

St. Anthony's Catholic Church Forest Grove, Oregon



Marriage Preparation and Wedding Policies



<http://www.safg.org>
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St. Anthony's Catholic Church
Forest Grove, OR

Dear Newly Engaged,

First of all, Congratulations! This time of preparation can be a wonderful time of discovery as well as a stressful time of planning. In order to help you in the best possible way, this booklet has been developed so that you may be able to understand more fully the Sacrament of Marriage as well as the many details that you will likely need to consider as your special day draws near.

As the stress of all the preparation becomes apparent, it is important to keep your focus on the things that matter most. So often nonessential things (ie. the site of the reception or the kind of decorations used) can drive the bulk of the planning process. In so many ways, this is difficult to avoid. Yet, it is important to remember that the two most important things for your marriage are:

1. Your preparation, and
2. The actual celebration of the wedding.

It is these two priorities that are the focal points of St. Anthony's marriage preparation process. It is our hope that this process does not become a series of "jumping through hoops" but is an effective part of your journey towards a life of Christian marriage.

So in the spirit of offering you useful information as well as answers to common questions, you are encouraged to keep this booklet handy.

God bless you!
Fr. John Marshall
Pastor

When should we contact the parish?

Contact the pastor at least six months in advance of the date on which they hope to celebrate their wedding. Only the pastor or parish secretary may book the date. Dates will be reserved only *after* the pastor has had sufficient opportunity to meet with the engaged couple in order to take care of necessary paperwork and to arrange for their participation in a marriage preparation program. Engaged couples should secure their date with the church *before* making commitments with caterers, reception halls, etc. Again, this may be difficult as the reception plans can easily overshadow the marriage prep., but you are urged to resist this temptation as it can create more problems later on. Remember that the wedding is more important than the reception.

We do not recommend a Catholic wedding for anyone who is not living his or her Catholic faith. If one person of the couple is not regularly participating at Mass or participating periodically in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we respect your right to believe that way, but suggest you reconsider your desire for a Catholic wedding.

What does it mean to live the Sacrament of Marriage?

Marriage is a vocation, that is, a life-response driven by a call from God. “The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1603). It is not just a human institution despite the many variations that it has held within history.

In the Roman Catholic Church, marriage is recognized as a Sacrament, that is, a practice identified by Jesus whereby the couple imitates the life of the Divine in a committed, faithful, and fruitful bond of love. Quite literally, the couple makes Christ present in their very lives as husband and wife. This presence enriches their lives, the lives of their children, and the lives of the Christian community. Thus, this Sacrament means more than a wedding ceremony; it designates the lifelong relationship of husband and wife. Marriage is not so much something that a couple receives as something a couple becomes. It follows that marriage has enduring significance for the entire membership of the Church. It is not exclusively or even primarily a private matter having to do with the couple's welfare. As a sacrament, the couple make a covenant between themselves and Christ. When two people marry, it becomes an important moment for the Church community and the Church has a responsibility to guide couples in preparation for life together.

What kind of preparation is needed?

Your marriage is the most significant life decision you may make in your life. As such we want to offer you the best opportunities to discover who you are as a married couple. Therefore, advance preparation is required of every couple wishing to be married in the Catholic Church.

10 Step Preparation Process

Preparation programs are mandatory for every couple wishing to be married in the Catholic Church. The seriousness of entering a Christian marriage requires the utmost diligence and willingness to be prepared in the best possible way. We recommend that you keep track of your own progress using our Marriage Preparation Checklist (available for download). Couples being married at St. Anthony's can plan on attending the following:

1.) Initial Meeting with the Pastor. This is a “get to know you” session and a chance to discuss the marriage preparation process. The pastor will help you fill out the initial paperwork to begin the process, describe the preparation process itself, answer any questions, and offer you advice as to how to journey towards your new life together. At this meeting you should receive the book, *Together for Life*, which will help you begin planning the details of the wedding liturgy.

2.) Contact the Marriage Coordinator. After meeting with the Pastor, couples will need to make contact with the Marriage Coordinator (see “People You May Need to Contact” on p. 11). The Marriage Preparation Coordinator will assist you in the preparation process by administering the Prepare and Enrich Inventory (see #4 below), connecting you with a Sponsor Couple, tracking your progress in the preparation process, and notify you of important meetings. The Marriage Coordinator is required to be present at the rehearsal and wedding day as well. Therefore, their availability will influence the date you may wish to have the wedding itself. The Marriage Coordinator will assist the couple in planning the details of the wedding ceremony (flowers, music, candles, etc.) to make sure that what you have planned will happen.

3.) Take Prepare & Enrich Inventory. PREPARE/ENRICH is a customized couple assessment completed online that identifies a couple's strength and growth areas. It is one of the most widely used programs for premarital counseling and education. Based on a couple's assessment results, a trained sponsor couple provides 4-8 feedback sessions in which the couple discuss and understand their results as they are taught proven relationship skills. This Inventory is not a test, but a recognized discussion tool used by couples to gain insights into the partner they've chosen to

marry, learn more about themselves, and learn more about their relationship.

4.) Meet with a Sponsor Couple. A Sponsor Couple will be assigned to you to discuss the results of the Prepare and Enrich inventory. These couples have been chosen because of their example of Christian marriage and they have been trained in facilitating the process. Total time with the Sponsor Couple will be about 4-6 hours.

5.) NFP (Natural Family Planning) Workshop Series. In recent years, scientific investigation of a woman's natural fertility cycle has led to a simple, safe, reliable and natural means for a couple to carefully plan their family size. Information about resources for NFP classes can be found in the back of this booklet. Do not put off these classes. It is in your best interest to begin right away in order to become comfortable and accurate with the process. **Note that this is a series of class spanning three months.**

6.) Engaged Encounter. This weekend program provides a couple with an atmosphere and format to deeply explore their relationship and dialogue honestly about their future lives together. Contact information can be found in the back of this booklet.

7.) Complete All Paperwork. As you journey through the preparation process, you will see that various forms will need to be completed: The First is the "Freedom to Marry" form which is akin to an affidavit that the couple is able to enter into marriage. A total of two witnesses will be needed. A recently created (originals not accepted) baptism certificate or affidavit is needed for all Christian persons engaged. Dispensations, permissions, annulments may also need to be completed (see pastor for

details). The civil marriage license is best acquired one week before the wedding. Again, see the pastor for details.

8.) Rehearsal. You will need to schedule a rehearsal at the same time you reserve the Church for the wedding. The rehearsal is intended to familiarize the wedding party with the procession, the sanctuary, ushering, and other elements of the celebration. This will be lead by the priest/deacon and the Marriage Coordinator.

9.) Sacrament of Reconciliation. Catholics can benefit from celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) before their wedding. It is a time not only to examine your conscience, but to seek to enter you marriage as selflessly and as spiritually healed as possible. Engaged couples are strongly encouraged to celebrate Reconciliation before their wedding.

10.) Wedding Day. Get committed members of family or friends to manage details; flowers placement, food and drink during the preparation and clean up of all spaces used after the ceremony.

Questions to Consider

Due to the seriousness of the Sacrament of Marriage and lifelong commitment it entails, we invite you to consider the following:

1) **Am I prepared to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage?** Catholic faith testifies that marriage is a serious commitment with rights and responsibilities. As a Catholic you have the right to receive the Sacraments while the Church is obliged to uphold the dignity of the

Sacraments. Therefore, it is our greatest desire that all couples would take seriously the preparation process. Being engaged is a wonderful time of serious discernment. It is not a failure to decide to delay or cancel a wedding if serious doubts exist for a couple. Good preparation is the best approach for lifelong decisions.

2) **Am I a practicing Catholic?** A practicing Catholic joins the Christian community for Sunday Mass on a weekly basis, has a clear understanding of the Catholic faith, and is actively involved in the activities and programs of the parish community.

3) **Am I a parishioner?** A parishioner is a registered and practicing member of St. Anthony's worshipping community.

If any of these questions cause doubt in your mind, we strongly suggest that you begin the reflection with your loved one and discern if you are ready to begin the marriage preparation process at this time.

Documents You Will Need

1) **“Freedom to Marry” Forms.** The engaged couple provides information regarding identity, status in the Church, and freedom to marry. The parish provides a form for the parents to complete, confirming the information provided by the couple. If parents are deceased, a close friend or relative who has known the person since age 12 may complete the form. Any needed permission forms or dispensations are discussed at this time as well. **These forms are filled out at the initial meeting with the priest.**

2) Baptismal Certificates. Catholics and any baptized Christians must provide recent copies of their baptismal certificates. By “recent” is meant within the last six months. These copies can be obtained by contacting your church of baptism.

3) Civil Marriage License. The couple must provide a valid Oregon marriage license to the parish office prior to the wedding date.

4.) Permissions/Dispensations/Annulments. Any needed permission forms or dispensations that are needed will be discussed and completed during the initial meeting with the pastor. If one or both of the engaged persons have been previously married, a declaration of nullity (think annulment) from the Catholic Church is necessary. Ask the pastor for more details if you think may apply to you. **Delay in receiving these forms will delay the wedding date.**

The Wedding Ceremony

The celebration of Christian marriage is an opportunity for the whole community of faith to experience the Lord through powerful symbols: bread and wine, spoken and sung the Word, light, and the rings. In the love of the husband and wife, we come to see a reflection of God’s love for us, the people of God. These signs and symbols are invitations to us to respond in faith to the Lord. It is for this reason that careful planning should take place in the selection of appropriate readings, music, etc. As you plan your wedding ceremony, there are several things to keep in mind. First, those attending are never to be considered merely guests to be entertained. The liturgical assembly is called to a role of active participation in prayer and song. Secondly, when choosing readings,

songs, meditations, or other music, always ask yourself, “Can we pray these words?”

The most essential elements are the proclamation of the Word of God and your response in the form of the marriage vows. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is generally not included when both parties cannot receive the Eucharist. All details should enhance your own and your guests’ experience of the essential elements. The main consideration should be: “How will this or that detail help us, our families and friends enter into a prayerful celebration of God’s love mirrored for them in our marriage?” With that in mind, we hope that you will find the following guidelines helpful.

A planning guide entitled *Together for Life* will be provided. It will assist you in choosing readings and prayers for the liturgy. In addition we offer a list with some suggestions:

1) Setting a Date and Time of Wedding: In order to secure a wedding date, you must meet with the Pastor, the Marriage Coordinator, and then finally consult the parish secretary in order to make sure that all calendars coincide. Then you must pay the rental fee for the church in order to secure the date in our calendar. This is done with the parish secretary as well. Weddings are scheduled on Friday between 5 PM and 7 PM or Saturdays between 9 AM and 2 PM. Because Reconciliation is at 3:30 PM on Saturday, please have your guests withdraw from the church by 3 PM.

2) Place: Custom provides for Catholics to be married at a Mass in a church. The Marriage Rite takes place after the Gospel and the homily. If this is to be an interfaith marriage, or if the majority of your anticipated

guests are not practicing Catholics, we suggest having the ceremony without Mass.

3) Decorations in the Church and Sanctuary. Simplicity is most effective and leaves attention focused on the celebration. The altar and pulpit should get first attention. No flowers are to be set directly upon the altar. Any decoration should be carefully placed so as not to block the liturgical action or your guests' participation in what is taking place. It is customary to leave some flowers in the church for Saturday and Sunday Masses. Only fresh flowers or plants are to be used.

4) Entrance Procession. Good liturgical and ceremonial practice dictates a single procession. The celebrant and the entire wedding party enter from the back of the church, as at Sunday Mass. We encourage both sets of parents to accompany the groom and bride in procession, and suggest that the attendants enter as couples. There is, of course, flexibility in planning your procession, which you may discuss with the celebrant and the Wedding Coordinator.

5) Family Participation: There are several opportunities in the liturgy for parents and family members to be involved in this special occasion, including proclaiming the Scripture readings and leading the Prayers of the Faithful. You may also wish to involve your sponsor couple. Please assign the readings (except the Gospel) to a family member or friend who will proclaim the Word with reverence.

6) Vows. *Together for Life* lists several options for wedding vows. You might also consider writing your own vows, so long as you maintain the core vows. Any changes must be approved by the celebrant.

7) Program. Printing a program of the wedding liturgy is an excellent gesture to aid in participation, especially for non-Catholic guests.

8) Music. Before planning for any music or musicians at your wedding, you must think about what you are planning. The guidelines for music at weddings is the same as those for Sunday Mass, whether instrumental, classical or “folk” style. All music used in church should be prayerful in its tone and should be carefully chosen to match the various moments of the wedding ceremony. The priest or pastoral musician can assist you in making these choices. ***Taped music is not appropriate.*** Popular romantic songs are usually inappropriate either because they don’t say enough, or because they contradict the Christian understanding of committed life. Singing at least one or more hymns, songs, or responses with the entire assembly is the ideal. Active participation, not entertainment, is the goal. ***Any music not in our music issue or Missal must be approved by the music coordinator and the celebrant.***

a) Prelude music, as guests are being seated, can be instrumental or sung. If the organ is used, light, bright classical music is quite effective in setting an appropriate mood.

b) Processional music should be instrumental. Your guests’ attention is focused on the wedding party, not on words to a song. The same applies to the recessional (march out).

c) Solos may be used before the ceremony, during the Preparation of the Gifts, or after the exchange of rings, and during Communion if there is a Mass celebrated.

d) Congregational Singing is appropriate during the preparation of the Gifts, or for Communion meditation. The Alleluia before

the Gospel should be sung, if a cantor is employed, also the Responsorial Psalm and other Acclamations.

e) The Lord's Prayer is the prayer of the whole assembly, and may be the only part in which most non-Catholics are comfortable joining in. It is never appropriate as a solo in the liturgy, but if the majority of guests are Catholic, it may be sung by all.

f) Cantors, organists and lectors are available for hire from the parish if you need them.

9) Children in the Wedding Party: Children are welcome to be part of your wedding, and based on prior experience, we have found that very young children often create unforeseen issues during the ceremony. **Therefore, the minimum age for participation is 5 years old.**

10) Pew Decorations: We suggest using plastic hangars or large rubber bands, which do not mar the pews. No tape on any wood surfaces within the church should be used.

11) Candles: Candelabra and other sanctuary candles are welcome (dripless only, please). A *Unity Candle*, though not liturgical in nature, may be used during the ceremony. It is not one of the primary symbols of the wedding liturgy and should not overshadow the primary symbols--the giving of consent and the exchange of rings.

12) Local and Cultural Customs: Local and cultural customs, such as the presentation of the *arras* (coins) and the rosary (lasso), are welcome at appropriate times during the Mass (see *Juntos Para Toda La Vida* for

details). As with the unity candle, these should not overshadow the primary symbols of the liturgy.

13) Photography: Photography and videotaping during the ceremony are permitted so long as they are not intrusive. If you take formal pictures in the church, we insist that it be done quietly, quickly, and with respect due the House of God, preferably before the service. During the service, ask the photographer to be discreet and nicely dressed. Videotaping is permitted with the same reservations. **The use of flash or extra lighting equipment is not allowed.** You are asked to inform your photographer so they will have all the information they need to have a successful day.

14) No flower petals, rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. is permitted to be thrown on the church grounds. We might suggest a suitable mention in your invitations.

15) Alcohol: Use of alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal or wedding is strictly forbidden. Both events require your full attention.

16) Dressing Facilities: Space is available in the Parish Center for the wedding party. Please appoint someone to have these areas cleaned out of all personal articles immediately after the ceremony. Commonly our Nursery and Fireside Room are used for these purposes.

17) Clean up: Please designate someone to stay after the wedding to tidy up both the church and bride and groom's room. Dispose of all trash in the large bin behind the Parish Center.

18) Parish Center & Receptions: Questions about using the Parish Center for your reception should be directed to the secretary. Call the parish office at 503-357-2989 for information, forms and fees.

19) Fees and Offerings: The Marriage Preparation Fee must be paid by the time you meet with the Marriage Coordinator to take the *Prepare and Enrich Inventory*. This can be given to the Marriage Preparation Coordinator at the time of the first meeting.

The Church Rental Fee must be paid in order to secure a date for the wedding. Wedding dates cannot be reserved without paying the church rental fee.

Catholic priests and deacons do not “charge” a fee for officiating at weddings, but if the couple wishes to give an appreciation gift, you are welcome to do so. We ask that you please designate it as such.

Marriage Fee Schedule

The prices listed below are our best estimates only and may change. Please contact the resource listed to find the actual costs. See also <http://www.safg.org> Start planning for these activities at least six months prior to your wedding date.

St. Anthony's Fees:

These fees are paid to St. Anthony's Catholic Church to provide the following services.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Marriage Preparation | \$300.00 wedding here |
| | \$200.00 wedding elsewhere |

This covers the Marriage Coordination, Wedding day Coordinator, Prepare & Enrich Survey and any misc. materials used during the marriage preparation process. (Plan 6 months in advance)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 2. Church Reservation (in-parish) | \$200.00 |
| <i>Contact the Parish Office for the Church "Rental Policy"</i> | +\$100.00 Cleaning Deposit |
| <i>See the chapter titled "Questions to Consider" in this document for "Registered Member" definition.</i> | |
| <i>Additional Cost if Out of Parish</i> | <i>+\$100.00</i> |

Other Organization Fees:

These fees are paid to other organizations and are required to get married at St. Anthony's Catholic Church.

Engaged Encounter

\$325.00 *Weekend*

*Program to increase your
communication*

<http://www.oregonengagedencounter.org/>

Natural Family Planning

\$55.00

Optional Fees:

Keyboard Accompanist & Soloist/Cantor \$100 to \$1000??

We can give you some suggestions if you ask.

People You May Need to Contact

Application for the Sacrament: Fr. John Marshall 503-357-2989
jmarshall@safg.org

Marriage/Wedding Coordinator: Call the office 503-357-2989
Marriage preparation process/tracking
Wedding Rehearsal & Wedding Day
office@safg.org

Church/Parish Hall Rental: Call the office 503-357-2989
office@safg.org

Engaged Encounter:

Visit Engaged Encounter's online registration and web site:
Oregonengagedencounter.org

Natural Family Planning:

Couple to Couple League <http://www.ccli.org/register>

Allow 3 – 4 months to complete

- Stacey & Ben Pelster – St. Anthony's 503-992-0329
- Ted & Patty Duggan (Beaverton) 503-430-1128
pjduggan9@comcast.net

Northwest Family Services –

To complete the marriage preparation process in one place, get
permission from pastor

www.nwfs.org

4805 NE Glisan Street, Portland

503-215-6377

Online classes available

St. Anthony's Catholic Church
Marriage Preparation Process Check List

Names of Engaged Couple: _____ and

Phone Numbers: _____ and

Proposed date for Wedding: _____ Location:

Date for Rehearsal: _____

Marriage Prep Check List (Enter date completed):

1. _____ Initial Meeting with Pastor
2. _____ Contact the Marriage Coordinator
3. _____ Take Prepare and Enrich Inventory
4. _____ Meet with Sponsor Couple
 - _____ Interview #1
 - _____ Interview #2
 - _____ Interview #3
 - _____ Interview #4
 - _____ Interviews (optional)
5. _____ N.F.P. Classes (Attach certificate of completion)
6. _____ Engaged Encounter (Attach certificate of completion)
7. _____ Pre Rehearsal Meeting
8. _____ Complete all Needed Paperwork (see below)
9. _____ Sacrament of Reconciliation

Completed Paperwork

“Freedom to Marry” form _____

Baptism Certificate, recent _____ (bride) _____
(groom)

Dispensations/Permissions needed _____

Annulment documentation (if needed) _____
(bride) _____ (groom)

Civil Marriage License _____ (needed one week prior to wedding)