

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Marriage Guidelines St. Mary Catholic Church

Diocese of Victoria in Texas
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If an annulment is needed, no date may be reserved until the final decree is granted.

These guidelines are intended as a means to ensure that your celebration will be a deeply religious experience.

PHOTOS, VIDEOS, FLOWERS, ETC.

Photos and video cameras are acceptable provided they do not become a distraction during your celebration. Please be careful not to damage the pews or church furnishings when attaching flowers. Thumbtacks and tape are never allowed. Rice, flower petals (real or artificial), confetti, birdseed, etc. are prohibited for safety and maintenance reasons. Remove all floral arrangements, photography equipment, etc. from the church immediately following the celebration. Any candles brought in must be dripless and have a plastic sheet to protect the carpet from any spilled wax. Items left in the church will be discarded.

HOUSE OF GOD

Boisterous conduct is out of place; as is food/drinks/gum chewing. The more that you leave the doors open, the warmer it will be in the church. Please keep all doors closed as much as possible. It is imperative that an atmosphere of prayer be maintained before, during and after the wedding celebration.

This holy union is most serious, because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your soul in this life and the next. That future, with its hope and disappointments, its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life and are to be expected in your own. And so, not knowing what is before you, you take each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death.

“A man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one body.”

EPHESIANS 5:31

PRELIMINARY

1. A couple wishing to marry is expected to make an appointment with a parish priest or deacon before setting the wedding date. A six month (minimum) waiting period is necessary to complete the pre-nuptial preparation.
2. At this time you should discuss your proposed wedding date, presider, religious background, or any other questions you may have.
3. Arrangements must have been made with your parish priest to complete the Pre-nuptial Inquiry and all dispensations if needed. If an annulment is needed, a wedding date may not be scheduled until the annulment is granted. Baptismal certificates issued within the last six months (not copies) are presented at this time. Completion of the on-line FOCCUS marriage preparation program is expected. There is a \$15 charge for the on-line program. Participation in a prescribed Engaged Encounter Program is also required. You may register at <http://www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm>. For those unable to attend the retreat, another option is <http://www.catholicmarriageprep.com>. There is a cost for both programs.
4. You are entering into a holy Sacrament and as with all Sacraments proper preparation must be undertaken. In addition to the Engaged Encounter weekend retreat, the couple will meet with the priest or deacon at least four times. Catholics should arrange with the priest for a time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) before celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.
5. Our own parish policy fully endorses the diocesan statement in regards to couples living together before Marriage. It is the policy of our parish that couples who are living together must separate before entering into Christian marriage. A state of GRACE is necessary for participation in any Sacrament.

PRESIDER

We welcome and recommend that your own parish priest or deacon officiate at your wedding. If you are inviting clergy from another parish or diocese to participate in the ceremony, it must be discussed and approved by the local pastor.

WEDDINGS SCHEDULE

Saturday – no later than 2:00pm. No weddings on Holy Days of Obligation, during the Lenten Season or on a major holiday.

STIPEND

The offering for the church is \$300.00 for contributing registered members of the parish. (Contributing registered members of the parish refer to either the bride, the groom or their parents – not grandparents or other relatives – who are listed in our parish registry and have contributed

at least \$750.00 over the past twelve months preceding the beginning of marriage preparation.) For guests who are not registered and/or noncontributing, the fee for the use of the church is \$1,000.00. The fee must be paid no later than one month before the wedding. (Offering for the priest/deacon is separate.) Please make checks payable to St. Mary Catholic Church and enclose a note with your name and wedding date.

CIVIL LICENSE and CHURCH DOCUMENTS

A marriage license issued by the State of Texas must be obtained no earlier than thirty (30) days and no later than three (3) days prior to the wedding date. All required church documents must be in the office at least one month prior to your celebration.

REHEARSAL

Once the wedding date has been confirmed, make arrangements no less than three months in advance with Cathy Lowe, our parish wedding coordinator to schedule your rehearsal. She may be reached at music@stmvictoria.org or 361.935.1068.

MUSIC, LECTORS, ALTAR SERVERS

Arrangements must be made through Cathy Lowe for all liturgical ministries well before the wedding. The music for your wedding is provided by the parish and included in the fees paid for the use of the church. Secular music is not allowed before, during or after the wedding. If you wish to have a guest organist or cantor it must be cleared by Cathy Lowe. An offering to the guest musician(s) is the responsibility of the couple. The fee for the use of the church remains the same regardless.