
"Here's The License - We're All Set."

When a Catholic walks into a priest's office with that greeting there should be justification for calling out the marines or something. You are expected to whistle "Here Comes the Bride", get out the little book with the questions in it, hear their answers, watch the groom kiss a five-spot a tearful goodbye, and then tell him how lucky he is to get such a beautiful bride, but she must be near-sighted or something, etc., etc., etc.

How they know they have to have a license is the big mystery. They haven't had ten years of catechism in the civil laws, yet they know they have to have a license, swear falsely to their ages, and a few little things like that - but with all their training in religion they don't know one thing about the Church's marriage laws, and they don't go to the trouble to find out. They come along with the bride and the license - all set.

In these cases the bride is usually a non-Catholic. They have a hazy idea that no banns are published in the case of mixed marriage, so they conclude that no previous notice to the priest is required. If there are any other little formalities to attend to, they are sure the priest can settle those very simply by calling up the Bishop for a dispensation - and they are so sure that the Bishop is at the phone 24 hours a day that they are just as likely to walk in at midnight as at noon.

If you have the temptation to put yourself into this class of prize pests, jot down a few notes that will protect you from the worst offences:

1. In a mixed marriage the parties must sign a contract before a priest in which it is agreed that the Catholic must be allowed free exercise of his religion, all children born to the union must be baptized and reared as Catholics, and the children must be given a Catholic education.
2. In this diocese the Catholic must first present himself alone to the priest to give notice of his intention, and must then arrange that the non-Catholic party be given at least six instructions on Christian marriage and the Catholic religion - and these instructions must be given before the dispensation is sought (by mail, not by telephone);
3. Matrimony is a Sacrament of the living, and a person who receives it in the state of mortal sin commits a sacrilege.

While every mention of the problem of mixed marriage by the Religious Bulletin brings a storm of protests (some of them from the sons belonging to the 30% of such marriages that are successful; more of them from the 20% of students who are courting non-Catholics) we have a duty in the matter that we must not neglect, hurt whom it may. The Chicago Tribune's heart-throb column handled the matter again the other day, in these terms:

"It is a serious problem, more serious than the light-hearted young pair realize in their madly-in-love period. The fact that they question even at this time proves that they recognize in themselves a germ of discord in opposing faiths under one roof. With some couples, where religious training has not been deeply inculcated, and where, consequently, there is little observance of faith, the problem disposes of itself. But these are not the ones who inquire about the wisdom of marrying one of opposite faith.... the real question devolves upon the future family... when youngsters enter the scene the problem takes on new life. Family influence often adds confusion... What eventually happens is that one side wins..."

Verbum sap.

PRAYERS: James Mooney's father, ill; Edw. Lonahan's uncle, deceased; Lawrence Smith's grandfather, deceased; Tom Grady's uncle, deceased; Carlos Frank's aunt, ill. Three special intentions.