

Preparing for Matrimony

at

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

(Revised 10-2021)

Congratulations!

Christian matrimony is much more than a private celebration of your love. It is a sacrament in which you publicly proclaim to your family, friends and Church that you have decided to bind yourselves together in a mutual and lasting covenant of love. The Lord must be the foundation and ultimate goal of this love.

The love of husband and wife is an awesome mystery that echoes the love of God Himself. We thank the Lord for your willingness to embark on this great adventure of faith and love. We sincerely hope that, through your time of preparation, your relationship with the Lord and your commitment to him will strengthen and deepen with every passing day.

Pray together!

Many Catholic couples make the error of thinking that their personal relationship with God is completely private and should not be shared with anyone, not even their spouse. Some couples have little or no experience praying together. If you don't yet have a solid relationship with the Lord, this is a marvelous time to develop it. Pray together every day. Open your hearts to God, who has made you and who has brought you together. Your priest can help you if you are unsure how to begin a personal prayer life.

Lead sacramental lives!

Matrimony is one of seven sacraments, which all work together in response to the needs of our spiritual life. The sacraments of Holy Eucharist (Mass) and Reconciliation (Confession) are necessary sources of spiritual nourishment and strength. As you prepare for matrimony, make sure that you attend Mass every Sunday (or Saturday evening) and that you go to Confession regularly; both of these sacraments are important in your matrimonial preparation and will remain important after your wedding and throughout your lives. Make sure to get a copy of our parish bulletin so you will know the times that these sacraments are available at St. John the Baptist church; at the same time, be assured that you can receive these sacraments at any Catholic parish.

Use the resources of your parish!

St. John the Baptist has many ministries to help in all areas of our Catholic Christian life: prayer groups, Bible studies, religious education, etc. We hope you will take full advantage of these, whether you are on the giving or receiving end of the ministry's work. In particular, we hope you will not hesitate to call upon the priest who is helping you prepare for matrimony. He is available to answer any questions, big or small, that you may have, and he is eager to help you in any way he can.

General Information

When to contact us:

Engaged couples should contact their parish priest *at least six months* prior to the proposed date of the wedding. **Do not reserve a reception hall or finalize any other arrangements until after you have consulted with one of the priests.** This will prevent you from investing large amounts of time (and possibly money) in arrangements that do not fit in with the limited times available in the parish calendar.

The location of your wedding:

The Sacrament of Matrimony ordinarily takes place in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. Other Catholic parishes are sometimes available, depending on local practice. If only one party is Catholic, the parish of that person is the normal place of the wedding. Exceptions to this norm must be discussed with the priest.

Your eligibility for the sacrament:

If either of you have been married before to someone else, make sure to tell the priest about this before making any other arrangements for your wedding. The priest will need to document the nullity of your prior marriage (or marriages) before he can even set a tentative date for your wedding. (This is true whether the previous marriage was in a civil or a religious ceremony).

The Preparation Process

During your first meeting with the priest, he will outline the preparation process for you. In the course of that process you will gather together several documents:

1. **Recently issued Baptismal Certificate.** Contact the church where you were baptized and have them send you a new certificate.
2. **Certificates of First Communion and Confirmation.** Photocopies of the originals are fine.
3. **Affidavits of Freedom.** The bride and groom must each provide two witnesses (parents, relatives, or close friends who have known you since your adolescence). The witnesses will fill out the affidavits and sign them in the presence of any priest, deacon, or notary, who will also sign and seal the documents. The bride and groom need not be present for the signing.
4. **Certificate of completion from an approved matrimony preparation program.** St. John the Baptist offers a four week matrimony preparation course which you may register for [HERE](#). If this course does not fit your schedule, other available programs in the Diocese of Orange may be found here: [Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange](#)
5. **Marriage license from the state,** issued no more than 90 days before the wedding. In Orange County, you can apply online at [Orange County Clerk Recorder](#) or call (714) 834-2500.
6. **Prenuptial questionnaire.** In one of your meetings with the priest, he will assist you in completing the prenuptial questionnaire, which summarizes pertinent information about your readiness for matrimony. If you need other documents, the priest will guide you in obtaining them. As the date of your wedding approaches, he will also help you plan the details of your wedding Mass or ceremony.

Another important part of your preparation for matrimony: Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the only acceptable method for Catholics to use who need to regulate the size of their family for serious reasons. An overview of NFP is included in our parish matrimony preparation course. A course in NFP can be arranged according to your schedule and is available through our parish. There is no charge for the first class. For more information please see our [web site](#) or contact our Rectory Office at (714) 540-2214. The information you learn in this course will continue to enrich your personal health as well as your matrimonial life long after the wedding!

Planning the liturgy for your wedding

You will be working with the priest, Parish Wedding Coordinator and the Director of Music Ministries to plan the details of your wedding liturgy. It is appropriate, especially when both parties are Catholic, that the wedding take place within the Celebration of the Eucharist. However, there may be occasions when it takes place within the context of a Liturgy of the Word, that is, outside the Mass. You may be using the booklet ***Together for Life*** to help make some of the selections.

You may wish to incorporate appropriate cultural customs into your service such as the *arras* or *lazo* or a gift of flowers for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Please be sure to discuss this and plan it with the priest well ahead of time. Since the wedding celebration takes place in the context of Mass or Liturgy of the Word and in God's House, careful attention should be given to appropriate attire for both bride and attendants. Care should be taken regarding both the length of the skirt as well as the neckline that they be in keeping with the dignity and sanctity of this moment of worship. This website should be viewed as an aid in recognizing appropriate styles: beautifullymodest.com.

Please include the following text in your wedding invitation: ***St. John the Baptist Church has a dress code policy which may be found on the parish website [here](#).*** Because we reverence the place in which the community of the Church gathers for worship, we ask that all your friends and relatives particularly in the wedding party be aware of the sacredness of the church building. In each Catholic church there is reserved the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood in the tabernacle. For these reasons we ask that all who enter the church at any time, whether before, during, or after the rehearsal or during the ceremony observe these basic principles:

- Silence, respect and reverence while in the church
- No food, drink, or chewing gum
- No alcoholic beverages on the church grounds, including the parking lot

Other Guidelines and Policies

1. **Days and Times:** Normal times for weddings at St. John's are Saturdays at 12:00 Noon, 2:00 PM and 3:00 PM. (However, other days and times may be arranged in consultation with the priest, as long as they do not interfere with the regular schedule of the parish.) Your florist and photographer may begin setting up 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the ceremony. Everything needs to be finished 1½ hours after the scheduled start of the ceremony, typically leaving about 30 minutes for photographs following the service.
2. **Wedding Coordinator:** As soon as your date has been set, please contact our parish Wedding Coordinator, Tony Manrique at tony@sjboc.org. He will assist and review your plans. He can also advise you about such details as the dimension of the Church interior, seating arrangements, proper decorum and video/photography policies. A Parish Wedding Coordinator is required.

3. Music: Please contact our Director of Music Ministries, William Fritz at audiovocemnoctis@gmail.com at your earliest convenience to plan your music. If you propose to invite outside musicians or cantors to participate in the liturgy, they need to be properly trained in the use of sacred music in Catholic worship, and you will need to have them approved by William.

4. Financial matters: No one is ever refused the sacraments due to an inability to pay. However, the parish does provide very competent individuals to assist at the ceremony and the use of the church facilities costs money.

a. Fees:

\$1200 to the church which includes everything necessary (the parish Wedding Coordinators, Organist, Cantor and the \$200 non-refundable fee to reserve your date and time in the church).

Extra Fees:

Guest fee: \$200 (applies if neither bride nor groom have been a registered, contributing parishioner of Saint John the Baptist Church for at least 6 months)

Bench fee: \$100 (applies if there are musicians used outside the SJB parish ministry)

Livestream fee: \$400 (optional, see livestream info sheet attached to these guidelines)

b. Donations/Stipends:

Altar Servers (2): typically, \$20 per server.

Priest: (optional) please enclose in a separate envelope with his name written on it

5. Rehearsals: Rehearsals are usually held a day or two prior to the wedding and are scheduled with the Priest or Parish Wedding Coordinator.

6. Children: Children involved in the liturgy should be old enough to conduct themselves appropriately during the ceremony.

7. Church Decorations: Please consult the Parish Wedding Coordinator for details on suitable use of decorations for the liturgy. Flowers may be placed only in the designated areas, below the statues of Mary and Joseph and at the two corners of the sanctuary platform. All pew decorations should hang from the pew ends. Only plastic clips may be used (no tape, tacks, wire or other materials that could mark the wood). All decorations should be appropriate for the dignity your wedding deserves.

8. Safety concerns: Rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals and the like are not permitted to be thrown in or around the church due to the hazards and nuisance they may cause. Runners may not be used.

9. Photography and Video: A separate form is provided detailing our photography and video policies. Please be sure the photographers/videographers receive this material. We ask that you have them sign it with their name and address and that you return it to the priest or parish Wedding Coordinator. A livestream of your wedding is also available through the parish.

We, the Bride and Groom, sign this form to confirm that we have read, understood, and will comply with and abide by all of the details indicated in this wedding policy – regarding ourselves and our guests.

Groom _____ **Date** _____

Bride _____ **Date** _____

Please keep a photocopy of this agreement and give a signed copy to the Wedding Coordinator at your first meeting.

Florist Instructions for Weddings

Matrimony is a sacramental ceremony. You, as the florist for this couple's wedding, will contribute greatly to the spirit of the service by your artistic expertise. To facilitate your role in this wedding, St. John the Baptist Parish offers you the following guidelines.

1. No more than four arrangements are to be used in the church.
2. The flowers must be placed either in the area under the statues of Joseph and Mary or at the corners of the top sanctuary step. No flowers may be placed by the altar or wedding kneeler. It is best to stop by the church and familiarize yourself with the environment.
3. No candles may be used in floral arrangements.
4. Flowers are restricted to the sanctuary area only and no arbors or arches may be used.
5. Delivery of flowers should be no more than thirty minutes prior to the wedding ceremony. Anything earlier may disrupt a prior ceremony. We suggest that boutonnieres and corsages be delivered to the family home to avoid confusion.
6. Runners may not be used. Rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals and the like are not permitted to be thrown in or around the church.
7. All pew decorations should hang from the pew ends. Only plastic clips may be used – no tape, tacks, wire or any other material that could mark the wood may be used to attach the decorations. All decorations should be appropriate for the dignity the wedding deserves.
8. Questions should be addressed to the Parish Wedding Coordinator, Tony Manrique, at tony@sjboc.org.

Saint John the Baptist Catholic Parish

1015 Baker Street

Costa Mesa, California 92626

tel: (714) 540-2214 email: tony@sjboc.org

www.sjboc.org

Photographer Guidelines for Weddings

The entire wedding party should arrive at the church no later than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the ceremony. (This should be kept in mind especially when scheduling pictures outside with the bride and her attendants.) **During the ceremony candid shots or available-light video may be taken, as long as they do not detract from the service.**

1. Observe the basic "line of sight" rule throughout the ceremony: if guests can see you, you are in the wrong place. To be specific, avoid the following areas:
 - a. in front of the pews;
 - b. the center aisle (up to the last pew where guests are seated); and
 - c. any part of the sanctuary area.
2. The photographer and videographer may use:
 - a. the side aisles;
 - b. the choir loft;
 - c. the music ensemble area (as long as there is no interference with the musicians);
 - d. the main aisle up to the last guests; and
 - e. the area outside the work sacristy (stage left) for a stationary video camera.
3. Floodlights and flash may not be used during the ceremony.
4. Posed photography with flash is allowed indoors and outdoors after the ceremony.
5. Everything must be finished and removed from the church 1½ hours after the scheduled start of the service.
6. Other directives of the parish Wedding Coordinator are to be followed. Any questions should be referred to him.

I agree to abide by the above guidelines. I understand that, in case of violation, I will not be allowed back.

photographer signature

street address

photographer **printed** name

city, state, zip

phone number

Please keep a photocopy of this agreement and return a signed copy to the couple's Wedding Coordinator by the following date: _____

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PARISH

LIVE STREAM SERVICE – DESCRIPTION & FEES (Weddings)

DESCRIPTION: The Live Streams are a way to have people who cannot be physically present in the church participate and feel a part of the liturgy.

They are similar to the live streams of our parish daily and Sunday Masses. They are NOT a customized, edited, professional product, and they will focus on the liturgies, not the congregation, and cannot provide interviews or “people” shots.

We also cannot guarantee that the live stream will be uninterrupted as we are subject to the vagaries of the platforms we’re streaming on and the internet connection.

To get a better idea of how the live stream will look and sound, we encourage you to view one or two of our live streams at the following links:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sjbor/videos/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfW2dvBn2QB2TrzII5Ryy6A>

FEES:

The Live Stream Fee for Weddings is \$400.

PLATFORMS:

Live Streams can be done on the following platforms:

- 1) St. John the Baptist Parish **Facebook** Page – viewable by anyone who has access to Facebook.
Completely public platform. After the liturgy is over, we can leave it on the Facebook page or delete it per your wishes.
- 2) Parish **YouTube** Channel – “unlisted” which means only those who have the link may view the stream. This means YOU must send the link (which we will provide 2 or 3 days prior to the liturgy) to the viewers ahead of time or they will not be able to view the live stream on the day of the liturgy.

RECORDING:

An mp4 of the live stream will be provided to you, and will be available for pick-up on a thumb drive 2 days after the liturgy, or via a DropBox download the day after the liturgy.

QUESTIONS: contact Tony Manrique at tony@sjbor.org or at (714) 540-2214.