



OCIA and Marriage Bonds

-Possible Scenarios-

(Revised July 2024)

I. Never Married, not in a Conjugal Relationship A person who has never been married and is not in a conjugal relationship may be brought into the Catholic Church and complete the Sacraments of Initiation. However, if the person intends to marry, the intended spouse must be free to marry according to Catholic Church laws. If the intended spouse is not free to marry, they must undergo a Tribunal process. The Catechumen or Candidate should only complete the Sacraments of Initiation once the intended spouse is free to marry according to Catholic laws.

II. Currently in a Valid Marriage A person in a presumably valid marriage according to Catholic Church laws may be brought into the Church and complete the Sacraments of Initiation. Neither party should have been previously married to another person who is still living. If either party is a baptized Catholic, the marriage must have been celebrated under Catholic auspices. If it was not, the marriage must be convalidated in the Catholic Church before completing the Sacraments of Initiation. If both spouses to the marriage were non-Catholic at the time of the marriage and remain so till present, then they were not bound to canonical form and are not required to convalidate the union before celebrating the sacraments of initiation.

III. Previously Married, not in a Conjugal Relationship, Not Anticipating Remarriage A person who has been previously married, is not in a conjugal relationship, and does not anticipate remarriage may be brought into the Catholic Church and complete the Sacraments of Initiation. However, it is prudent to introduce a nullity case for such a person before completing the Sacraments of Initiation, as they might wish to marry in the Church someday. This matter should be carefully discussed by the ordained cleric working with the Catechumen or Candidate. The decision must be thoroughly explored with the ordained cleric in the parish and not left solely to the person's conscience or the OCIA team. When it is deemed appropriate by the ordained cleric working with the Catechumen or Candidate that the person might be brought into the Catholic Church, please contact the Tribunal (214) 379-2840 tribunal@cathdal.org to discuss the matter.

IV. Previously Married, living in a Conjugal Relationship A person who has been previously married and is living in a conjugal relationship cannot be brought into the Catholic Church and complete the Sacraments of Initiation until the Tribunal process is finalized with an affirmative outcome. Both the Catechumen or Candidate and the current or intended spouse must be free to marry, and their current relationship must be a presumably valid marital union according to Catholic Church laws. Contact the Tribunal at (214) 379-2840 or tribunal@cathdal.org for help in introducing the case.

During the inquiry process, specific questions regarding previous marriages, divorces, or annulments for both the inquirer and his/her spouse or intended spouse ought to be presented. This should be conducted as early as possible, and before the Rites of Acceptance or Welcoming.

This policy ensures that all individuals entering the Catholic Church or completing the Sacraments of Initiation do so in accordance with the Church's teachings on marriage and marital bonds.