

Services of the Chancellor's Office

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Letters of Good Standing

Most dioceses and shrines require that a priest or deacon have a letter of good standing sent in advance of their arrival, if they plan to assist at the sacraments there. Some dioceses also restrict priestly faculties – they must be requested (apart from emergencies). Therefore, it is always a good idea to request a letter of good standing before a trip. Email your requests to fatherjerabek@bhmdiocese.org. Please do not wait until the last minute. We understand that sometimes urgent situations arise, such as funerals.

Information needed: Diocese/shrine traveling to, what you will be doing there in terms of ministry (wedding, celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, going on retreat, etc.), dates that you will be there.

Transfer of Marriage Files OUT of the Diocese

If you have prepared a couple who will be celebrating their wedding outside the Diocese of Birmingham, the marriage file must pass through the Chancellor's Office. We will forward it to the Chancellor of the diocese where the marriage is taking place with the appropriate permissions (Nihil Obstat), then they will forward it to the Catholic church or chapel of the wedding.

Practical steps:

- Request any dispensations or permissions in advance, so that you can insert the rescript in the wedding file.
- Keep a COPY of the complete file in the parish's marriage files.
- Send the ORIGINAL, COMPLETE marriage file to the Chancellor's Office AT LEAST six (6) to eight (8) weeks before the wedding.
- Include a cover letter saying where the marriage is to take place, giving permission for it to be celebrated there, naming who the celebrant will be, and indicating that you have done the required marriage preparation.
- We will then do our own cover letter/permission and forward the file to the place. If it is out of the country, we will send it by Fedex.
- If the marriage is taking place at a non-Catholic location (with a dispensation from canonical form), the marriage must be recorded in the parish where the marriage preparation happened!

Marriage Permissions and Dispensations

By now everyone should be using the new form, which is available on the diocesan website (go to the Offices section, then Chancellor's Office; there you'll find a download link). This is a "fillable PDF", so you can type in your responses before printing, if you wish. *MANY forms arrive incomplete.* We can do better at filling out this newer, streamlined form! Moreover, Diocesan Marriage Policy directs that we should meet with a couple at least six months before the marriage, yet many dispensation request forms come in at the last minute. Please send your forms in early on in the marriage preparation process. Thank you for your cooperation.