



## DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS IN TENNESSEE

### Chancery

5825 Shelby Oaks Drive

Memphis, TN 38134

Tel.: (901) 373-1200 Fax: (901) 373-1268

chancellor@cc.cdom.org

## Explanation of Testimonial Letters

It frequently happens that marriages of our parishioners are celebrated in other dioceses in the United States or in other countries.

When one of the parties to a marriage resides in this Diocese, his/her parish priest has the responsibility to assist in establishing freedom to marry, even when the wedding is to take place in another diocese. Canon 1066 states: "Before a marriage is celebrated, it must be evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration." Canon 1070 adds: If someone other than the pastor who is to assist at the marriage has conducted the investigations, the person is to notify the pastor about the results as soon as possible through an authentic document."

This responsibility is usually fulfilled by facilitating the necessary course of pre-marriage instructions and by forwarding to the parish where the wedding is to take place all sacramental documents, letters of freedom, prenuptial investigation form, and any other pertinent documents establishing the readiness and freedom of the party to marry. When the place of the wedding is another parish located within the Diocese of Memphis, those materials can be sent directly by you to the parish. However, *when the parish of the wedding is located in another diocese*, these documents must be accompanied by TESTIMONIAL LETTERS from the Diocese of Memphis and a NIHIL OBSTAT from the diocese of the place of the wedding. *Problems can be encountered by our people if they arrive for the wedding in another place and find these TESTIMONIAL LETTERS and NIHIL OBSTAT have not been issued.*

Priests, deacons and other parish ministers who are approached by a parishioner for help in preparing for a marriage in another diocese are asked to use the form: "**Testimonial Letters.**" The form is available in English and Spanish. If the marriage is to take place in a country where Spanish is the primary language, please use the Spanish version. For dioceses in the United States or other countries, please use the English version. Once completed, the form, along with the documents, is to be sent to the Office of the Chancellor of the Diocese of Memphis. We will issue the TESTIMONIAL LETTERS and forward the materials to the diocese where the wedding is scheduled to take place. The receiving diocese will then issue the NIHIL OBSTAT and forward them to the parish of the wedding.

Occasionally, when there is doubt about international mail, the parties may want to hand carry a copy of the documents with them. If this is the case, please inform the Chancellor's Office when you send in the request. The testimonial letters will be issued, the originals forwarded, and an authenticated copy will be issued for the parties to deliver to the parish of the wedding.

If you have any questions, please consult the Chancellor's Office.



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**TIME DEADLINE for TESTIMONIAL LETTERS**  
*All documents must be received by this Office no later than four (4) weeks prior to the wedding.*

## TESTIMONIAL LETTERS

### Groom

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

### Bride

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

### Place of Marriage:

\_\_\_\_\_

Church

\_\_\_\_\_

City

\_\_\_\_\_

Diocese

### Priest/Deacon Celebrant:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Marriage

### Documents Submitted

- |   |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Prenuptial Investigation:                  | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 2. Testimony of Witnesses Concerning Freedom: | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 3. Certificate/Proof of Baptism:              | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 4. Granted Dispensation/Permissions:          | Groom _____ | Bride _____ |
| 5. Other Documents:                           | _____       |             |

**Concerning Banns:** \_\_\_\_\_ Announced, with no objection \_\_\_\_\_ To be announced \_\_\_\_\_ Dispensed

I know of nothing that stands in the way of the valid and licit celebration of the proposed marriage (c. 1066). Permission, insofar as it is required, is hereby given for this marriage to take place outside of the parish (c. 1115). Therefore, I respectfully request the issuance of the **Testimonial Letters / Nihil Obstat** (c. 1070) for the marriage.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Priest or Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parish

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

**Visum est:** As Chancellor of the Diocese of Memphis, I hereby grant the Testimonial Letters.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nihil obstat:** We have no objection to the above-mentioned marriage taking place in this (Arch)diocese.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_