



# International Confederation of Christian Family Movements



## **GUIDELINES ON INTER-FAITH MARRIAGES**

**By Rev. Father Joseph Mizzi, CFM Europe Continental Chaplain  
Malta**

Based on Motu Proprio of Pope Paul VI entitled *Matrimonia mixta* (1970) which was codified in the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

Owing to the fact, that our societies are becoming more and more multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious, people are marrying people who belong to different religions and faiths. It is our responsibility to inform them clearly and precisely about these marriages and to help them and accompany them in this journey.

The Catholic teaching on inter-faith marriages boils down to the fact that the Catholic party has to declare that s/he is going to remove all dangers of defecting from the faith, and s/he also has to promise that s/he is going to do all in her power that all the children will be baptised and educated in the Catholic faith. The Church does not ask anything from the non-catholic party. He is only to be informed about the declaration and the promise of the Catholic partner. However, both of them are to be instructed about the purposes and the essential properties of marriage. In cases of marriages between people of different religions (known as marriages of disparity of cult marriages) the church can dispense the Catholic partner from the canonical form of marriage, but that marriage for validity has to be celebrated in a public form. The canonical form of marriage may not be preceded or followed by another ceremony in which matrimonial consent is given and received. The manifestation of consent is a unique act that cannot be regulated by two different legislations.