

Dear Padre,

I know a Catholic couple who wanted to celebrate their sacrament of matrimony at a Mass in a forest, but the bishop didn't allow it. Why not marry in God's creation?

A marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic is usually celebrated in a parish church. It can be celebrated in another church or oratory with the bishop or pastor's permission. A marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person can be celebrated in a church or another suitable place, although a Catholic church remains the preferred place for the celebration.

Why is the parish church the preferred site for the celebration? For Catholics, matrimony is a sacrament—one of the seven sacred signs through which God communicates love to us. When Catholics ask God to bind their union as a sacrament, the couple's love for each other is a sign of God's love for both, and their union is also a continuous sign of Christ's love for the Church. Thus, the church as a "house of God," which contains the presence of Christ, is revered as the most sacred place to make this most sacred commitment. Marriage, according to Pope Francis in a 2015 General Audience, "is not merely a ceremony in a church, with flowers, a dress, photographs....Christian marriage is a sacrament that takes place in the Church, and which also makes the Church, by giving rise to a new family community....[Saint] Paul says that the love between spouses is an image of the love between Christ and his Church. An unimaginable dignity!" ●



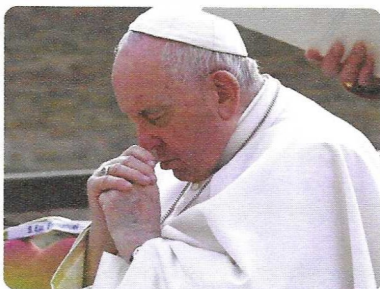
CNS PHOTOKABEN GALLAWAY, CATHOLIC NEW WORLD

Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
May 8	May 9	May 10	May 11	May 12	May 13	May 14
<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Sixth Sunday of Easter</i>
Acts 14:5-18	Acts 14:19-28	Acts 15:1-6	Acts 15:17-21	Acts 15:22-31	Acts 16:1-10	Acts 8:5-8, 14-17
Jn 14:21-26	Jn 14:27-31a	Jn 15:1-8	Jn 15:9-11	Jn 15:12-17	Jn 15:18-21	1 Pt 3:15-18 Jn 14:15-21



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

[Jesus] knows that, in life, the worst anxiety, anguish, arises from the sensation of not being able to cope, of feeling alone and without points of reference when faced with events. We cannot overcome this anguish alone...and this is why Jesus asks us to have faith in him, that is, to lean not on ourselves but on him.

REGINA CAELI, ST. PETER'S SQUARE, MAY 10, 2020

CNS PHOTO/VATICAN MEDIA