

Cohabitation Policy

October 9, 2020

1. The first meeting with the couple should be a general introduction without a discussion about cohabitation. That discussion should occur at a subsequent meeting with the priest or deacon.
2. The emphasis of the cohabitation meeting should be the blessings and opportunities of a good marriage.
3. The guidelines for the discussion about cohabitation are included in the Pre-Marriage Talking Points and accompanying materials.
4. The couple should be asked to live apart or with some other appropriate accommodation. They should be given opportunity, before a subsequent meeting with the priest or deacon, to discuss this issue privately with prayer.
5. Should a couple determine that they cannot discontinue cohabitation, the priest determines the next steps. Moving toward a Catholic marriage ceremony remains a possibility. The fact that the couple may choose to continue cohabitating should not necessarily become the basis for denying them the sacrament of Matrimony. Also, the ritual used is to be determined by the priest.
6. There are three goals for these discussions:
 - a. The couple would understand the value of chastity.
 - b. The couple and the pastor, priest, or deacon would have opportunities to listen to each other.
 - c. A relationship would be established between the priest or deacon and the couple.

Adopted on October 9th, 2020 by Bishop Donald Kettler