



# *Convalidation*

Bringing YOUR Marriage  
*into* THE Church

## **FINDING AND REACHING OUT TO COUPLES MARRIED OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**

- Outreach strategies – “The aim of pastoral action will be to make these people understand the need for consistency between their choice of life and the faith that they profess, and to try to do everything possible to induce them to regularize their situation in the light of Christian principles..” (Familiaris Consortio #82)
  - How do we find Catholic couples who are not married in the Church? When a new person registers in the parish, registers children for religious education or Catholic school, seeks Baptism for their infant or child, requests a letter of eligibility to be godparent or confirmation sponsor – the registration form/intake process should include a record of marriage information – Date of Marriage/Parish of Marriage (include City and State)/Name of Celebrant.
    - Have a strategy in place to invite couples not married in the Church to set up an appointment with the pastor (or someone designated by him) to begin the conversation.
    - Send a personalized letter from the pastor inviting couples into a conversation (may use template letter provided); have a welcome packet for all new parishioners that includes brochures, booklets or handouts on sacramental marriage, convalidation, etc.
    - Parish website and parish bulletin – always have a section inviting couples to consider marriage in the Church – use evangelizing, non-Church language (may use sample bulletin announcement provided)
    - Keep the *Convalidation* brochure and other marriage-related handouts in high traffic gathering spaces (handouts should be colorful, attractive, inviting and evangelizing).
    - Baptismal Prep offers a great opportunity for the pastor (or Baptismal prep team) to invite couples to consider marrying in the Church (First Eucharist and Confirmation as well)



- Use wedding rehearsals as times for pre-evangelization (explaining the “Order for Celebrating Matrimony” and the history and purpose of Catholic rituals to the wedding party and family members in attendance)
- Opportunities for reconnection with Young Adults– Ash Wednesday, Christmas, wedding rehearsals, weddings, Baptisms, Confirmations, First Communions, funerals
  - Create a sense of connectedness and belonging by welcoming young adults
  - Great resource: *Connecting Young Adults to Catholic Parishes*, USCCB, quote on pp. 77-78 – Young Adults need opportunities to dialog about views on marriage and covenantal commitment. The Church has much proven wisdom to share on relationships, sex and marriage.

