

Guidelines for Weddings at Christ, Our Savior Catholic Parish

Congratulations! Your decision to marry one another is a yes to the Lord to share your lives together as wife and husband. You have met each other, fallen in love and now realize that you cannot imagine the future without each other. Your decision to marry in the Catholic Church is also a gift that you will give to your families, the parish community, your future children and all of humanity. Your love for each other is a reminder to every one of the passionate love of Christ for his people. Thank you for saying yes.

As you get started in planning your wedding, there are a few things you will need to know:

- The sacrament of Marriage is between two baptized people, male and female.
 - If one of you has been baptized in another Christian faith community, your baptism, if under the formula of “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” is valid and would mean your marriage to each other is the sacrament of Marriage.
 - If one of you has never been baptized under the above formula, your marriage is a holy union, but it is not considered a sacrament. If the unbaptized person is baptized in the future, your marriage automatically become the Sacrament of Marriage.
 - When a marriage takes place between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, we must request special permission from the Bishop for the Catholic to marry a non-Catholic. The Catholic party must promise to continue to practice the Catholic faith and have all the children baptized and raised as Catholics. The non-Catholic person is simply asked not to interfere.
 - There is no requirement for the non-Catholic to convert to be a Catholic to marry in the Catholic Church. If, however, the non-Catholic would like to become Catholic, we are happy to help with this process. All discernment and preparation to become Catholic is done apart from the Marriage preparation.
- You must be free to enter into Marriage.
 - If you have been married previously at any time in any country, you will need to receive a Church annulment. No date can be set until this process is completed. Please consult with the priest or deacon who is responsible for your preparation to guide you through the annulment process.
 - You need to be able to complete the basic ends of marriage, mutual support of each other, willing to be faithful to each other in all areas of life and be open to the possibility of having children.
 - If you are struggling with any substance abuse, please be aware this will profoundly affect the marriage in a negative way. Please be honest with each other and the person responsible for your preparation.
 - We ask each person to provide the testimony of two people who have known you for a long time, like parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles. Forms will be provided for them to fill out in front of a priest or deacon.
- Documents you will need:

- A new copy of your Baptism certificate. It is common in the Catholic Church to request an updated copy of your baptism. It should be a new certificate issued within the last six months. If you are of another Christian faith tradition, we ask for a copy of your Baptism certificate also.
- Certificates of your First Communion and Confirmation. If you are not Catholic, you will not have these sacraments from the Catholic Church.
- A marriage license. The Catholic Church follows the law of each country. In the State of California, a Catholic priest or deacon has the authority to witness marriages. There is no need to be married civilly before being married in the Catholic Church. A marriage license is obtain from the Orange County Clerk's Office. You can fill out the application for your license on line.
- **Couples must complete their marriage license application and make an appointment online prior visiting our office. Marriage license applications can be completed at:**
<https://ocweddings.ocrecorder.com/#/>
 Again service is by appointment only. **No walk-in service** is available at this time.
- A Marriage license is valid for 90 days. For this reason, it is advisable to set your Marriage license appointment about a month before your wedding.
- After obtaining the Marriage license, please give it to the person responsible for your wedding preparation.
- Marriage Preparation Programs:
 - You must complete one of the following Marriage Preparation Programs before your wedding date.
 - Catholic Engaged Encounter at <https://eweekend.org/>
 - Diocese of Orange Marriage Preparation: <https://ocmarriage-fflcm.talentlms.com/>
 - Visit the Diocese of Orange for other Marriage preparation programs.
 - Fr. Joe Robillard likes to use FOCCUS as a guide for discussions with the couples he is working with.
- Times of weddings:
 - Normally weddings are scheduled on Saturdays, at 10 am, 12 noon and 2 pm provided there is no other parish event scheduled in the Church.
 - Weddings can take place any other day of the week provide that it does not conflict with any scheduled parish event. Weddings are not available on Sundays because of the Sunday Mass obligation for all Catholics.
- How much?
 - Marriage is a sacrament, a gift from God. For this reason, there is no charge for the sacrament. Christ, Our Savior Catholic Parish maintains it services by donations. The recommended donation for a wedding is \$500. If you decide to give more than \$500 the parish will be very grateful. If you decide to give less than \$500, we will still celebrate your wedding here.

- We ask for a refundable deposit of \$200 that will go towards the donation to the parish.
- Other services provided by the parish
 - Wedding Coordinator: \$200 (The wedding coordinator will do the rehearsal and be present on the day of the wedding to insure everything runs smoothly)
 - Music:
 - Organ accompaniment \$200
 - Cantor \$150
 - Choir \$300
- The priest who prepares the couple and officiates at the wedding does not charge a fee for his services. It is customary to offer a gift of appreciation. The suggested appropriate gift is \$100 and it is much appreciated
- It is customary to have a rehearsal before the wedding so that the wedding party is comfortable with the ceremony on the day of the wedding. Everyone who will have a special part in the ceremony is expected to be at the rehearsal.
- Photographers and videographers:
 - Every couple likes to capture the special moments of the wedding day and it is customary to engage the services of a photographer and/or videographer. We ask you to have the photographer and/or videographer to consult with the wedding coordinator where it is appropriate to take photos/videos.
 - Because a wedding in the Catholic Church is a religious ceremony, photographers and videographers are not allowed in the sanctuary or to stand in the center aisle. They are to be as “invisible” as possible and not distract guests from paying attention to the ceremony.
 - Photographers and videographers who cause a distraction will be asked to leave the Church building.
- Flowers Arrangements: Often the couple would like to add extra flower arrangements in the sanctuary for the wedding. We ask that you be sensitive to what liturgical season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter for example) the Church is honoring. There are times when in keeping with the liturgical season when flowers are not a part of the decorations. There are other times when there are an abundant of decorations in the Church sanctuary. It would be worth your while to consult with the person preparing you for marriage as to what would be appropriate.
 - Flower arrangements are the couple’s responsibility.
 - Flower arrangements are not allowed to obscure the altar, ambo, or presider’s chair.
 - After the wedding you are welcome to take the flower arrangements with you, but if you decide to leave them in the Church, it would be greatly appreciated.
- The Rite of Marriage:
 - The Roman Catholic Church has designed a beautiful rite of celebrating a wedding. There are many different options.

- The Roman Catholic Church does not allow for changes to the rite, especially with regards to the marriage vows.
- All music is to be approved Church music. Popular music is not allowed.
- Remember, you can add any personal declarations of love and commitment at your reception, as well as any popular music that is meaningful to you.
- The priest or deacon who will be officiating at your wedding will guide you as to the appropriate selections for the marriage ceremony in the Church.

Last things: These guidelines are not exhaustive. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We are here to help you begin your life together as husband and wife.