

GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH

Congratulations and Welcome!

1. On behalf of the parish we extend our congratulations on your engagement!
2. We pray that this time of preparation for your matrimony will be filled with grace, faith and joy. We trust that these guidelines will assist you in preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Topeka, Kansas.

Preparing for the Sacrament

3. Your preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony began on the day of your baptism and continued through your years of religious and spiritual formation at home and in school. It is rooted in your own prayer life and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church.
4. You are now entering the final and immediate preparation for your Christian marriage which is marked by its unity, exclusivity and indissolubility.
5. All planning of weddings at St. Matthew is made with the Bride and Groom only. There is no need for a wedding planner or coordinator. If the services of wedding planners/coordinators have been retained, those persons and their associates have no authority regarding the marriage celebration. The liturgical norms of the Catholic Church will be strictly observed as well as Canon Law.
6. For a couple to marry at St. Matthew, we need to formally establish that both are free to marry. To establish this fact formally, we will carry out a pre-nuptial investigation, which requires the collection of certain documents. Once it has been established that both parties are free to marry, both will be required to participate in the parish marriage program, attend one of the Archdiocesan marriage preparation programs, and the NFP (*Natural Family Planning*) Introduction.

Establishing Your Freedom to Marry

7. Marriage is an act of the will. It is created by verbally expressing consent following the appropriate form. Therefore, a man and a woman must be free from coercion and free from impediments to be able to marry. The law of the Church provides for certain procedures to establish that no-one is forcing you to marry against your will. The process is called “pre-nuptial investigation.” It consists of the gathering of documentary evidence and statements from the bride and groom.
8. At least six months before the desired date of marriage, you must contact the parish office at (785) 232-5012 or email the priest directly at jtorrez@archkck.org to schedule a meeting with him so that he may begin the pre-nuptial investigation. Your freedom to marry is established by a formal declaration made by the bride and the groom in the presence of the priest and possibly by the testimony of two witnesses for each of the parties to marry. In the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, the statements of the bride and groom are recorded in a special document,

designated as the Pre-Nuptial Form. The interviewing priest will explain the meaning of these documents and will ask you some standardized questions regarding your intentions and your freedom to marry.

9. In addition to these statements, you must submit a recent copy of your baptismal certificate. This is used to establish that you are Catholic, and thus subject to the discipline of the Church and that you are not already married. When you marry, an annotation is made to your baptismal record in the parish where you were baptized. For this reason, the copy should be issued within six months of the initial meeting and/or wedding date so that we can have additional evidence that you are not married. You should contact the parish where you were baptized in order to obtain a copy of the certificate.
10. If the Catholic party is marrying a Non-Catholic baptized person, the Non-Catholic party must also submit a Baptismal Certificate.
11. Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it to complete their Christian Initiation before they are admitted to Marriage if this can be done without grave inconvenience (OCM, no. 18).
12. If you are cohabiting and/or sexually-active, we invite you to make a good confession and do what is necessary to live chastely before the wedding. Marriage, just like Confirmation, Eucharist, Holy Orders and, whenever possible, Anointing of the Sick, require the state of grace for their fruitful reception.
13. With respect to validity, someone who is married while in a state of mortal sin may be validly married (as they would be validly confirmed, ordained, or validly celebrate Mass). But he/she would not receive the grace proper to this sacrament and indeed commits a further grave sin of sacrilege and renders the sacrament objectively illicit.
14. Catholics are bound to follow the discipline of the Church; therefore, without prejudice to the competence of civil authorities concerning the merely civil effects of marriage, a Catholic does not create the reality of marriage as a sacrament through civil marriage. If you are Catholic and had entered a civil marriage with a person other than your current bride or groom and went through a civil divorce, you never created the Sacrament of Matrimony with that person because you did not follow the form prescribed by the discipline of the Church, which requires that Catholics freely express their consent before the Church's minister. That "civil marriage" only had the appearance of true marriage and must be declared null and void for "lack of canonical form" by the Tribunal. If you are Catholic and have entered a civil marriage with your current bride or groom, you are not validly married until you celebrate your marriage according to the form prescribed by the discipline of the Church (*Convalidation*).
15. If a couple has attempted marriage contrary to the laws of the Church, a validation is permitted only after they have completed the marriage preparation and assessment process and only after one year has elapsed since the attempted marriage.
16. In the case of a convalidation of a civil marriage of 5 or more years, formal marriage preparation is not required, although the priest may deem it beneficial to the couple to receive some form of preparation.

17. If you are a divorced Catholic and your previous union was contracted in the Catholic Church, you must obtain a declaration of nullity before marrying in the Church. In fidelity to Jesus' teaching, the Church believes that marriage is a lifelong bond (cf. Matt 19:1-10); therefore, unless one's spouse has died, the Church requires the divorced Catholic to obtain a declaration of nullity before marrying someone else. The tribunal process seeks to determine if something essential was missing at the time of consent, that is, the time of the wedding. If so, the Church can declare that a valid marriage was never actually brought about on the wedding day.
18. If your intended spouse is divorced and is not Catholic, the Catholic Church requires that this person also obtain a declaration of nullity before marrying in the Catholic Church. The reason for this is that the Church respects the marriages of non-Catholics and presumes that they are valid. Thus, for example, it considers the marriages of two Protestant, Jewish, or even non-believing persons to be binding for life. Marriages between baptized persons, moreover, are considered sacramental. The Church requires a declaration of nullity to establish that an essential element was missing in that previous union that prevented it from being a valid marriage, and thus the intended spouse is free to marry.
19. If the circumstances above apply to your engagement, no date may be set, nor marriage preparation may begin until an annulment has been granted or finalized. The reason for this is that the petition may not be granted; and even if the petition is granted, there may be unexpected delays in the process; e.g., if your fiancé/e's spouse wishes to appeal the tribunal's decision. Please contact Sue Carson at dansuecarson@yahoo.com or the Pastor at jtorrez@archkck.org to begin this process.
20. For a Catholic marriage to be valid, it is required that: (1) the spouses are free to marry; (2) they are capable of giving their consent to marry; (3) they freely exchange their consent; (4) in consenting to marry, they have the intention to marry for life, to be faithful to one another and be open to children who will be baptized and reared as Catholics; (5) they intend the good of each other; and (6) their consent is given in the presence of two witnesses and before a properly authorized Church minister. Exceptions to the last requirement must be approved by Church authority.

Initial Meeting with Priest and Preliminary Information

21. The first step in your preparation for marriage is a meeting with the priest. Both the bride and the groom must be present at this initial meeting. The priest will complete the Pre-Nuptial Form and may ask you to sign it. He will also indicate if it is necessary to provide the testimony of witnesses.
22. If possible, please bring the following documents:
 - Permission or release from the Bride's parish if other than St. Matthew
 - Copy of Baptismal certificate for both parties issued no more than six months prior to the initial meeting
 - If there was a previous attempt to marry in the Catholic Church that was declared null by the Ecclesiastical Courts, you must submit a copy of the Decree of Nullity or Defective Form Decree or Death Certificate, unless annulment(s) and/or defect of form(s) were granted in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.
 - For Convalidations, a copy of your present Marriage License is required.

23. At this meeting, you will also go over the marriage preparation process at the parish which includes the following:
- Introduction to a couple inventory called **FOCCUS** - a nonprofit organization dedicated to building, promoting and enhancing healthy relationships by offering resources and training that “**F**acilitate **O**pen, **C**aring **C**ommunication, **U**nderstanding and **S**tudy.”
 - Go over required Archdiocesan programs, marriage topics, and schedule future meetings
 - Reserve a tentative wedding date
 - Receive the “Together for Life” book which aids in planning your wedding (get more help at togetherforlifeonline.com)
24. Your wedding is to be celebrated in a church, whether it is the bride’s or groom’s, though you may obtain permission by means of the Archbishop and the pastor to hold the celebration in another location. You are not permitted to have the wedding outdoors (OCM, no. 27).
25. The time for your wedding must be discussed with the priest of St. Matthew (and if applicable, the visiting priest/deacon who will be celebrating your marriage). Wedding times at St. Matthew are:

Friday Evenings - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Saturdays - 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM

26. Convalidations may be celebrated at the times given above or may be done after a weekend Mass or any evening during the week. Again, this must be discussed with the priest prior to the celebration.
27. If a wedding is celebrated during Lent, the penitential character will be maintained and thus a suitable simplicity in ceremony and decoration will be observed. No weddings will be permitted on Friday of the Passion of the Lord and Holy Saturday (OCM, no. 32).
28. If you are going to prepare for the Sacrament in another parish, you must submit a letter from the assisting priest or deacon stating that he is doing the necessary investigation per Canon Law and that he will submit the complete file and documentation on the freedom to marry of the bride and groom to St. Matthew in a timely manner. If the parish is located outside the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, the documents are sent through the Chancery of the home diocese to the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, which in turn sends the documents to St. Matthew.
29. If you would like a priest or deacon other than the priest from St. Matthew to celebrate your ceremony, the visiting priest or deacon must send a letter to the pastor of St. Matthew requesting the delegation required by Canon Law to lawfully witness your marriage. It is highly recommended, if all possible, that the celebrating priest or deacon be the one who prepares you for the sacrament.
30. If you request a concelebrating priest(s), it is appropriate that the same priest who prepares the engaged couple should, during the celebration of the Sacrament itself, give the Homily, receive the spouses’ consent, and celebrate the Mass (OCM, no. 23).

31. If you have not entered a civil marriage, and the celebration is not a convalidation of an existing civil marriage, you must purchase a Marriage License at the [Shawnee County Courthouse, Room 209](#) (<http://www.shawneecourt.org/FAQ.aspx?QID=77>). The marriage license can be purchased up to 60 days prior to the wedding and brought into the office at least one week before the date of marriage or may be brought to the rehearsal.

Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Programs

32. There are several approved marriage preparation courses available to you in this Archdiocese. Couples are required to choose one of the following:

- **Preparing to Live in Love** (Lead Couple Preparation - Seven Sessions) - Three key components make this program incredibly effective and uniquely helpful - program content, authentic witness, and experiential delivery. Topics include:

- A Mission to Love
- Smart Loving with insights from your family of origin
- Communicating for Intimacy
- Sex, Sacred Body Language
- Sacrament of Matrimony
- Forgiveness and Healing
- Becoming a Couple (decision making)

Website: livinginlove.org

- **School of Love Marriage Preparation** (Six Week Course) - A dynamic, Catholic, professional, and enjoyable program. If this is chosen, the NFP Introduction is not required. Topics include:

- Natural and supernatural Love
- Sacramental understanding and preparation
- Marital sexuality and the virtue of chastity
- Spiritual formation in prayer and virtue
- Communication and forgiveness
- Finances and tithing
- Natural Family Planning (theological and human as well as medical aspects)

Website: schooloflovekc.com

- **Preparing to Live in Love Weekend** (where available) - All seven sessions are covered and condensed into a weekend

- **Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend** - Is a weekend retreat away with other engaged couples with plenty of time alone together to plan for a sacramental marriage. It is designed to give couples planning marriage the opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together in a face-to-face way. Topics include:

- Understanding self
- Is romance enough?
- Are we communicating?
- Conflict resolution
- Creating a life-giving marriage
- Financial fidelity
- Two become one or unity
- Intimacy in marriage
- Becoming a family
- Sacrament of Matrimony
- Betrothal
- Stewardship

Website: archkck.org

(Ministries - Engaged Couples)

- **Agape On-Line Marriage Preparation** (Exceptional Form only) - This course makes it possible for couples in difficult circumstances to complete their marriage preparations. Such circumstances include military deployment, separation by distance or living in a rural area with no access to standard courses. If this is chosen, the NFP Introduction is not required. Topics include:
 - Knowing you better (introductions)
 - In the beginning ...
 - Sacrament of Marriage/Ephesians 5
 - NFP (Janet Smith)
 - The rite of matrimony in detail
 - Forgiveness/Your body is a temple
 - Relationship tools
 - Feedback (wrap up)

Website: catholicmarriageprep.com

33. All the above courses provide the following:

- Provide valuable skills for a successful marriage
- Allow time for you to reflect as a couple on your relationship
- Lay out the Church's vision for sacramental marriage and why that is important

NFP Introduction

34. NFP is a research-based method of spacing births that is not only effective but healthy for the woman and the couple's relationship. Couples are required to attend one of the following:

- "Prescription for a Long and Happy Life" with Dr. Laurie Heap
- FertilityCare Introductory Session. Register at fertilitycarekc.com or register.ccli.org

Website: archkck.org

(Ministries - Natural Family Planning)

Sacrament of Penance

35. I invite the couple (those who are Catholic) to go to confession before the wedding, especially if they have been away from the Church or if they have not been to confession for a long time. You are encouraged to make an appointment with a priest before the wedding to hear your confession or you may come to St. Matthew when this sacrament is readily available; i.e., **Saturdays at 4:00 - 4:45 PM or Wednesdays at 6:00 - 7:00 PM.**

36. This sacrament is very important, especially if the couple (those who are Catholic) are celebrating their matrimony within the context of Mass and are planning to receive Holy Communion. Remember, you must be in a state of grace and if you are aware of serious sin, you must go to confession before you receive our Lord in the Eucharist.

Planning the Ceremony

37. Once your freedom to marry has been established and you have completed your participation in the programs required by the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas or the completed file has been received at St. Matthew from another parish, you can begin to plan for the actual ceremony.

38. Regarding the readings for the celebration, we encourage you to read them and meditate on them as a couple. Prayerfully reading the proposed Scriptures will aid you in your preparation for the Liturgy of the Word at the ceremony.
39. When it comes to the consent or marriage vows, you may choose from the different options provided in the ritual. You may not, however, write your own.
40. When choosing Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist to assist at the celebration, please invite those who are familiar with these ministries and are actively participating in the Church.
41. If you will have music during the celebration, you will need to contact our Director of Music Ministry, Mr. Chris Hubbard (hubbardc@saintmatthews.org). He will inform you of the different musical possibilities and arrangements (cf. para. 52, 53).
42. If you are planning a solemn ceremony with a procession, music and a rehearsal, our marriage coordinator Sue Carson (dansuecarson@yahoo.com) will be assisting you in the planning of the details and rehearsal. She, as well as the priest, are the only ones authorized to manage and arrange wedding procedures at the rehearsal. A fee of **\$100** will be assessed for her services.
43. It is extremely important that all participating members be on time for the rehearsal in order to accommodate and be respectful of Church and personal schedules. The following are asked to attend the rehearsal: bride and groom, maid of honor and best man, bridesmaids and groomsmen/ushers, flower girl(s) and ring bearer(s) [*must be old enough to participate*], Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, and parents and grandparents. Musicians and cantors are also asked to attend if they are not familiar with St. Matthew Catholic Church.
44. Videographers and photographers are welcomed, but they are at the expense of the couple and will not be provided by the parish. If their services are obtained, they must follow the directives laid out later in these guidelines.
45. Alcohol is not permitted on church property at the time of the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony. Members of the wedding party are invited to refrain from drinking alcohol before the rehearsal and ceremony. Should the bride or groom arrive at the rehearsal or wedding in an inebriated state, the wedding will be postponed. Should a member of the wedding party be inebriated, he or she will not participate.

Marriage Ceremony

46. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish a lifelong partnership between themselves, derives its force and strength from creation, but for the Christian faithful it is also raised up to a higher dignity, since it is numbered among the Sacraments of the new covenant (OCM, no.1).
47. A Marriage is established by the conjugal covenant, that is, the irrevocable consent of both spouses, by which they freely give themselves to each other and accept each other. Moreover, this singular union of a man and a woman requires, and the good of the children demands, the complete fidelity of the spouses and the indissoluble unity of the bond (OCM, no. 2).

48. With these words in mind, you will be celebrating the mystery of human love in its most exalted form. Marriage is a communion of love and life between one man and one woman, when it is celebrated among Christians it has been elevated by Christ to the infinite dignity of a sacrament.
49. The day of your wedding is a joyous occasion for you, your families, and the entire Church. On this day, you will be filled with much excitement and emotion, but we encourage you and your guests to maintain a prayerful demeanor throughout the service.
50. The following are the Rites to be used for the wedding ceremony (*everything in Italics is optional*):

Matrimony within Mass: First Form

Greeting of Party at Door
 Entrance Procession
 Celebrant and Servers
 Wedding Party
 Groom with Parents
 Bride with Parents
 The Introductory Rites
 Sign of the Cross/Greeting
 Address to Couple and Community
 Gloria
 Collect
 The Liturgy of the Word
 1st Reading - Old Testament
 Responsorial Psalm
 2nd Reading - New Testament
 Alleluia
 Gospel
 Homily
 The Celebration of Matrimony
 The Questions Before the Consent
 The Consent
 The Reception of the Consent
 Acclamation
 The Blessing and Giving of Rings
 The Blessing and Giving of Arras
 Hymn or Canticle of Praise
 The Universal Prayer
 The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 Preparation of the Gifts
 Prayer Over the Offerings
 The Eucharistic Prayer
 Preface
 Holy, Holy, Holy
 The Memorial Acclamation
 The Great Amen
 The Communion Rite
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Blessing and Placing of Lazo or Veil
 The Nuptial Blessing
 The Sign of Peace
 Lamb of God
 Communion
 The Concluding Rites
 Prayer After Communion
 Final or Solemn Blessing

Matrimony within Mass: Second Form

Entrance Procession
 Celebrant and Servers
 Wedding Party
 Groom with Parents
 Bride with Parents
 Greeting of Party at the Sanctuary
 The Introductory Rites
 Sign of the Cross/Greeting
 Address to Couple and Community
 Gloria
 Collect
 The Liturgy of the Word
 1st Reading - Old Testament
 Responsorial Psalm
 2nd Reading - New Testament
 Alleluia
 Gospel
 Homily
 The Celebration Matrimony
 The Questions Before the Consent
 The Consent
 The Reception of the Consent
 Acclamation
 The Blessing and Giving of Rings
 The Blessing and Giving of Arras
 Hymn or Canticle of Praise
 The Universal Prayer
 The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 Preparation of the Gifts
 Prayer Over the Offerings
 The Eucharistic Prayer
 Preface
 Holy, Holy, Holy
 The Memorial Acclamation
 The Great Amen
 The Communion Rite
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Blessing and Placing of Lazo or Veil
 The Nuptial Blessing
 The Sign of Peace
 Lamb of God
 Communion
 The Concluding Rites
 Prayer After Communion
 Final or Solemn Blessing

Matrimony without Mass: First Form

Greeting of Party at Door
Entrance Procession
 Celebrant and Servers
 Wedding Party
 Groom with Parents
 Bride with Parents
The Introductory Rites
 Sign of the Cross/Greeting
 Address to Couple and Community
 Collect
The Liturgy of the Word
 1st Reading - Old Testament
 Responsorial Psalm
 2nd Reading - New Testament
 Alleluia
 Gospel
 Homily
The Celebration of Matrimony
 The Questions Before the Consent
 The Consent
 The Reception of the Consent
 Acclamation
 The Blessing and Giving of Rings
 The Blessing and Giving of Arras
 Hymn or Canticle of Praise
 The Universal Prayer
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Blessing and Placing of Lazo or Veil
 The Nuptial Blessing

Holy Communion
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Sign of Peace
 Communion
 Prayer After Communion

Final or Solemn Blessing

Matrimony without Mass: Second Form

Entrance Procession
 Celebrant and Servers
 Wedding Party
 Groom with Parents
 Bride with Parents
Greeting of Party at the Sanctuary
The Introductory Rites
 Sign of the Cross/Greeting
 Address to Couple and Community
 Collect
The Liturgy of the Word
 1st Reading - Old Testament
 Responsorial Psalm
 2nd Reading - New Testament
 Alleluia
 Gospel
 Homily
The Celebration Matrimony
 The Questions Before the Consent
 The Consent
 The Reception of the Consent
 Acclamation
 The Blessing and Giving of Rings
 The Blessing and Giving of Arras
 Hymn or Canticle of Praise
 The Universal Prayer
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Blessing and Placing of Lazo or Veil
 The Nuptial Blessing

Holy Communion
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Sign of Peace
 Communion
 Prayer After Communion

Final or Solemn Blessing

Matrimony Between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian

The Rite of Reception
 Greeting of Party at Door
 Entrance Procession
 Celebrant and Servers
 Wedding Party
 Groom with Parents
 Bride with Parents
The Liturgy of the Word (see above, there may be one or two readings)
The Celebration of Matrimony (see above)
 The Blessing and Giving of Rings may be *omitted*
 Nuptial Blessing may be *omitted*
Final Blessing

*Please see the following for an introduction to a Catholic Wedding: <http://youtu.be/3uAHwtBRg5c>

51. Other customs from outside these rituals may be used; e.g., roses to the Blessed Virgin Mary after communion, flowers presented to mothers by the couple at the sign of peace, the lighting of the unity candle after the blessing and giving of rings, etc. These practices continue under the force of a statement in the Introduction to the OCM that “attention should also be given ... to local customs, which may be observed if appropriate” (29). Please discuss these customs with the priest prior to the ceremony.
52. Regarding music for the ceremony, as in any other liturgical celebration the music should express and reflect the atmosphere of the ceremony. In accordance with the dignity of the occasion, the texts of songs to be sung ought to reflect the Christian understanding of love and marriage, the mystery of Christ and the Church. Music from the entertainment industry, pop-culture or similar genres is not appropriate at any time during the celebration of Christian marriage, no matter how beautiful or how meaningful they may be to your relationship. You may enjoy them in your wedding reception. Only music that has been composed for the liturgy can be used during the celebration. Some pieces of festive classical music are acceptable during the procession, but this must be discussed with our Director of Music Ministry, who has the final say.
53. In addition, all music to be done at your wedding ceremony will be conducted by capable musicians or soloists. No pre-recorded accompaniments for solo or ensemble singing is allowed, as well as no devices to play recordings.
54. Printed programs or booklets are not necessary, but they may be used as a means of engaging the congregation. If a Mass is celebrated and you choose to design a program or booklet, please include the following statement for your guests:

Catholics believe that the Eucharist is the true Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ and that our receiving the Holy Eucharist is the sign of our oneness and membership in the Roman Catholic Church. We invite Catholics who are prepared and properly disposed to come forward and receive Holy Communion. Those not receiving Holy Communion are invited to use this time to pray for the intentions of the newly married couple.

Flowers and Decorations

55. Flower arrangements are permitted in the church, but should not be placed by the altar or tabernacle to impede or obstruct the flow of the liturgy.
56. The florist should be made aware of the possibility that other celebrations may be taking place before the ceremony and should plan accordingly. They, or the couple, are asked to contact the parish office ahead of time to receive an approximate time when they may begin setting up for the ceremony. Flower arrangements, bouquets, women’s corsages and men’s boutonnieres may not be dropped off in the parish office.
57. Flower girls may throw plastic pedals down the middle aisle, but not real pedals. These are to be collected after the ceremony by the family.
58. Pew bows/flowers are permitted; however, they are not necessary. If they are used, no tape can be used attach them to the pews, but rather a ribbon or string. These too, are to be removed by the family immediately after the ceremony.

59. Candelabras are not necessary. If the couple chooses to use them, they must be lit before the celebration and will not be a part of the ceremony. They must be placed by the tabernacle, but should not impede or obstruct any movement during the liturgy.
60. Rice, bird seed, confetti or the like are not allowed on the premises of the Church. Bubbles are permitted, but only outside of the Church and after the ceremony. Aisle runners are not recommended.
61. If your marriage is taking place during Advent or Lent, we ask that you respect the penitential nature of the seasons and be discreet with the flower arrangements and other decorations. Florists ought to be reminded that in everything the ritual of the Church, Canon Law and these guidelines will be strictly followed.

Photographer/Videographer

62. It is entirely up to you to hire a photographer or videographer to take pictures of your marriage or produce a souvenir video.
63. The photographer will have approximately 30 minutes to an hour following the celebration to take pictures of the bride and the groom, depending on the time of the ceremony. The photographer may take pictures before the ceremony but must be done 30 minutes before the celebration commences. Please inform your photographer of these rules. Also, we ask that you remind the photographer that St. Matthew Catholic Church is a sacred space and, therefore, pictures taken ought to be dignified and appropriate to the space. Furniture is not to be used as props or moved.
64. Photographers/videographers must dress in a manner suitable to the environment and the occasion. They may not in any way disrupt the ceremony and they must be discreet while the ceremony is taking place. They are not allowed in the sanctuary (the area around the altar) at any time during the celebration.

Donation, Stipends, and Fees

65. The following are a list of donation(s), stipends, and fees:
 - Donation to the Church - If you or your family (parents or grandparents) are registered and contributing parishioners, the suggested amount to donate to St. Matthew is **\$200** (not including the \$100 fee for the marriage coordinator). If you are not a registered and contributing member of the parish, we suggest an amount of **\$500** (not including the \$100 fee for the marriage coordinator).
 - Music ministers and others - In addition to an organist, weddings may feature instrumentalists, a cantor and other singers. The fees for these services will be discussed with the Director of Music Ministry.
If the celebration includes a Mass, altar servers should be given a small offering.
 - Clergy - The services of the priest or deacon are free, but it is customary to offer a stipend. Couples may want to consider not only the time devoted to the wedding, but also the effort put into the marriage preparation process.

66. Donations and stipends should be placed in clearly marked envelopes and given to the intended recipients by the couple or the couple's family.

Conclusion

67. Throughout the process of immediate preparation for your marriage, the most important element is your prayer for the gifts of holiness, unity and indissolubility. These guidelines are meant to help you prepare for the external aspects of the celebration. The most important element in your preparation is your own spiritual growth. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to meet regularly with the priest or deacon who is helping you to prepare for marriage, to find time for personal prayer and communal prayer with your future spouse and to develop the habit of going to Mass together every Sunday before the date of your wedding and beyond.

68. Remember, marriage is not a social event and it is not a social construct, it is not for the weak, the selfish, and the insecure. Marriage is a communion of love and life between a man and a woman that when it is celebrated between Christians has been raised by Jesus Christ to the dignity of a sacrament, that is, a vehicle of the life and love of God!

Resources

Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body by John Paul II

Love and Responsibility by Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II)

Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built by William May

Men and Women are From Eden by Mary Healy

Three to Get Married by Fulton Sheen

Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Marriage God Wants for You: Why the Sacrament Makes All the Difference by Cardinal Wuerl

Good News about Sex and Marriage by Christopher West

Embracing God's Plan for Marriage: A Scripture Study for Couples by Mark and Melanie Hart

The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth by Scott Hahn

Behold the Mystery: A Deeper Understanding of the Catholic Mass by Mark Hart

Eucharist by Bishop Robert Barron



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