Grace in soul after Baptism. Stress wisdom of sending children to schools which give God and Religion an even break with the three R's. . . . Make it *four* R's instead of three!

### **Third Instruction**

Confession—*Sacrament of Penance.*

*Christ forgave sins.* Gave this power to the Apostles after Resurrection. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive. . . ." Just as He gave Apostles the power to baptize (give Divine Life) so He gives them the power to restore Divine Life. This answers objections

why not go direct to God. What right has man to forgive sins? *Answer:* As a delegate of Christ.

Popular Objections: "All a Catholic has to do is to go to Confession and then he can do what he likes!"

*Answer:* A Catholic has to do everything a non-Catholic has to do to have his sins forgiven *and* a little bit more!

(1) Examination of Conscience. (2) Sorrow for Past (Stress Cross). (3) Firm purpose of amendment (Avoid setups). (4) Actual Confession (Stress advice and guidance). (5) Penance. Compare Catholics who go regularly to Confession vs. those who do not. Give highlights of Ten Commandments and the comfort and strength which Confession gives to millions. (Stories). Non-Catholics find this one of the most interesting lectures.

#### **Fourth Instruction**

*The Blessed Sacrament and the Mass.*

As Christ hid His Divinity in the form of the Christ Child at Bethlehem, so He hid both His Divinity and Humanity in the form of the Blessed

Sacrament at the Last Supper. If God gives to *us* the power of transforming bread and wine into the substance of our own body and blood indirectly through the laws of digestion, why cannot *He* change bread and wine into His own Body and Blood directly? He said so. And this was the belief of the whole Christian world until the Reformation. The wonder of Bethlehem reflected in the Tabernacles of the world. Its consolation to Catholics throughout the world.

The Sacrifices of the Old Law were fulfilled in the Perfect Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary; and which is perpetuated in all the Masses of the World. One sun shines in the heavens and is reflected in all the windows of the world. One Son of God offers His complete and perfect Sacrifice on Calvary which shines through and is perpetuated on all the altars of the world. Holy Communion is God's perfect Gift to us. Holy Mass is our perfect Gift to God. God gives us twenty-four hours a day, one hundred and sixty-eight hours a week. It is fitting that we return one hour of di-

vine worship to Him each Sunday, in keeping with His Divine command to keep holy the Sabbath Day.

*Outline of the Mass:* At the Last Supper, Christ did three things. He offered bread and wine to His Heavenly Father—the Offertory of the first Mass; He changed bread and wine into His own Body and Blood—The Consecration of the first Mass; and He gave to His followers—the Communion of the first Mass. Beautiful ceremonies grouped themselves around each of these parts, and gave us the Mass as we have it today. Latin. Vestments. Offering Mass for loved ones and for special intentions. Illustrated booklets, like the “Mass Visible” or Mass Slides are a great help. The booklets, “The Mass” (Paulist Press) and “I See the Mass” (Queens Work), are liked by most converts as an introduction to the Mass. Encourage non-Catholics to attend Mass with their Catholic friends and pray for the gift of Faith in ALL of God’s Divine Truths.

Explain how Catholics, believing the Mass to be the Divine Form of Worship left by Christ, cannot consistently participate in non-Catholic

services. They may, however, attend non-Catholic weddings (valid) and funerals as a courtesy to their non-Catholic friends. Note: *Faith of Our Fathers*, by Gibbons, is excellent on Mass and Blessed Sacrament.

### **Fifth Instruction**

*Marriage* (1) A Sacrament; (2) For Life; (3) For Children; (4) Mixed Marriages.

(1) Marriage not only a civil contract over which state has certain rights; (e. g., license, blood tests, etc.) but also a *Christian Sacrament* over which the Church has certain rights. Hence, whenever a Catholic is concerned (whether two Catholics or a Catholic and a non-Catholic) there must be a Catholic Priest and two witnesses. Just as a Catholic may not go to the Judge or Minister for any other Sacrament, e. g., Confession or Confirmation, so he may not go to them for the Sacrament of Marriage. (Note: Stress fact that non-Catholic marriages among themselves are generally acknowledged by the Church providing both parties are free to marry.) As a *sacrament* mar-



riage gives Divine helps to be true to God, to each other and to children (Develop).

(2) *Marriage is for Life.* Therefore no divorce with remarriage after a valid marriage. Therefore no marriage can take place by Catholic Priest unless both parties understand and promise this in writing before ceremony. Correct popular misconceptions on divorce and remarriage in Catholic Church. Contrast loyalty to one's country regardless of sacrifice and loyalty to one's marriage vow. Read: "I take thee for better or worse . . . in sickness or in health . . . *until death do us part!*" Develop.

(3) *Marriage is for Children.* Therefore no *artificial* Birth Control. Birth Control is misuse of a faculty, like lying, gluttony or drunkenness; therefore, a sin against nature. Rhythm is taking advantage of breaks that nature gives you (and that only for a *good* reason). Birth Control is *breaking* nature. *Objection:* "But the end is the same in both rhythm and birth control; therefore what's the difference?" *Answer:* "End is same in a savings account and bank robbery — what's the difference?"

Stress: Church does *not* say you have to have a child every nine months and five minutes, but she does stress sacredness of children. The child for which you have to sacrifice the most may be the child who will be your greatest joy. Examples—perhaps in your own family.

(4) *Mixed Marriages*. Review introduction to first instruction. Every Minister, Priest and Rabbi urges whenever possible unity of Faith in marriage. That *is* the ideal. Father, Mother, Children all united in same Faith. (Develop) Catholic Church has a special precept against mixed marriages. But mixed marriages in a mixed population like the United States of America are often inevitable. And sometimes they are not a bad mixture! (Smile!) But we say—face issues fairly and squarely beforehand. Hence the Six Instructions now required to give the non-Catholic a better understanding of obligations assumed in marrying a Catholic. The Instructions are also helpful in giving the Catholic a review of his Faith and a deeper appreciation of his obligations in a mixed marriage.

## Sixth Instruction

*Sacramentals, Tour of Church, Varia.* Sign of Cross, Holy Water, Genuflections. Medals. Devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary (stress). Purgatory, Prayers for Dead. At the Wedding rehearsal in church (try to have one—even for very small weddings; it puts the non-Catholic more at ease), there is an excellent opportunity to explain and show the Confessional, Sanctuary Lamp, etc. *Genuflections* in honor of Our Lord's Real Presence. Non-Catholic may genuflect to God in general as a courtesy to their Catholic friend. On entering the church, if the Priest lowers his voice and explains this reverence to Our Lord, Real Presence, non-Catholics are generally most reverent. The Eucharistic Fast. The laws of Fast and Abstinence and the reasons for them.

## READING MATTER

HELPFUL PAMPHLETS: *I Believe In God*, by McGinn; *Divinity of Christ*, by Gillis; *Eve of Marriage*, by Berger (General); *Why Not A Mixed Marriage* (Objections and Dangers), by O'Brien; *Shall We Have Children*, Baltimore Panel, by Dr. Galvin, Fr. Connell, et al; *The Mass*, small but well liked by non-Catholics; all by Paulist Press, 401 W. 59th St., N. Y. C. *Finding Christ's Church*, by O'Brien, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind., is excellent, complete with charts, dates, etc. *What You Should Know About Catholics*, by Fr. Wade, small but excellent summary of objections against the Church, 1005 N. E. 16th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. *Chart of Churches*, by Markoe, Vincentian Press, St. Louis.

BOOKS: *Sharing the Faith*, by Fr. O'Brien, Our Sunday Visitor Press, gives suggestions of some thirty Bishops and Priests on convert work. In Chapter 12 there is a fairly complete answer to most of the objections to signing the promises in mixed marriages. *Now I see*, by Lunn; *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*, by Stoddard;

*The Faith of Our Fathers*, by Gibbons; Fr. O'Brien's convert stories, *The Road to Damascus*; *The Meaning of Life and Marriage* by Baron von Gagern, M.D., are all excellent and helpful references for different types of converts.

### **Suggestions For a Happy Marriage (Develop)**

1. Keep little things little and big things big. Happy couples strive for unity in fundamental principles; in non-fundamentals, liberty. In all things—charity. Good cooking and housekeeping aid domestic peace.

2. Live within your means. Don't get used to two salaries for two and have to drop back to one salary for three. Beware of charge accounts.

3. When possible park your home far from both mothers. In-laws often become out-laws. Visit often, but don't bind yourself to regular visits.

4. Pick the right time, the right place and the right way to make corrections. Strive always for the positive, tactful approach.

5. Show appreciation for little

things. Take nothing for granted. Wives especially center life on the little things that men forget.

6. Remember marriage is a partnership, not a dictatorship. Individual personality and God. Mutual thoughtfulness. Love too often becomes a tyranny.

7. Remember dates and anniversaries. They are important.

8. Frankness and open-ness on both sides. Don't hoard grievances. Get them off your chest, but, watch your "timing"!

9. What happens at home keep at home; otherwise it generally comes back in garbled form. Be friendly but reserved with neighbors.

10. Watch drinking and gambling. These two habits alone have marred countless homes. (Examples.)

11. Choose your friends carefully, when inviting them to your home. They can make or break a marriage.

12. Recreation money. Get out at times regularly—just the two of you.

13. Have your children early, and find time for them. This is the real happiness of marriage.

14. Religion can become a bond or a barrier. Unity of Faith is the Christian ideal. Pray together and attend Mass together often. The Christian Home!

15. Stress the obligation of sending the children to Catholic School if possible where God, Our Lord, and the precious teaching of Christianity will have an equal place with their ABC's. Religion, like the love of Father and Mother, is not something to be limited to one dry Sunday School lesson each week, but should be interwoven all through their little lives. Urge a visit to the first grade room of a Catholic school some Sunday afternoon, getting the teacher in charge to explain the pattern of her instructions. This will do more good to break down prejudice against Catholic education than anything else.

Read slowly our Marriage Ceremony. Urge a complete course of instructions later on.

## OBJECTIONS

### I.

Objections against the promises are often raised. Admit frankly that the promises do seem at first to be one-sided and unfair. One priest startled the non-Catholic party, not to mention the Catholic by saying, "Personally, I wouldn't sign those promises if I were you!" And then he added with a smile, "Unless I knew what I was signing. That's what the instructions are for."

### II.

"But I don't want to be a Catholic."

"Of course you don't. I wouldn't either if I knew as little about it as—e-r-ahem—some people do! But, remember you are marrying a Catholic, and sooner or later Junior or Sister is going to ask you some very embarrassing questions. Wouldn't it be wise to know something about Catholic teaching just to save face with your own children? This will be especially true with the mother, who will get most of the questions."



### III.

"But I had religion forced down my throat as a child, and I'm not going to do that with my children.

"I don't blame you. I wouldn't either. Why not make it as beautiful and lovely and attractive as everything else you teach them? Surely the love of God and the teachings of Our Lord have great possibilities."

### IV.

"But why not let them grow up and choose their own religion?"

"By the same token, why not let them grow up and choose their own manners, their own ABC's, their own version of the three R's? Don't you see that just as you give them natural truth as early and as attractively as possible, so you should give them supernatural truth?"

Children who have been allowed to grow up and choose their own religion, generally choose none, as is attested by the millions of Americans not affiliated with any Church."

### V.

"But why the Catholic religion?"

"That's what we'd love to explain

to you in a course of instructions! Then you can ask all the questions you wish and clear up popular misconception on so many points.

“Briefly the reason is this: If you believe that Jesus Christ is really and truly God, and that He founded one true Church and gave that Church certain divine teachings, and certain divine helps, you would want your children to have them, wouldn't you.”

“Well, yes *if* I believed that.”

“Well, your Catholic friend here does believe just that. Hence one of a Catholic's most sacred obligations is to give this divine spiritual inheritance left by Christ, to his children as early as possible.”

## VI.

“But why do I have to sign the promises?”

“Simply as an evidence of the same good faith you show when you sign for your marriage license! Through the years, Mother Church has found that some couples were taking the promises too lightly and were forgetting about them afterwards. Therefore to impress upon the minds of

persons marrying Catholics the sacred responsibilities of giving children their spiritual inheritance, she now asks both Catholics and non-Catholics to sign the papers."

### VII.

"If I marry a Catholic will I be bound by the no-meat law on Friday?"

"No. However, Catholics make this little sacrifice of meat on Friday in memory of Christ's Great Sacrifice on Good Friday, and most non-Catholics are happy to co-operate. And for the sake of peace in the family, Brother, you'd better eat that fish!"

### VIII.

Another point, "Why can't we have a double marriage ceremony—one in the Catholic Church, and one in mine?"

"For the simple reason that with us marriage is a Sacrament, just as sacred as Baptism or Confession or Holy Communion. Now you can readily see why Catholics couldn't consistently go to a Minister or Judge for the Sacrament of Confession or Holy Communion; so neither can they

consistently go to the Minister or Judge for the Sacrament of Marriage. It would be a denial of their faith."

"But you ask ME to come to *your* Church."

"Yes, because you believe that you would be validly married in *any* Church. Therefore, *you* are not breaking any fundamental *principle* by being married in a Catholic Church. Naturally you would have a *preference* for your own Church, so you are asked to sacrifice a *preference* by being married in a Catholic Church, rather than ask the Catholic to sacrifice a *fundamental principle* by being married in yours. And I am sure you wouldn't want that."

## IX.

"No, but why can't she worship in my Church once in a while after we are married? I go to hers."

"Don't you see it's the same fundamental principle at stake? If you believed that Our Lord established the divine form of worship at the Last Supper and continues it today in the Mass, could you consistently participate in what you consider a purely

human service, established by those who broke off from the one true Church?"

## X.

"No, but I don't believe that. I believe that one religion is as good as another."

"Good, so *you* are free to worship in a Catholic Church without any violation of principle. Your friend on the contrary believes that Our Lord established the Mass through the last Supper as the one true form of divine worship, and hence cannot actively participate in any other form of worship. Catholics may and do attend non-Catholic funerals and weddings, however, as a courtesy to their friends or relatives."

## XI.

"Well, suppose I *do* believe my Church is the one true religion established by God and that all others are false. How could I then make the Catholic promises in Marriage?"

"You *couldn't* in that case, and *you* should take the same stand as the Catholic does about his religion."

Some time ago, a non-Catholic going with a Catholic, *did* take this very stand, and said he believed *his* Church was the one true Church."

"What happened?"

"Well, they finally agreed to disagree, agreeably—and went their respective ways."

"So you believe in a non-Catholic being true to his own principles?"

"Of course. The Catholic Church teaches that everyone is bound in conscience to follow his principles. He is also bound, however, to make reasonably sure that his principles are in accord with God's divine revelations. The course of instructions that you are asked to take will show you again and again how the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church are in complete accord with Christian revelation, and, hence, are fair and reasonable in every respect."

Discussions similar to the above, conducted in a friendly spirit, generally help most non-Catholics to see the wisdom of taking the instructions which in a large number of cases, lead to the gift of faith.

## APPENDIX

### **Directions for the Celebration of Marriage Between a Catholic and a Non-Catholic in the Archdiocese of Baltimore**

1. At least six instructions are to be given in the fundamentals of the Catholic Faith including at least one instruction on the Sacrament of Matrimony and the obligations undertaken by a non-Catholic in contracting marriage with a Catholic.

2. Marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics are to take place in the church. Except in the case of validations any departure from this rule must be sanctioned by the Chancery Office.

3. The formulae and ceremonies of marriage including the use of surplice and stole as prescribed in the Roman Ritual for two Catholics are to be used with the sole exception of sprinkling the parties with holy water.

4. The marriage must take place at the altar rail, so that in no circumstance may the parties be admitted to the Sanctuary.

5. In accord with Canon 1102, Paragraph 2, marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic may never take place in connection with Holy Mass nor may the Nuptial Blessing be given.

6. The organ may be played and only Catholic hymns may be sung in connection with the ceremony.

7. Two candles may be lighted on the altar which may be decorated with flowers.

8. Permission for the bride to dedicate her bouquet to the Blessed Mother and the manner in which this may be done is left to the prudent judgment of the Pastor.



