

St Mary of the Assumption Church

414 East Church Street

Santa Maria, CA 93454

(805) 922-5826

MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

Congratulations once again on your decision to marry in the Catholic Church! The guidelines below explain in detail each part of the preparation process outlined on our Parish Marriage Information sheet which you have already received and read. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have as the person conducting the interview revises these guidelines with you.

Meetings with the Clergy

Between now and the wedding ceremony, the couple meets several times with the person helping them to prepare for their marriage. These meetings can last up to one hour each and involve paperwork, planning, and taking written testimony. It is the couple's responsibility to schedule these meetings.

The "Foccus" Pre-Marital Inventory (PMI)

The PMI directs the discussions between the couple and the person helping them prepare for their marriage towards those areas of married life that may not yet have been adequately explored or discussed by the couple or in which they have disagreements. Generally, there are two to four one-hour meetings to discuss the results.

Collection of Documents

At the end of your first meeting with the priest or parish minister preparing you for your marriage, a marriage file will be started for you. All of the following documents will be kept in this file and the file will become a part of the permanent records of the parish.

- Proof of baptism or non-baptism for each party: Catholics must submit a new copy of a baptism certificate, issued within the last six months, from the church where they were originally baptized; non-Catholics may submit a copy of any kind of document they have. Non-Catholics do not have to obtain new certificates. If the required proofs of baptism are absolutely unavailable, sworn testimony of family members can be substituted using the proper forms. Un-baptized persons must have their non-baptism verified by at least two other family members.
- Certificates of First Communion and/or Confirmation: If these sacraments were received in either a Catholic or Orthodox Church, photocopies of the original certificates, or new ones, should be included in the file.
- Certificate of Completion of a Marriage Preparation Program: Each couple must attend a marriage preparation program. The priest or parish minister will give you a copy of the schedule for the next three months. It is the couple's obligation to schedule and attend a program. There are three types of program:
Engaged Encounter Weekend - Four week Program and One day Program
- Sworn testimony of two people for each party establishing their freedom to marry: this testimony is given under oath, in private, on the forms provided. Witnesses are usually parents or other family members. Witnesses for the groom must have known him since he was 16 years old. Witnesses for the bride must have known her since she was 14 years old. The forms can be sent to witnesses anywhere in the world.
- Sworn Testimony of the Bride and Groom: This is usually the last piece of paperwork included in the marriage file. Like the witnesses mentioned above, each fiance gives his/her testimony in private, under oath, on the forms provided.
- Marriage License: In the United States, church weddings are recognized by the government as legal. Normally, Catholics would have only one ceremony. Because the church marriage is also the legal marriage, the couple must have a valid civil marriage license in order to get married in the Church. The priest or parish minister will provide you with the information necessary to obtain one. (Please note: the marriage license is valid for 90 days only - **do** not get one more than 90 days prior to your marriage). If you are already civilly married, you must provide a copy of your original civil marriage license to be included in your marriage file.

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- Annulments of prior marriages: If either party has ever been married to anyone else, either in the Church or outside the Church, whether they are Catholic or not, they are not free to marry in the Catholic Church until each marriage has been annulled by the Church. No date for a wedding can be reserved until the couple's freedom to marry has been established.
- Special Permissions: special permissions or dispensations are necessary for Catholics to marry in certain situations. These include a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic Christian, a Catholic marrying a non-Christian, and couples wishing to marry when one of them is under the age of 20. These situations require additional paperwork, discussion and/or counseling and a letter of evaluation from a psychologist.

Fulfillment of Financial Obligations:

Generally, the financial obligations include the following:

- Customary donation to the parish: \$400.00
- Counselor: _____ + ?
- Minimum Total Financial Obligations: \$400.00 +?

Marriage is a right in the Catholic Church. No eligible Catholic can be denied a Church wedding because they cannot make a donation. If you are unable to fulfill the usual obligation, please let the priest or parish minister know immediately so that other arrangements can be made.

Planning the Wedding Ceremony

The priest or parish minister will give you and explain the planning booklet called "*Together for Life*." This booklet contains all of the choices for all of the parts of a wedding ceremony, as well as planning forms. The booklet also contains complete instructions and explanations.

Rehearsal

Please contact the Parish Wedding Coordinator to schedule your rehearsal at least one month before the ceremony. The coordinator is Gisela Rendon (805) 922-5826.

Music

The basic guideline to be followed in planning your music is that all music played in the church should be religious and liturgically correct and should be played live.

Decorations

You are welcome to decorate the interior of the church for your wedding. Please do not do anything that damages, mars or scars the walls, floor or furniture. Tacks, tape, or bare wire are not permitted. Runners are not permitted down the main aisle. No floral or garden arches. Please do not throw things (*flowers, petals, rice, birdseed, etc.*) inside or outside the church. Pew decorations must hang from the ends of the pews. These are to be removed after the wedding. You are welcome to leave flowers for Sunday Mass if you wish. NOTE: Floral arrangements of any type are NOT permitted during Lent.

Photography

Photographers should check with the wedding coordinator to review the guidelines for weddings either at the rehearsal or prior to the wedding. Generally, pictures can be taken anytime during the ceremony from anywhere in the church except from the sanctuary. Each couple may have one still photographer and one video cameraman. Flash pictures and video camera lights are not permitted. A posed picture of the entire wedding party may be taken in the church immediately after the ceremony. All other pictures are to be taken outside or at the reception!

*Please remember to give a copy of these guidelines to all musicians, decorators and photographers; if they have any questions have them contact the Rectory (805) 922-5826.

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MARRIAGE INFORMATION

The Faith Community of La Purisima Concepcion congratulates you on your decision to marry in the Catholic Church. Our preparation process is intended to help you prepare to enter a marriage that will last for the rest of your lives and to assess your readiness to do so at this time. The basic outline of the process appears below. Each item or requirement will be fully explained to you by Father during your first interview.

1. Call the Rectory (805) 92-5826 and request an appointment for your pre-marriage interview. Both the bride and the groom must be present. This initial interview must take place at **last six months before the proposed wedding date.**
2. Complete the Marriage Information Form on the other side of this page and bring it with you to your interview.
3. If there are no apparent obstacles to your marrying at this time, the person preparing you for marriage will give you a copy of the Marriage Guidelines and explain each requirement. If there are obstacles to marrying at this time, they will be explained to you and you will be told how to remove them
4. The marriage preparation process include the following:
 - Several one hour meetings with the person who is assisting you with the preparation.
 - Evaluation of the pre-marital inventory called "Foccus" administered with a counselor, used to help assess your readiness for marriage. You will be given the counselor's name and phone number.
 - Collection of the documents necessary to complete your marriage file.
 - a) Proof of baptism or non-baptism for each party.
 - b) Certificates for First Communion and/or Confirmation if received in a Catholic or Orthodox Church
 - c) Certificate of completion of an approved marriage preparation program.
 - d) Sworn testimony of two people for each party establishing their freedom to marry in the Catholic Church.
 - e) Sworn testimony of both the bride and groom.
 - f) Valid civil marriage license issued by any county in the State of California or, if you are already civilly married, a copy of the marriage license for that ceremony.
 - g) Church decrees of annulment for **any kind of prior marriage** by either the bride or the groom, whether Catholic or not.
 - h) Any special permission(s) required by Church law.
5. Fulfillment of financial obligations. (This includes a **\$50.00 non-refundable deposit** to reserve the date of your wedding.) Please make sure the donation to the church has been **paid in full at least one month prior** to your wedding date.
6. Planning the wedding ceremony
7. Rehearsal
8. Celebration of the marriage

We are looking forward to helping you through this process of preparation and to the celebration of your wedding.

MARRIAGE INFORMATION FORM

Groom's Name: _____
(Your Full Name)

Address: _____

Home Phone:()_____ Work Phone ()_____ Other: ()_____

Birth Date: _____ Place of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Religion: _____ Parish/Church: _____ City: _____
(What parish do you belong to?)

Have you ever been baptized? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, in what religion? _____

Have you ever been married before, in any kind of ceremony, civil or religious? Yes _____ No _____

.....

Bride's Maiden Name: _____
(Your Full Name)

Address: _____

Home Phone:()_____ Work Phone ()_____ Other: ()_____

Birth Date: _____ Place of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Religion: _____ Parish/Church: _____ City: _____
(What parish do you belong to?)

Have you ever been baptized? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, in what religion? _____

Have you ever been married before, in any kind of ceremony, civil or religious? Yes _____ No _____

Who do you want to officiate at your wedding? _____

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Interviewer: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Ceremony Day: _____ Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____

Language: English_____/ Spanish_____/ Bilingual_____ Celebrant: _____

Deposit: _____ Balance: _____ Date Paid: ____/____/____ Receipt #: _____

Interviewer's Comments: _____
