

CATHOLIC TEACHING ABOUT MARRIAGE

For most people marriage is one of the most important decisions and realities of their life; in it they form a community of love. For Catholics, marriage is not merely a civil contract but is a covenant between a man and a woman before God. If both are baptized, the marriage is a sacrament, a symbol of the unity of Christ and the Church. A sacramental marriage is a means of grace, giving strength to the husband and wife to live out their commitment, and to help each on the path to holiness.

THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT

As you prepare for marriage, you'll be asked to reflect carefully and prayerfully on the nature of this sacrament.

The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

PRELIMINARY PLANNING BEGINS WITH THE ORIENTATION SESSION

Most couples reserve a reception location as much as a year in advance. Before you do that, or contract with a photographer, or think about invitations, or make any other agreements you should contact the Coordinator of Liturgy & Sacraments (281-370-3401) and make plans to attend one of the monthly orientation sessions as a couple.

Archdiocesan guidelines require that you schedule your wedding at least 6 to 9 months before the time you'd like to get married. This will allow sufficient time for preparation, not only for the wedding celebration, which will last a short time, but also for the marriage, which will last a lifetime.

DATES AND TIMES

Weddings are celebrated on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. Rehearsals are conducted on Friday evenings.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

The first required step in the preparation process for the sacrament of Matrimony at St. Ignatius Loyola is participation in an orientation session. These 2 hour sessions will be held monthly on the fourth Sunday of the month following the 11:00 am Mass (12:30 – 2:30 pm) in the Christus Center.

Once you have decided on marriage, it is never too early to participate in this session. The preparation process takes a minimum of 6-9 months so consider attending the introductory session at least 7-10 months prior to your anticipated marriage date.

Couples seeking to prepare for and/or celebrate the sacrament at St. Ignatius Loyola will meet with members of the clergy, representatives from the Offices of Liturgy & Sacraments and Adult Formation for an introduction to the preparation process, an overview of the liturgy planning, the process for scheduling a date for your marriage and to complete the initial paperwork.

Pre-registration is not required but is helpful for planning. Download and complete the Marriage Preparation Information form from the menu at left. Bring the completed form and a recent certified copy (issued within the last 6 months) of each one's baptism certificate to the session if possible.

For further information and to register call Luis Garcia, Coordinator of Liturgy & Sacraments, at the parish office.

Childcare is available for children ages 6 months - 10 years in the parish nursery; please register with Kathy Schaefer at the parish office no later than one week prior to the session.

Once you participate in the Orientation session and complete the necessary paperwork, you'll begin a formal process of marriage preparation which includes scheduling the date of your marriage. Preparation for marriage involves a process of discernment, which is meant to be an affirming experience as you become more aware of your readiness to enter Christian married life. This process is meant to help you assess your personal faith and your relational readiness, not to make those judgments for or about you. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

"So that the "I do" of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance."

St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, Spring TX

Initial interview

The process begins when you sit down for an initial conversation with the priest or deacon who will be responsible for your marriage preparation.. This is an opportunity for you to get to know one another, to explain the marriage preparation process, to discuss any necessary permissions or dispensations if necessary and to complete the Prenuptial Investigation form.

Faith readiness

One of the most important aspects of the discernment process is the assessment of your faith readiness. Because the marriage of two baptized Christians is a sacrament, it requires the presence of faith in those who receive it. No two people are at the same place in their journey of faith, however. Through the marriage preparation process, you should be able to better identify and deepen your faith, both as individuals and as a couple.

Marriage readiness

Another aspect of the discernment process looks at your readiness to marry. While there is no possible way to determine this definitively, there are clear indicators that can predict potential problems or even the eventual failure of the marriage. You'll be asked to complete the Fully Engaged Inventory; a premarital inventory, which will give both of you an opportunity to reflect on your attitudes and your relationship. This isn't a test, but is an aid for you and the priest or deacon to use in highlighting important areas for discussion.

Formation programs

This part of the marriage preparation process is intended to help you understand better both the human and Christian aspects of marriage, and to introduce you to persons and resources that are available to help strengthen your marriage. Couples are required to participate in one of two programs:

- Our parish **Mentor Couple program**: A married mentor couple assists in the preparation. Through individual reflection, written assignments and group dialogue, the engaged couple learns of married life from a couple already living a Christian marriage.
- The Archdiocesan **Engaged Encounter**: A Weekend experience designed to give couples an opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their future life together. Couples will address topics such as self-identity, role expectations, money, sex, children, family and religion

Wedding Liturgy

During the course of preparation for marriage, couples will have an opportunity to participate in the planning of their wedding liturgy. The priest or deacon will work closely with them and advise them of the many options they have in selecting Scripture readings, prayers, blessings, and vow formulas.

WEDDING FEES

FEES FOR REGISTERED PARISHIONERS

A parishioner is a person who has been a registered and a contributing member of St. Ignatius Loyola Parish for at least 6 months prior to scheduling their wedding. All others are considered non-parishioners.

FEES FOR NON-PARISHIONERS

In addition to the fee for registered parishioners, an additional charge of \$500.00 will be added for use of the Lady Chapel. For use of the main sanctuary, an additional fee of \$1000.00 will be added. These fees are required to be submitted at the same time the initial deposit and contract are returned.

FOR PARISHIONERS AND NON-PARISHIONERS

The Initial Deposit (and additional fees for Non-Parishioners) is due (payable to St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church) with the signed wedding contract and alcohol policy prior to securing a date for your wedding. All remaining fees are due at least six weeks prior to the rehearsal. (Payable to St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church and delivered or mailed to the Office of Liturgy and Sacraments at St. Ignatius Loyola.)

For any further information please contact Luis Garcia, Coordinator of Liturgy & Sacraments (281-370-3401).