



## The Purpose of Marriage Preparation

The Catholic Church believes that marriage is a sacrament, a divine encounter with God that transforms the couple, *"that the two might become one flesh."* - Genesis 2;24. As it is a permanent commitment, marriage requires careful thought, prayer and preparation. As a parish, we wish to journey with you to help you with this special moment in your life.

## Requirements

1. Couples must contact Visitation Church at least six months prior to the date they wish to celebrate their wedding.
2. Weddings are ordinarily celebrated in the parish of the Catholic bride or groom. If the couple seeks to have the marriage performed in a non-Catholic church, special permission must be obtained through the church. Weddings are not permitted to take place in any outdoor venue, restaurant, hotel, or similar settings.
3. The date for the wedding is set after the initial meeting with the priest. The date cannot be set over the phone or prior to that encounter.
4. For all couples being married at Visitation Church, there is a marriage preparation program through which the priest will guide the couple. It involves a series of interviews with the priest, completing a FOCCUS inventory, attending an archdiocesan marriage preparation day or Engaged Encounter weekend, and collecting the necessary documents, (See below)

## Required Documents

1. For Catholics, a copy of the baptism certificate recently issued within the last six months. The parish of baptism can be contacted to provide a new copy. If the non-Catholic can obtain proof of baptism, a certificate would be appreciated but is not necessary.
2. Two affidavits of freedom (four in all) signed by the parents, siblings, or other competent witnesses declaring that the bride or groom is free to marry. This is done in the presence of a Catholic priest or deacon.
3. First Communion and Confirmation certificates.
4. Certificate of attendance at a Marriage Preparation workshop or Engaged Encounter weekend offered by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The dates and fees can be obtained by contacting: For English - Candy Metoyer 213-637-7250 / [cmetoyer@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:cmetoyer@la-archdiocese.org) or for Spanish - Graciela Villalobos - 213-637-7561 / [gvillalobos@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:gvillalobos@la-archdiocese.org). For Engaged Encounter Weekends - please go to the website <http://ceeofla.org> for information and registration.
5. A valid marriage license issued by the Los Angeles Recorder's Office. Go online at: <https://lavote.gov/home/county-clerk/marriage-licenses-ceremonies/general-info/about> for the closest office and requirements.
6. All documents should be obtained and provided to the parish at least one month prior to the wedding date.

## The Wedding Ceremony

Weddings are usually celebrated between 10 AM and 2 PM on Saturdays. Weddings are not usually scheduled after 2 PM because of Confessions and Saturday evening mass. Weddings at other times can be scheduled if the church and the priest are available. All members of the wedding party and those involved in the ceremony are asked to be at the church at least 30 minutes before the ceremony begins. The day and time for the wedding rehearsal will be set with the wedding coordinator.

## The Church Fee

The customary offering to the church for weddings of registered parishioners is \$1,700. The offering for couples from outside of the parish is \$2,450. A nonrefundable initial payment of \$500, as well as this signed agreement, is required to reserve the church. Checks can be made out to Visitation Church or can be paid online through Faith Direct at <https://membership.faithdirect.net/givenow/ca772>. This fee includes the use of the church, music coordination, along with a pianist and a singer on the wedding day, the wedding coordinator, and the sacristan. The remaining balance of \$1,200 (\$1,950 for non-parishioners) is due 30 days before your wedding date.

1. Music - Kathy McGrath, our Music Director, should be contacted as soon as the wedding date is set. Her contact information is: 818-400-6094 or [kathmcgrath@me.com](mailto:kathmcgrath@me.com). She will coordinate the music for the wedding.

2. Wedding Coordinator - Carmen Fuentes should be contacted as soon as the wedding date is set. Her contact information is: Direct: 714-458-7330 / Office - 888-881-0558 or [www.expressionaryevents.com](http://www.expressionaryevents.com). The coordinator will conduct the wedding rehearsal, will be present on the wedding day for the beginning of the ceremony, will assist with ceremony set up, will help to coordinate with the wedding vendors i.e. florists, photographers, etc. Any other use of the wedding coordinator can be negotiated with her personally.

## Photography

Pictures may be taken during the ceremony. Flash photography is allowed. The photographer will need to contact the wedding coordinator prior to the ceremony to receive instructions. Following the ceremony, pictures may be taken in the church for only 15 minutes after the conclusion of the wedding.

## Church Decoration

The bridal party is welcome to decorate the church with flowers, an aisle runner, or bows on the pews. No adhesives are allowed. Flowers are the responsibility of the wedding party. The couple is welcome to leave the flowers to decorate the church or to take them to their wedding reception. No use of birdseed, rice, confetti, sparklers or flower petals is permitted.

## Additional Cleaning Fee

An additional cleaning fee of \$300 will be charged should the church and environs be left in disarray.

## Live Streaming

If the couple wishes to live-stream their wedding mass for an additional fee, please contact the wedding coordinator, Carmen Fuentes at 714-458-7330.

## Convalidations (Blessing of a Civil Marriage)

The customary offering to the church for a simple convalidation is \$400 (no music, no wedding coordinator, and no large wedding party).

For other convalidations of registered parishioners the customary offering is \$1,700 and for couples outside of the parish, the offering is \$2,450 (music, wedding coordinator, and wedding party). A nonrefundable initial payment of \$500, as well as this signed agreement, is required to reserve the church.

I have read and understand the above terms of this agreement which I am returning with my deposit.

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(Print Name)

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(Signature)

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(Date of Signature)