

Frequently Asked Questions

When can we schedule our wedding date?

Your wedding date and time may be scheduled after Step 2 of the Marriage Process. Please book with Nancy Boettcher at nboettcher@stboc.org

What if one of us has been previously married?

If either of you have been married before, whether in the Catholic Church or by any other civil or religious authority, even if you are not Catholic, you will need to obtain an annulment before being married in the Catholic Church. For more information please contact us at rayala@stboc.org

Can we bless our civil marriage?

You may validate your civil marriage. In most cases, preparation for convalidation is very similar to the marriage preparation process. On a case by case basis, it can be customized to best serve the needs of each couple.

What are the costs to be married at St. Bernard of Clairvaux?

- Facility Fee: \$500 (Registered Parishioners), \$1000 (Non-Registered Parishioners)
- Musician Fee starts at \$250
- Sound Engineer at \$50
- Wedding Planner Fee: \$200
- Loved for Life Engagement Weekend Fee: \$135
- God's Plan for A Joy-Filled Marriage Class Fee: \$85
- Natural Family Planning Class Fee: around \$130

It is customary to give the priest or deacon a stipend for officiating at your wedding. The Diocese of Phoenix recommends \$100, but the amount is left to your discretion and is considered a gift. If you choose to give your priest or deacon a gift, it must be written directly to him.

What days of the week and times are weddings celebrated?

Weddings are typically celebrated on Friday evenings at 4:00 PM or 5:00 PM, Saturdays at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Other days of the week are permitted, providing that both the church and priest are available.

Are there any days that weddings are not permitted?

The Catholic Church does not permit nuptial masses and other ritual masses on November 2, the Feast of All Souls or on other solemn feasts, such as Solemnity of Mary (Octave of Christmas) Jan 1, Christmas Day, and during Holy Week. Marriages during the Season of Lent are not encouraged.

When and where will the rehearsal be held?

The rehearsal is typically held in the church the night before the wedding at 5:00 PM. If for some special reason, the day before the wedding does not work, an alternate date can be arranged.

Who will preside at our wedding?

We invite you to meet with our parish priest if you are going to marry at St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Guest priests are also welcome to celebrate the wedding.

What time are we able to arrive at the church?

The church is available an hour before your scheduled wedding time on the day of the wedding and half an hour after the wedding ends. You are welcome to take pictures before, during, and after the wedding. Although, flash photography is not allowed during the ceremony.

Will the marriage be celebrated within the celebration of Mass?

If both the bride and the groom are Catholic and the Eucharist is meaningful to them, celebrating a marriage within a Mass is recommended since the Eucharist is our main sign of unity. This entire liturgy will be approximately one hour in length. If either the bride or the groom is not Catholic, it is recommended the marriage be celebrated without a Mass. Since at present, Catholics and other Christians do not have shared communion, it would be inhospitable to have only the bride or the groom receive the Eucharist. This communicates a strong symbol of disunity. This entire liturgy will be approximately forty minutes in length.

Can we have flowers, pew bows, and runners?

You are welcome to bring flowers to decorate the church except during the season of Lent. You may use pew bows but please do not use tape to attach them (rubber bands, floral wire and pipe cleaners work just as well). Aisle runners are not used at St. Bernard's because of the risk of slipping on the smooth travertine marble floor.

How many witnesses or people in the bridal party should we have?

The size of your bridal party is up to you. The Catholic Church does require that you have two witnesses present. These witnesses must be at least 16 years of age and they do not have to be Catholic. However, the State of Arizona requires that the witnesses signing the marriage license are at least 18 years of age.

The music you select for your wedding must be liturgical in nature or instrumental. You are strongly encouraged to use our Music Director, Mr. Kent Campbell.

Who will help plan the marriage liturgy?

One of our Wedding Coordinators will assist you in planning the details of the liturgy. She will schedule and conduct your rehearsal, finish preparing the marriage license, as well as be present on your wedding day from the time you arrive to the time you depart, making sure all details are complete. Plan to meet with the Wedding Coordinator at least four weeks before the wedding and feel free to call her with questions regarding flowers, photography, etc. anytime leading up to that meeting.

What Scripture readings will be used, how do we select them and who should read them?

The recommended readings are in the book "Together for Life" and are the readings most appropriate for this liturgy. You will receive this book when you meet with the parish priest.

You need to select THREE readings for your wedding: one from the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures, one from the New Testament/Christian Scriptures, and one from the Gospels in the New Testament. When you have made your Scripture selections, select ONE wedding guest to read the Old Testament/Hebrew Scripture reading and ONE wedding guest to read the New Testament reading. The priest/deacon will read the Gospel from the New Testament.

If you are having a Mass, the readers must be Catholic. Select one person, to read the Prayers of the Faithful. The person reading the Prayers of the Faithful does not have to be Catholic. Please remember in your choice of readers to select people who read clearly and distinctly, who can project their voice, and who are not afraid of a microphone. Give all the readers their reading well in advance so they can practice. Please, consider also selecting readers who can attend the rehearsal so that they can practice in the actual space and with the sound system. If you are having a wedding Mass, you will also need 2 people to bring the gifts of bread and wine forward. The gift bearers do not have to be Catholic.

What role does Hospitality play?

To be welcoming, hospitality always plays an important role. It speaks of gratitude to friends and family when the bride and groom greet and welcome their guests upon arrival. It creates a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere, putting people in a celebratory and participatory mood. Since your guests have been invited to share in this special day in your life, it dispenses with formality by putting emphasis on the relationship of the couple to the guests. It may also help relax and calm you during the time you are waiting for the liturgy to begin. It is a beautiful way of expressing gratitude and appreciation to guests for their presence. Although this is optional, it is worth your consideration.

Ushers/Greeters: Ushers and greeters could be inside or outside welcoming people and distributing

Worship Aides: You can be assured your guests are greeted if you choose people for this role who are welcoming by nature.

Guest Book: If you plan to have a guest book at the church, it is good to have a person placed at the book to welcome guests and invite them to sign the guest book.

What about wedding customs?

Flowers to the Blessed Mother: This practice is a personal religious devotion. It consists of taking flowers to the statue of Our Lady. The couple silently asks Mary to remain close to them throughout their marriage. This custom is optional, so if it is not important to you personally, we do not suggest you add it to your ceremony.

Lazo & Arras: This Hispanic custom is optional. Again, if it is not important to you personally, we do not suggest you add this to your ceremony.