



**Diocese of Worcester**  
Office of the Bishop  
49 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

August 6, 2009

Dear Monsignor/Father/Deacon,

I am happy to announce the promulgation of the **Pastoral Policy for Marriage Preparation**, effective August 6, 2009, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. It has recently been revised and now is the particular law in the Diocese of Worcester for marriage preparation. The decree by which this policy is promulgated accompanies this letter.

The revision and promulgation of this pastoral policy on marriage preparation affords us a new opportunity to educate our people in the Church's profound moral teaching in the area of marriage and family. It can also, I hope, serve as an instrument of the "new evangelization" consistently called for by Popes Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

This policy was drafted with input from many of you and attempts to respond to the pastoral concerns you have encountered in your ministry of assisting couples in their preparation for marriage. I am grateful to the Office of Marriage and Family, the Diocesan Tribunal, and the Office for Divine Worship for their work in developing this policy.

I want to draw your attention to a significant change reflected in the policy. Couples are now required to attend a session entitled "God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage" as part of the formation program, in addition to attending an Engaged Encounter weekend, the preferred marriage preparation program. Information concerning the dates of these programs is provided on our Diocesan website by clicking the link for the Office of Marriage and Family or by calling that office.

I am also promulgating by means of this letter the revised **Offering Schedule for Weddings**, which is effective immediately. This change in requested offerings was recommended to me by the Presbyteral Council. I have now approved it. The new schedule, exclusive of music fees which should be worked out in an equitable way with the parish's music ministers, is as follows:

**\$250 for parishioners** (increase from \$175)

- \$125 – Parish compensation (increase from \$50)
- \$50 – Marriage preparation materials (remains the same)
- \$75 – Priest stipend (remains the same)

**\$325 for non-parishioners**

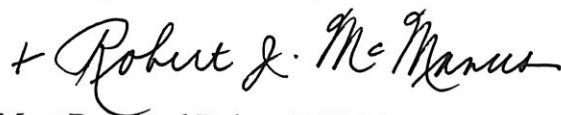
- \$175 – Parish compensation
- \$50 – Marriage preparation materials
- \$100 – Priest stipend

An offering higher than those listed above may not be requested.

I am grateful to all of you for your dedicated pastoral care in this challenging ministry of helping couples to prepare for this life-long vocation of marriage. You are the “face of the Church” to them as you demonstrate the care and concern the Lord has for them.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert J. McManus". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus  
Bishop of Worcester