

POLICIES REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA CHURCH



Congratulations on your engagement! Having come to this point in your relationship, you wish to enter more seriously into a period of preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage. The priests and the community of faith at St. Ignatius are here to walk with you in this time, to encourage a growing appreciation for this great Sacrament, and to support you in living it out. Specifically as a Sacrament, Marriage is established to be a genuine sign of Christ's love for His Church—and the Sacramental bond is a source of grace for both husband and wife. Because of the nature and purpose of this Sacrament, there are definitive conditions which are required to enter into a valid Marriage. It is also important to be aware of aspects of the rite of Marriage within the Church, so that these do not come as a surprise as you form your plans.

Requirements for Marriage within the Church

This Sacrament can only take place between one man and one woman, both of whom are baptized. At least one must be Catholic. Both spouses must be free to marry:

- Having no prior marriage bond unless such a bond has been declared null after thorough investigation by the Church.
- Not having other impediments to marriage (i.e. being under the legal age of marriage, being directly related, etc.).

Some details to be aware of regarding the Marriage rite

Marriage usually takes place within the context of the Mass for two Catholics. This most fully expresses the foundation of the Marriage in Christ's self-gift to the Church. In cases where a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic, however, Marriage is celebrated outside of the context of Mass. The Catholic partner will also be required to sign a statement promising to continue the practice of the faith and to Baptize and raise the children of this marriage in the Catholic faith.

The proper place for a Catholic Marriage is the parish church to which either the bride or the groom belong. Although, for good reason, the rite can take place in another Catholic parish or chapel, permission for this must be granted by the priest at the proper parish.

The rites of the Church use the words and images of Scripture and Tradition to express the spiritual reality which is taking place in the Sacraments. Because of this, all music played in the church must be sacred music, suitable to the theology of marriage, appropriate for a wedding Mass, and appropriate to the part of the Mass in which it is used. This will preclude secular music such as pop songs or show tunes. Similarly, all of the signs and actions within the liturgy must come from Catholic practice, especially as laid out in the Rite of Marriage. Traditions which are secular in origin and nature, such as the practice of lighting a unity candle, will not be incorporated within the rites of the Church themselves, although they can always be incorporated into the celebration afterward.

A list of policies on the back of this page will help you as you come closer to your wedding date and look to plan out details for the ceremony.

Detailed Policies for the Ceremony

Ordinarily, the couple will select the readings they would like to include at the wedding ceremony. The priest will select appropriate prayers with these selections in mind. These elements of the wedding rite and any other questions regarding the ceremony itself should be discussed clearly with the priest—at the final meeting with him if not before. Below are some further details to keep in mind as you plan your wedding:

Before and After the Ceremony

- Two members of the wedding party must serve as official witnesses to the marriage. They must be of sound mind, sufficient maturity, and at least fourteen years of age.
- No food or drink are permitted in the church itself. If there is food or drink on the property, make sure the area will be cleaned afterward.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted on church grounds before or after the wedding.
- Because of the serious nature of this sacrament, signs of alcohol use by a member of the wedding party before the wedding will result in their being asked to step down from their role; signs of alcohol use by the bride or groom will result in cancellation of the ceremony. Alcohol impairs one's ability to reason and to freely enter into a covenant, which is essential to a valid marriage.
- Do not throw rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. on the church property—inside or out.

During the Ceremony

- All music played in the church must be sacred music, suitable to the theology of marriage, appropriate for a wedding Mass, and appropriate to the part of the Mass in which it is used. This will preclude secular music such as pop songs or show tunes.
- Music choices must be approved by the priest or deacon and the music director prior to the wedding.
- Seasonal decorations in the church, especially during Advent, Christmas, and Lent will not be rearranged for weddings. Additional decorations should not obstruct the liturgy and are not to be placed on the altar. An aisle runner may be purchased from the florist: our center aisle is between 90 and 100 feet long. The wedding party is responsible for the disposal of the runner and of any pew decorations and programs.
- Professional photographers/videographers must speak to the presider before the wedding. They may use flash during the procession, but otherwise should not use flash and should not become a distraction. The sanctuary is off-limits at all times for photographers.

Customary Offerings

- For parishioners, an offering of \$500 to the parish is recommended. For non-parishioners making use of the church, an offering of \$750 is recommended. If a St. Ignatius Parish Ministry team is preparing you for marriage and the wedding ceremony will occur at a different location, \$250 is recommended. This offering helps offset the costs of the parish.
- It is also customary to give each altar server \$20 in appreciation (if servers are provided by the parish).
- Fees for music should be worked out directly with the musicians.
- It is not necessary or customary to make an offering to a priest of the parish.
- If a deacon or visiting priest witnesses the wedding, it is a courtesy to give him a gratuity (we recommend at least \$100).