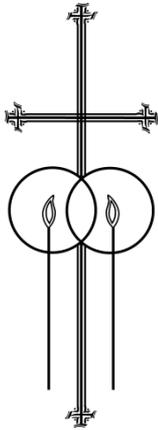


**HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH**

**CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**WEDDING GUIDELINES**



*“This is my commandment:  
Love one another  
as I have loved you.”*

John 15:12

HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH CATHOLIC CHURCH  
2330 CHEYENNE STREET, IRVING, TEXAS 75062  
972-252-5521, FAX 972-252-5523

January 2025

*Dear Engaged Couple:*

*Congratulations on your engagement! We wish you every blessing in the exciting journey that you are entering. May your new life be one of peace, joy and growing in love together!*

*You have expressed a desire to celebrate your marriage in the midst of the Roman Catholic Faith Community of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish. This booklet is a tool to help you make the best use of the resources of Holy Family to prepare for your Sacramental Marriage and to plan the celebration of the Wedding Rite. We have available a variety of support systems to nurture your relationship. Please feel free to call on the various staff members and volunteers that are listed in the back of this booklet. We are here to serve you.*

*Sincerely in Christ,*

*the Pastoral Staff of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish*

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# 1: THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that matrimony is recognized as one of the seven outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace (sacrament). Matrimony is a sacred covenant, a union that is a source of holiness not only to the couple, but through the couple to the whole church and the world beyond.

Sacramental marriage does not exist in the abstract, but in the concrete relationships of married couples. Baptized persons are to live out their baptism (being Christ in the world) on a continuing basis, so married couples are to make a life-long commitment to witness to the power of divine love in the world. Matrimony, therefore, has enduring significance for the whole church; it is not exclusively or even primarily a private matter having only to do with the couple's personal welfare. By undertaking the sacrament of matrimony, in which the husband and wife receive the guarantee of God's abiding fidelity and the empowerment to remain faithful to each other, they assume responsibility to send forth the presence of Christ in their marital relationship in their daily behaviors, in their sexual union, in their challenge to communicate, and in their respect for each other. In short, in all the ways people live out a healthy marriage, the couple shows the love of God to each other and to the world.

Freedom is the basis of authentic love, and freedom is rooted in maturity and knowledge. The church in the Diocese of Dallas, therefore, in supporting authentic, freely given love, requires both partners in a sacramental union to have completed their eighteenth year and to have known each other for at least six months prior to the wedding.

Since sacraments belong to the whole church, the proper place for a celebration of sacramental union is the home of the faith community, the parish church. Likewise, the ordinary official witness of the faith community is one of the priests or deacons of the parish staff. Exceptions may be made to allow a priest or deacon relative or close friend to witness the marriage and preside over the liturgy. The priest or deacon of the wedding would also interview and complete the marriage paperwork.

Taking on sacramental commitment, which is enduring, joyful, faithful, and life-giving is a great gift and a great challenge. The faith community of Holy Family seeks to support the marital covenants in its membership as well as draw on the sacramental power of its married members. We desire to help couples understand as fully as possible both the giftedness and the responsibilities of sacramental marriage, and we desire to help each couple celebrate the commitment they make to each other in as beautiful and as complete a way as possible.

We invite you to read this booklet and to find the practical ways that Holy Family is prepared to help you celebrate and live this very special sacramental union.

## 2: PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Although we recognize that all of your life has been preparing you for this new journey in faith, we believe that the seriousness of the marriage commitment requires an equally serious time of immediate preparation set aside before the sacramental celebration.

Today engaged couples in the United States live in a social and cultural setting that has undergone so much change over the past 50 years that the very understanding of marriage has radically changed. In our 21<sup>st</sup> century society many factors -- such as longer life spans, lower fertility rate, higher education, the rising status of women, high mobility, and changing economic realities -- have combined to alter the primary goals of marriage in our society. People today expect more from their spouse than ever before."

Texas Catholic Conference

Holy Family of Nazareth Parish and the Catholic Diocese of Dallas cooperate in providing programs and services to help you formulate the most helpful preparation program for yourselves. **Ideally, these programs are completed as early as possible, to give you optimum benefit.** To marry at Holy Family of Nazareth you will need to participate in one (or a combination) of the following programs:

***MARRIAGE FORMATION: PREPARING FOR SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGE*** is a process that focuses on skills for married life and also emphasizes faith formation as an essential ingredient for the journey of marriage. The sessions meet at Holy Family once a week for nine weeks with a blessing of couples celebrated during a Sunday mass. You are accompanied by a trained mentor couple for your marriage preparation. This preparation leads you to a deeper understanding of one another and your call to the vocation of Christian Marriage. This formation process is the preferred preparation at Holy Family.

***MARRIAGE FORMATION – at – Home:*** This formation process is for couples unable to participate in *Marriage Formation* sessions at the church. The program involves the same content, however the meetings with the sponsor couple (a married couple from the parish and trained to facilitate this marriage preparation program) are at the sponsor's home. This preparation also leads you to a deeper understanding of one another and your call to the vocation of Christian Marriage.

### **3: PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

Liturgy is a powerful form of communication. The order in which events occur give particular meaning to the events. The placement of the marriage rite after the proclamation of God's word, for example, shows that marriage is a response of the couple to a call or invitation from God.

If both parties of the couple are practicing Catholics, the Church invites them to marry within the context of the Eucharist. In this case a priest is the ordinary officiant of the wedding and presider at the Eucharist. For a marriage between a Catholic and a fiancé of another religious tradition, they may ask to marry within the context of the Eucharist, or they may, as is customary, to marry in the context of the Liturgy of the Word followed by the Rite of Marriage and concluded by the Lord's Prayer. In this case, a deacon or priest can serve as the minister.

Planning the liturgy from the physical setting to the choices of scripture, music, prayers, and optional rituals is to be done as carefully as possible because the wedding celebration will announce to all who attend how the couple understands their relationship with each other, with God, and with God's people.

At Holy Family of Nazareth, the staff (priests, deacons, pastoral staff, Wedding Committee members, Music Ministers and Liturgy Committee members) is prepared to assist you in your discussions, reflections, and choices for the best expressions of your love and faith. We would like to help you plan a wedding ritual that is both reverent and beautiful.

The basic structure of the ritual is given to us by the universal Church, but a wide range of pastoral options is available for you to personalize your celebration. At Holy Family we have guidelines for the planning of the liturgical celebration and the use of the church that honor the whole community's need to use the church facilities in harmony. Attention to a few of these requirements from the beginning will facilitate your planning and make your celebration a blessed and joyful experience.

Many parishes and even dioceses have guidelines in order to respect Christian values, such as modesty, with a reverence for the sacredness of marriage vows before God. These guidelines are especially important today, when what is fashionable is inspired by media, celebrities and star athletes.

*With regard to attire at Holy Family of Nazareth*, the specifically religious nature of a Christian wedding is to be honored by having the bridal party be present before God modestly dressed. If you have any questions, please call the parish office.

## **A. SCHEDULING YOUR SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY**

Weddings are usually planned for Saturdays, although other days and evenings are possible. Weddings can be scheduled any time except during Lent and Triduum (Holy Thursday-Easter Sunday) and Advent.

In order to ensure that wedding parties have use of the facilities for an adequate amount of time, weddings are scheduled accordingly, with consideration for other events and regular parish liturgies.

*The decor of the sanctuary is to remain in place for weddings. The celebration is to reflect the liturgical season of the year.*

All weddings scheduled in our church will be facilitated by our Parish Wedding Committee. A member of this committee will discuss with you the details of florists, photographers, and sanctuary arrangements. The Wedding Committee representative will be present at the rehearsal and available before, during, and after the celebration to oversee all the many details of your wedding.

#### **B. ORDINARY LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR WEDDINGS:**

**PRESIDER(S):** A priest or deacon usually serves as the church's official witness to the marriage as well as leading the liturgical prayer of the Marriage Rite. The priest or deacon who witnesses your marriage will generally be the same one who has worked with you in the preparation for the Sacrament.

**LECTOR(S):** Men or women who proclaim (read) the Scripture. They may be family or friends of the couple.

**CANTOR(S):** A singer who leads the sung Scripture (Psalm, etc.), provides vocal solos and invites the assembly to join in the sung prayer.

**USHERS:** These are usually family members or friends who greet and seat the guests.

**MUSIC MINISTERS:** Musicians (pianist, organist, guitarist, etc.) that play for Holy Family of Nazareth may be hired, or you may engage family or friends with an HFN Music Minister consulting on sound equipment use and management.

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:** These are men or women commissioned by the parish or diocese who assist in distributing the Eucharist when the wedding is celebrated at Mass. Generally, they are necessary only for a large group of guests who are Catholic.

**ALTAR SERVERS:** If you, or the presider, wish to have servers, they are available from Holy Family of Nazareth or you may, with the pastor's permission, invite trained family or friends to serve.

### **C. WEDDING MUSIC AT HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH**

Well in advance of the wedding, the couple will discuss with the liturgical music ministers, priest or deacon (or the Pastor in the case of a guest priest) musical considerations and develop a program of suitable music for their wedding. During this time, the couple can determine what musicians they want to assist. Fees for the musical services can be clarified with the musicians.

Holy Family of Nazareth has competent and qualified musicians. Guest soloists and instrumentalists are welcome provided they have full understanding of the dignity and importance of music in the liturgical setting provided by the Marriage Rite *and* an HFN music minister is contracted to consult on the use of sound equipment. This applies whether the ceremony is within the Eucharist or not. Recorded or taped music is not permitted.

#### **1. Things to consider**

As a Sacrament of the Church, the celebration and blessing of the marriage covenant calls for music which will reflect the couple's understanding of marriage within the context of the church. The selection of the wedding music is to reflect the

sacred nature and sense of joy that characterize all Christian worship. The music and words chosen for the marriage ceremony are to sustain and support the prayerful nature of the liturgical celebration and be an appropriate complement to the scriptural readings and formal prayer of the rite. The following questions are to be considered in planning the music:

- a. Does the musical score evoke a sense of sacred action and call the community to joyful prayer?
- b. Does a particular selection emphasize and enhance that part of the liturgical celebration at which it occurs?
- c. Does the overall music selection allow for some congregational participation?
- d. Does the text express a biblical view of love and marriage?

A "yes" response to the above questions will assure that lyrics will celebrate not only the human love between two persons, but love as a reflection of the God who is love, and the wedding music will emphasize the theme of sacred celebration.

Careful application of the above considerations leads to the conclusion that some songs -- even some which have been regularly performed before and during weddings in the past -- are unsuitable.

## **2. Music at specific points**

It is appropriate for music (if you desire) during the following parts of the wedding:

- Seating of the Parents and Grandparents
- Procession Attendants, Bride and Groom
- Lighting of Unity Candle (or following the vows)
- Recessional

### 3. Other Music for a Wedding with Mass

**GATHERING SONG:** A song for the entire assembly may take the place of an instrumental processional or may immediately follow a processional. A song of praise or thanksgiving is appropriate and serves to involve the worshipping community and set the mood for the celebration.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** The Psalm is *best sung*. As on Sunday, the assembly is to be encouraged to sing a responsorial refrain with a cantor singing the solo verses, or a soloist may sing the psalm entirely.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** The Gospel Acclamation or the Alleluia (except during Lent) is to be sung. It should be a familiar arrangement to the assembly. If it is not sung, it is omitted.

**OPTIONAL RITES:** Following the Marriage Rite itself, there is often a time of lighting the unity candle or other special ritual that can and should be accompanied by music. Short vocal solos, congregational acclamations, or instrumental music will be generally appropriate.

**PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS:** Instrumental or vocal music may accompany the presentation and preparation of the gifts of bread and wine. Music used here, however, should not prolong or delay the liturgy.

**EUCCHARIST ACCLAMATIONS:** The Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen) ideally are sung by the assembly in familiar musical arrangements. The cantor/soloist leads the assembly in these acclamations.

**LORD'S PRAYER:** The "Our Father" may be recited or sung, whichever will most effectively involve the participation of the entire worshipping assembly.

**LAMB OF GOD:** The Lamb of God, which accompanies the Breaking of the Bread, may be sung in a familiar arrangement by the assembly, by a soloist or be recited.

**COMMUNION:** Music during Communion is effectively provided by an organ, piano, instrumental, congregational or vocal selection.

**MEDITATION SONG:** After Communion, a song for meditation may be sung or an instrumental piece played.

**PROCESSIONALS:** It is appropriate for instrumental or sung music to accompany the beginning and ending processions.

#### **4. One other option**

**WORSHIP AIDS:** Printed programs are very appropriate for a wedding liturgy and encourage congregational singing and response. It can be easily prepared and is a thoughtful gesture inviting the assembly to participate in the celebration.

### **D. SOME GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE CHURCH**

**GENERAL:** Holy Family of Nazareth is our parish home. We ask that you treat our facilities with the respect that you would treat your own beloved home and possessions. We ask that the wedding couple and their friends clean up any areas used for the wedding.

There is **NO SMOKING, EATING, or DRINKING** in the Church building, dressing areas, or rest rooms.

FLOWERS: Customarily fresh flower arrangements (if used) are left in the sanctuary as an offering of thanksgiving for the sacrament. All arrangements will be lower than the top of the altar. The Wedding Committee representative is your contact to consult with. No flower petals may be dropped by flower girls.

CANDLES/DECORATIONS: Discuss with your Wedding Facilitator the use of the Unity Candlestand and pew bows. Candelabra and other fixtures furnished by outside firms are to be removed promptly after the wedding and in any case are never to be left in the church overnight. Any candelabra used must have a drop cloth or plastic under it to protect the floor from candle wax. Candelabras may not obstruct the view of the altar or the assembly. Pew decorations may not be attached with tape or any metal device that may harm the wood finish of pews or church furniture.

- *Please do not throw rice, bird seed, confetti, potpourri or any other material inside the church, outside the church, or anywhere on the church premises.*
- *Aisle runners are not permitted.*
- *All doors and aisles are to remain accessible.*

PHOTOGRAPHY: Photographs in the church after the wedding are limited to no more than 30 minutes.

We ask that no pictures be taken during the wedding except those that are taken from the side aisles of the church WITHOUT a flash.

The photographer must *avoid distracting movement* during the celebration and is strictly PROHIBITED *from ascending the altar steps*.

If group pictures are taken after the ceremony, they should be done quickly and quietly. Photographers are encouraged to come to the rehearsal and clarify procedures with the priest or deacon. Pictures may be taken prior to the wedding but should cease 30 minutes before the wedding begins. You may want to give the photographer a list of those pictures you would like to have.

VIDEO TAPING: Please check with the priest or deacon on the location of a video camera. The camera may not have a light of its own.

REHEARSAL: One rehearsal is planned for your wedding celebration and is ordinarily scheduled the evening before the wedding. Rehearsal time is limited and must begin promptly at the scheduled time. Please invite only the members of the wedding party and those participating in the ceremony (i.e. readers, etc.)

BRIDE'S ROOM: Please designate a friend or family member to check the Bride's Room for personal belongings after the wedding. Holy Family of Nazareth Church and its representatives are not responsible for lost or missing items.

## 4: AFTER THE WEDDING BELLS

Holy Family of Nazareth Parish cares about you, not just as you prepare to marry, but also after you are married. If you should decide to make our parish your spiritual home, we extend a warm welcome to you. *Please register or update your parish membership.*

Marriage Ministry at Holy Family of Nazareth exists for support and enrichment, as well as for fun and fellowship. We urge you to sign up for our parish weekly Flocknote and to watch the bulletin for scheduled events.

The *Together with Jesus* Couple Prayer Series is offered each January. This 6-week process will help you learn more and varied ways to enrich your prayer life.

Family Ministry also offers information on such services as natural family planning, counseling referrals, marriage enrichment, parenting programs, and others. This ministry exists to support and nurture family life in and with the parish community. If we can be of assistance to you, in any way, please call.

The Office of Family Ministry, 972-252-5521.

## APPENDICES

### A. CHECKLIST FOR WEDDING PLANNING

Before any date for any wedding in any country/state is scheduled please talk with the marriage ministry and/or priest(s) at the church where you plan to marry.

#### ***At Least Six Months Before:***

- \_\_\_ Contact the parish to arrange a preuptial appointment with the Family Minister or a priest. Decide when you will take Marriage Formation as required by the Church.
- \_\_\_ Schedule necessary meetings with the priest or deacon to complete marriage paperwork necessary for a Catholic Church wedding.
- \_\_\_ Obtain a NEW *recently dated* "Certificate of Baptism with Notations" if Catholic from your church of baptism and bring to the office.
- \_\_\_ "Preuptial Questionnaire" to be completed with the priest or lay minister who is assisting you. Any other papers needed for your marriage are to be completed at this time.
- \_\_\_ Bring "Affidavit of Free Status" completed by parent or family member signed in the presence of a priest or deacon and give to your priest/deacon.
- \_\_\_ Set a wedding date.
- \_\_\_ Contact a Music Minister.

#### **Six to Four Months Before:**

- \_\_\_ Begin marriage formation as required by the Church.

- \_\_\_ Obtain the booklet "Together For Life" or see TogetherForLifeOnline.com. The priest, deacon or lay minister will explain to you the various scriptural and prayer options that are possible for your wedding celebration.
- \_\_\_ Reserve and pay the deposit for the church, parish hall and/or cafeteria as needed.

### **Spiritual Preparation:**

- \_\_\_ Pray and reflect as a couple on the possible liturgical options as you prepare for your wedding celebration.

### **One to Two Months Before:**

- \_\_\_ A Holy Family of Nazareth Wedding Facilitator will contact you and assist you in coordinating details pertinent and specific to a wedding at HFN.

### **One Month to Two Weeks Before:**

- \_\_\_ Have worship aid (program) of your wedding celebration printed if you are having one.
- \_\_\_ Obtain a Texas Marriage License.\* Schedule an appointment no more than 12 weeks before wedding. with Dallas County Records. Call 214-653-7559 for required documents, 509 Main St., Dallas.
  - \* License is good for 90 days but is not valid for the first 72 hours.
- \_\_\_ Bring your marriage license to the parish office for the officiant **at least 14 days before** the wedding ceremony.
- \_\_\_ Pay balance of fees: wedding (and/or reception if held here).
- \_\_\_ Turn in the reception set-up diagram to the church office (if reception is at HFN).

### **Spiritual Preparation:**

- \_\_\_ Take time to reflect upon and pray together about the vows you will make to each other.
  
- \_\_\_ Catholics need to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) prior to the Sacrament of Matrimony. Scheduled times at Holy Family of Nazareth are Wednesdays, 6-7pm and Saturdays, 4-5pm or by appointment.
  
- \_\_\_ If the wedding does not include the Liturgy of the Eucharist, it is a common practice among Catholics to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist at another time on the wedding day.

### **Rehearsal:**

- \_\_\_ Arrive ON TIME with the wedding party. Only the wedding party and those involved in the ceremony are invited to the rehearsal.

### **Wedding Day:**

- \_\_\_ Arrive AT LEAST ONE HOUR before the wedding.
  
- \_\_\_ Photographs in the church building, *prior to the wedding*, should cease **30 minutes** before the celebration begins.
  
- \_\_\_ Photographs in the Sanctuary *after the celebration* are limited to no more than **30 minutes** since there may be another wedding or liturgy scheduled.

*The Community and Staff of Holy Family of Nazareth Parish rejoice with you in one of the greatest events of your life. We pray that God will bless your lives together with much joy, peace, and happiness. Enjoy this special time!*

**B. HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH PASTORAL STAFF:**

Pastor: Fr. Jacob Dankasa 972-252-5521 x103  
Parochial Vicar: Fr. Eugene O'Donnell 972-252-5521 x107

Deacons: Mr. James Baird 972-252-5521  
Mr. George Chou 972-252-5521

Family Ministry Associate:  
Sharon Gross 972-252-5521 x109  
direct 972-370-5049

Wedding Committee Coordinator: Sharon Gross

Reservations for a reception at HFN:  
Carol Barber 972-252-5521 x112

**C. FEES AND STIPENDS:**

Please call the parish office for the fees for the use of the church, cafeteria, kitchen, and/or parish hall.

For a contributing registered member of Holy Family of Nazareth there may not be a charge for the use of the church.

The honorarium for the priest or deacon is typically ~\$200.

The stipends for other Liturgical Ministers, Deacon, Altar Server and Wedding Liaison will be discussed at the Wedding Contract signing.

Arrangements for the musician's fee and/or sound technician are to be made directly with him/her and are payable at the rehearsal.

Altar Servers are needed for a Mass. These young people are to be given a small compensation for their time and service.

#### **D. WEDDING LIAISONS**

Genevieve Ramos      gramos926@yahoo.com  
Elizabeth Arebiyi      olabeth2000@yahoo.com

#### **E. VOCALISTS**

Andrea Hobson  
Kimberly Kresge  
Magdalena Chavez  
Carol Barber

#### **F. MUSICIANS**

Kimberly Kresge      (Flute, Vocalist)  
Marianne Lauda      (Piano and Organ)  
Sandy Morgan      (Guitar, Piano, Vocalist)

#### **G. SOUND TECHNICIAN** (required when musicians are not known by HFN)

Charles Kresge  
Edward Aguinaldo      (please send a text for your inquiry)

*May your marriage be a  
long adventure in personal growth*

*May you have true friends to stand  
by you in joy and in sorrow*

*May you be deeply involved in  
the events of your times*

*May you take time to reflect  
on the wonder of being*

*May you see your children's  
children to the third and fourth generation*

*May you come to old age and gray hair  
in peace and contentment*

*May you be kind to each other always.*

Beginning Your Marriage

John L. Thomas, S.J. and David M. Thomas



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