

# The Sacrament of Matrimony



## Couples Checklist for Church Marriage

- Meet with your parish priest/deacon at least 6 months in advance of the desired date, prior to making any other wedding arrangements. A suggested donation to Holy Redeemer of \$300.00 will be gladly accepted. Additional fees are as follows:
  - Organist: \$200.00
  - Cantor: \$100.00Checks should be made payable to “Holy Redeemer”.
  
- Church use
  - Obtain permission of the pastor if: (1) you wish a priest/deacon outside the parish to officiate
  - or (2) you request the presence of any non-Catholic clergy.
  - Choose witnesses. The best man and maid/matron of honor may be Catholic or Non-Catholic.
  - Check with your parish priest/deacon concerning:
    - Flowers and decorations
    - Rehearsal date and time
    - Photographer

## PRE- MARITAL FORMATIONAL SESSION

- Pre-Nuptial Investigation
  - This is a short questionnaire to be filled out with both parties prior to marriage to assure the Church there is no impediment to the marriage. This is completed with your priest at the parish office.
  
- Sign up for and attend an Archdiocese of Washington Marriage Preparation Class
  - <http://www.adw.org/marriage-prep-schedule/>
  
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
  - All are encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the rehearsal.

- Wedding Liturgy
  - A booklet called, “Together for Life” will be given to you at the time of your initial meeting with the priest. It provides guidance in selecting appropriate scripture readings and prayers for the liturgy. Because of issues concerning Eucharistic sharing which may arise from the presence of non-Catholic witnesses and guests, a mixed marriage celebrated according to the Catholic form ordinarily takes place outside the Eucharistic liturgy.

### CHURCH DOCUMENTS NEEDED

- For the Catholic Party:
  - Recent Baptism Certificate
    - Contact the church in which you were baptized. The certificate needs to be dated within six months of the marriage
  - Confirmation Certificate
    - Contact the church in which you were confirmed. The certificate needs to be dated within six months of the marriage.
- For the Non-Catholic Party:
  - Baptismal certificate
    - When documentary proof is not available, affidavits of parents or trustworthy persons are acceptable.
    - Testimony the Party is Free to Marry obtained from two witnesses

### CIVIL DOCUMENTS NEEDED

- Marriage License
  - The license is obtained from a municipality within the State of Maryland.

For convalidation of a civil ceremony the paper work indicated above must be done as well as providing the church documents as well.

Proof of civil marriage must be presented.

### DISPENSATIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF NULLITY

This only applies if one or both parties have been previously married or if one party is from another religious tradition. The priest or deacon officiate at your wedding is responsible for acquiring any and all dispensations necessary for the marriage. If an annulment is necessary, all procedures cease and the wedding date/ time shall be released until a declaration of nullity is officially obtained. No marriage may take place at the Collegiate Church unless both parties are free of prior bond (i.e., previous marriage) and impediments, with necessary dispensations (e.g., if one party is from a non-Christian tradition) and permission (e.g., if one party is from a Christian tradition outside of the Roman Catholic Church).

## PLANNING YOUR WEDDING MUSIC

Our Holy Redeemer Music Ministry shares in your joy over your upcoming wedding. We are honored to help you plan the music for your happy event.

- What to do first:
  - The first step in planning music for your wedding is to contact our parish music director, Mrs. Maria Balducci. Typically couples make an appointment to meet with Mrs. Balducci within six months before wedding. Please contact Mrs. Balducci at the office (301) 474-3920 or email at maria.balducci@holy-redeemer.org.
  - When you get in touch with Mrs. Balducci, she will help explain how music plays an important liturgical role within the wedding Mass. She will provide a list of suggested music selections, and is happy to help plan the music as much as you would like.
  - The Catholic Church requires that all music used in Catholic worship must reverently reflect that sacred prayer that is being celebrated. Music perceived as "secular" (non-sacred) by our culture may not be used in Catholic worship. If you plan to use musicians from elsewhere, your musicians will also be required to observe the Catholic Church's music requirements. Therefore, you will still need to contact Mrs. Balducci and review the music selections together before the wedding.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact the Parish Office at  
301-474-3920  
Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 4:00pm

## GUIDELINES FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographers / Videographers are asked to comply with the policy outlined below. Please give a copy of this form to both the photographer and videographer.

- Photographers may:
  - take photographs of the guest as they arrive,
  - take photographs of the ushers/ groom prior to the ceremony provided guests are not left unattended,
  - take photographs of the procession, reading of scripture, wedding ceremony, and preparation of gifts, communion procession and recessional.
- Photographers may NOT:
  - take photographs during the Eucharistic Prayer,
  - cause the ceremony to start late for "limo" pictures,
  - interrupt the flow of the procession in any way, shape or form,
  - enter the sanctuary for any reason,
  - change the church environment for any reason,
  - block the view of guests.

- Videographers
  - are permitted ONLY if they set up a stationary camera. They may NOT move around the space at any time.

### FLOWERS & DECORATIONS

- Holy Redeemer will be opened two hours prior to the Wedding Mass in so that flowers may be delivered & arranged.
- You may NOT rearrange the church furnishings in order to accommodate wedding décor without the express permission of the pastor.
- Simple pew bows or reserved signs may be used to indicate reserved seating, however we ask that tape not be used to hang them on the ends of the pews.
- For safety reasons, floor runners may not be used.
- You may wish to place simple flower arrangements on the sanctuary in the following places:
  - In front of the altar,
  - In front of the ambo, at the base of the Sacred Heart of Jesus & Our Lady statues
- Flowers may not be utilized during the sacred holy season of Lent. However, the bride and her bridal court may carry flowers while entering and exiting the church, as well as the groom's men may wear buttoners. The Groom's and Bride's mothers may also wear corsages.
- Couples wishing to honor the Blessed Mother during their ceremony may present Our Lady with a simple small bouquet of flowers during the wedding liturgy.
- No additional flowers and decorations may be used.

### WEDDING REHEARSAL

In order to get your special day just right, it is important that the entire wedding party attend the wedding rehearsal. This is held the day before your wedding from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the church.

### What is the Sacrament of Matrimony?

#### A Natural Institution

Marriage is a practice common to all cultures in all ages. It is, therefore, a natural institution, something common to all mankind. At its most basic level, marriage is a union between a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation and mutual support, or love. Each spouse in a marriage gives up some rights over his or her life in exchange for rights over the life of the other spouse.

While divorce has existed throughout history, it has been rare until recent centuries, which indicates that, even in its natural form, marriage is meant to be a lifelong, union.

## **The Elements of a Natural Marriage**

As Fr. John Hardon explains in his Pocket Catholic Dictionary, there are four elements common to natural marriage throughout history:

- It is a union of opposite sexes.
- It is a lifelong union, ending only with the death of one spouse.
- It excludes a union with any other person so long as the marriage exists.
- Its lifelong nature and exclusiveness are guaranteed by contract.

## **A Supernatural Institution**

In the Catholic Church, however, marriage is more than a natural institution; it was elevated by Christ Himself, in His participation in the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), to be one of the seven sacraments. A marriage between two Christians, therefore, has a supernatural element as well as a natural one. While few Christians outside of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches regard marriage as a sacrament, the Catholic Church insists that marriage between any two baptized Christians, as long as it is entered into with the intention to contract a true marriage, is a sacrament.

## **The Mark and Effect of the Sacrament**

The spouses are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage because the mark—the external sign—of the sacrament is not the wedding Mass or anything the priest might do but the marriage contract itself. This does not mean the wedding license that the couple receives from the state, but the vows that each spouse makes to the other. As long as each spouse intends to contract a true marriage, the sacrament is performed.

The effect of the sacrament is an increase in sanctifying grace for the spouses, a participation in the divine life of God Himself.

## **The Union of Christ and His Church**

This sanctifying grace helps each spouse to help the other advance in holiness, and it helps them together to cooperate in God's plan of redemption by raising up children in the Faith.

In this way, sacramental marriage is more than a union of a man and a woman; it is, in fact, a type and symbol of the divine union between Christ, the Bridegroom, and His Church, the Bride. As married Christians, open to the creation of new life and committed to our mutual salvation, we participate not only in God's creative act but in the redemptive act of Christ.

From Scott P. Richert, *About.com Catholicism*