

ST. MARY'S BY THE SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH

321 10th Street • Huntington Beach, California 92648 • (714) 536-6913

WEDDING INFORMATION

Congratulations on your approaching wedding. The following handout was prepared to inform you of the necessary requirements to have this Sacrament celebrated at St. Mary's by the Sea.

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a sacred and solemn event celebrated in church in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Holy Matrimony preferably occurs in the context of Mass, and always in the presence of a Priest or Deacon, who is the Catholic Church's appointed minister. If these truths are kept in mind, it will be understood that there are certain rules of decorum which must be maintained out of respect for God and His Church, and because your wedding will take place in a Roman Catholic church, certain songs or practices you may have observed at other weddings are not appropriate for a traditional Catholic setting. Please be assured that the Pastor, the Wedding Coordinator, and everyone here at St. Mary's by the Sea will do all that we can to accommodate you and keep this day special for you.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **At least one of the parties must be a Roman Catholic who attends Mass on a regular basis.**
If you are a parishioner of St. Mary's by the Sea and have been registered **at least six months prior to setting your wedding date** you are considered a "Registered Parishioner." Anyone else is considered a "Non-Parishioner."
2. Definite reservation of the Church is made only by the Pastor. Please contact him at least **six months** in advance of the wedding date
3. **New Certificate of Baptism** for Catholics, bearing a church seal and **dated within six months of the wedding date.** (The original or a photocopy are unacceptable.)
4. Certificate or other record of Baptism for non-Catholic Christians, if possible.
5. **First Communion and Confirmation certificates** for Catholics (either the original or a photocopy are both acceptable).
6. **(2) "Letters of Freedom to Marry"** for **each** party signed by a member of the family or other competent witness, in the presence of a Priest or a Notary Public.
7. Certificate issued as proof of attendance in a **Catholic Marriage Preparation Program**, such as:
 - a. The Engaged Encounter
 - b. The Communications Workshop for the Engaged
8. Dispensation for a mixed religion, filled out with the Priest (if not both Catholics).
9. **Pre-nuptial Investigation** for **each** party, filled out with the Priest.
10. **Marriage license** from the State of California.
11. Proof of marriage already performed in the cases of validation.
12. Proof of annulment by the Church for any previous marriage.

FEES

The Sacrament of Marriage is free of charge. However, the fees for the use of the facility and the different services are as follows:

- The Church – *Registered parishioner(s) - \$500.00 • Non-parishioners - \$700.00
- The Organist – \$200.00
- A Vocalist (optional) – \$200.00
- Wedding Coordinator – \$200.00
- The Altar Server – \$20.00
- The Priest – An offering given to the priest as an expression of your gratitude, is most appreciated, but not required.

PLEASE NOTE: A deposit of one-half the Church amount is due at the time you set the actual date for your wedding. The balance must be paid 1 month before the actual wedding date or sooner.

Note: A “Registered parishioner” is understood to be a practicing Catholic who has been a registered member of this Parish for at least six months prior to setting the date for their wedding.

CANCELLATION POLICY

If you cancel **within the first 30 days** (after booking your date with us), we will refund the fee you paid to the Church, minus a **\$100 non-refundable charge**.

If you cancel anytime **after 30 days**, your **deposit** (either \$250 or \$350) becomes **non-refundable**. There are no exceptions to this rule.

WEDDING TIMES

Weddings are usually held on Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and never on Sundays. It is important your wedding begin at the scheduled time, as the church may be needed following the ceremony.

NUPTIAL MASS OR WEDDING CEREMONY

A Nuptial Mass lasts approximately one hour. A wedding ceremony without a Mass lasts approximately thirty minutes. A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic will have a Wedding Ceremony only. All Catholics present for a Nuptial Mass are encouraged to receive the Eucharist if conscious of no mortal sin. Catholic couples are strongly encouraged to choose a Nuptial Mass as the beginning of their married life.

Approximately one to two weeks before the wedding date, you must see the Pastor to finalize all details for your Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony found in the book “Together for Life.”

THE WEDDING COORDINATOR

The Wedding Coordinator for St. Mary's by the Sea is Ginny Aragon – (714) 841-2401. You may contact her after you have met with the priest and set the date for your wedding. Please note: you must go through our wedding coordinator for all matters pertaining to Church procedure.

WEDDING REHEARSALS

The Wedding Coordinator will preside at the rehearsal and explain the details about your wedding. Please be prompt. Wedding rehearsals generally last about one hour and must begin no later than ten minutes after your scheduled appointment, as the use of the church may be required after your scheduled hour. Rehearsals must be scheduled with the Wedding Coordinator during the following times:

- Monday through Wednesday - 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Thursday - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Friday – 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. with the following exception:

Wedding rehearsals cannot be scheduled on the 1st Friday of any month.

FLOWER GIRL & RING BEARER

If you choose to have a Flower Girl and/or Ring Bearer, they **must** be at least **6 years** of age to participate in the wedding.

CHURCH DECORUM

As our vestibule sign states: "**Silence is Golden in the House of the Lord**". Any necessary conversation should be conducted in whispers or outside the church, both at the time of the rehearsal and at the wedding itself. This policy exists out of respect for Our Lord and gives evidence of the two thousand year old belief in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist, held by those of the Catholic faith.

DRESS

Out of respect for Our Lord and for the edification of our neighbors, we ask that men, women, boys and girls appear in church modestly and respectfully dressed. Backless or low-cut dresses or tight fitting clothes do not fit the norm of Christian modesty or respect. This especially includes the bride and the women in the wedding party. Should any of their dresses be deemed inappropriate on the day of the wedding, we will provide a shawl for them to wear. If you are unsure, please check with the Wedding Coordinator. Your cooperation is evidence of your love for Our Lord and is greatly appreciated.

CHOOSING THE MUSIC

All hymns within the wedding ceremony or Nuptial Mass must be religious in nature, as well as reflect the Catholic faith. The Wedding Coordinator will provide you with a list of acceptable music.

Your musical selections must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator and the organist (if applicable) no later than two weeks before the scheduled wedding for approval.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used at your wedding should be noble instruments, such as the organ, violin, flute, or harp. The use of guitars is permitted, but only with the approval of the Pastor. **The use of prerecorded music is not allowed.**

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

The California State marriage license must be given to the Priest or the Wedding Coordinator at least **one week before your wedding**. Please include all materials given you by the State, including the typed license, the blank marriage certificate, and the provided envelope.

BOUQUET FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The presentation of a special bouquet of flowers at the foot of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary is an established Catholic tradition. The flowers are presented to the statue as an offering of love for the Mother of God. A shortened or full version of the Ave Maria is often played or sung at this time. During the presentation, the bride and groom ask Mary in prayer to bless their marriage, and that their children lead holy and happy lives, as well as any other special intentions.

Flowers are often presented to Mary even at wedding ceremonies where both parties are not Catholic, and although it is not a requirement, all couples are strongly encouraged to continue this beautiful practice. Be sure your florist understands that a separate bouquet needs to be prepared for the presentation to Mary.

DRESSING ROOM

Our Conference Room is available for the bride and her attendants to dress and prepare for the wedding. Please let the Wedding Coordinator know what time you plan to arrive so that the Conference Room may be opened for you. Please be sure not to leave any waste materials or personal items behind in the Conference Room after the ceremony.

FLOWERS, SEATING & DECORATIONS

- Flowers may be arranged by the florist of your choice.
- Flowers or bows may be attached to the pews using **plastic brackets only**. The pews may not be roped off.
- The church does not supply any decorations or candelabras.
- Aisle runners are not allowed.
- There are fourteen pews on each side. Maximum church occupancy is 325 (250 seated, including the choir loft).
- **The throwing of petals, rice or bird seed is forbidden (inside & outside of the Church).**
- All flowers and decorations must be removed from the church immediately after the ceremony.

ORGANIST

Please contact the Wedding Coordinator for the name of our organist. Normally the organist does not attend the wedding rehearsal. Please speak with the organist about additional rehearsals, such as with a soloist, if necessary.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Pictures and videos may be taken during the wedding by the Wedding Photographer, only. **Guests are not allowed to take personal pictures during the Mass.** In addition, there is to be **no flash** used inside the church. There are also to be **no posed pictures inside the church** either before or after the wedding. This is to protect the sanctity of the house of God and respect for the Eucharistic Presence. The photographer or videographer **must not stand in the sanctuary** where he is visible to those in the body of the church.

Any posed pictures may be taken in front of the church or in the courtyard before or after the wedding. In case of rain, it is advisable to request that your photographer bring the equipment necessary for indoor photography. Our Hall may be scheduled for this purpose.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact their wedding photographer to advise him or her of the rules of the Church. In addition, they need to have the “Photographer’s Contract” (*attached*) signed and returned to us before the date of their wedding.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR WHILE IN THE CHURCH

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to instruct the members of the wedding party as to proper behavior while in the Church, especially to those who may not be Catholic.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

There are absolutely **NO alcoholic beverages** allowed on Church property at any time.

UNITY CANDLES

The “unity candle” is *not* a part of the Catholic wedding ceremony.

GENUFLECTIONS

As Catholics, we believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the tabernacle. We are bound to render the Blessed Sacrament the same adoration and honor due God Himself. Roman Catholics genuflect (bend down on the right knee) towards the tabernacle upon entering the church, before leaving the church, and whenever passing by the tabernacle.

Genuflection has been the Roman Catholic response to Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist for centuries. All Roman Catholic participants in your wedding should genuflect toward the tabernacle in adoration of Our Lord.

SIGNING THE LICENSE

The Best Man and Maid/Matron-of-Honor or the 2 official witnesses must see the Priest immediately after the wedding to sign the marriage license. The bride and groom will already have signed the license.



If you would like to be married here at St. Mary’s by the Sea Church, please call to make an appointment with the Pastor, Father Quang Vinh Chu, at (714) 536-6913. Both parties will need to be present at this meeting. Thank you.

PHOTOGRAPHER'S CONTRACT

Re: the wedding of _____

Date: _____

The following is the policy of:

**St. Mary's by the Sea Church
321 10th Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648**

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*I acknowledge that I have read the Church's policy as stated above and will abide by their rules.
(Please sign below)*

Photographer

Date

**(Note to Bride & Groom: Please have your photographer read and sign this form, then return it to St. Mary's by the Sea Church.)*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

(Please put in Wedding Folder.)

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Date: _____

Priest: _____