

*The Sacrament of Holy  
Matrimony at Sacred Heart  
Catholic Church*



Marriage Preparation Information

*And*

Guidelines for the  
Celebration of Marriage at  
Sacred Heart Catholic Church

# SACRED HEART OF JESUS MISSION STATEMENT

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We, the faith community of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, are committed to forming Disciples of Christ by embracing Stewardship through Hospitality, Prayer, Formation and Service.

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## HELPFUL PARISH CONTACTS FOR YOUR WEDDING



Fr. Pat Sullivan  
*Pastor*  
913-422-5700 x 204  
[frpat.sullivan@shoj.org](mailto:frpat.sullivan@shoj.org)



Dcn. Nicholas Moragues  
*Pastoral Assistant*  
913-276-3176  
[dcnnick.moragues@shoj.org](mailto:dcnnick.moragues@shoj.org)



Evan Akers  
*Director of Music and Liturgy*  
913-422-5700 x 229  
[evan.akers@shoj.org](mailto:evan.akers@shoj.org)



Julie Krause  
*Director of Operations*  
913-422-5700 x205  
[julie.krause@shoj.org](mailto:julie.krause@shoj.org)



Maureen Reintjes  
*Resource Specialist*  
913-422-5700 x 250  
[maureen.reintjes@shoj.org](mailto:maureen.reintjes@shoj.org)

# Letter from the Pastor

Congratulations on your engagement! I realize this is an exciting time and want to assure you we will work diligently to make your celebration *the best day of your life*. In order for that to happen, you need to do *your part*. Please understand that as a Pastor and physician of souls, I take the covenant of Holy Matrimony seriously, and I am counting on you to do the same.

In this document you will find the steps necessary to be approved for marriage in the Catholic Church. You will also find helpful insight, as well as parish policies for having your ceremony at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish. What this booklet *cannot do*, is make your marriage successful; that's up to you. That said, I'm confident you will be on the right track after the preparation process.

It is crucial to know the most important aspect of marriage is not the ceremony (as excited as it will be), but living out the promises you make. By stating your intentions and reciting your vows, you will be entering into a sacred covenant with God. With that in mind, this newly formed relationship with your spouse can be the most amazing thing you've ever experienced, if you engage this process and place God at the center of your lives.

I have been blessed to experience many beautiful, healthy marriages involving couples who understand the huge responsibility of the marital commitment. Namely, that **it requires a lot of hard work anchored in Jesus and his Church**. Thus, marriage is something that can only succeed by selflessly giving 100% to your spouse. It demands patience, understanding, compromise, determination, fortitude, fraternal correction...and so many other virtues. Of course no one is perfect, but these virtues, along with a happy, healthy marriage *will happen* if you take this process to heart.

It is not just a cliché saying that a family that prays together stays together; it is very real. So begin today praying with your future spouse. Go to Mass together and relish the Sacraments. In short, take this process seriously and seek to learn from it. If you do, you *will live happily ever after*. This I promise!

Again, congratulations and please know we are praying for you.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Pat Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Pat Sullivan

# PART I – OVERVIEW OF THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE

## Introduction



In his apostolic exhortation on the role of the Christian family in the modern world, Pope John Paul II wrote: “Knowing that marriage and family constitute one of the most precious of human values, the Church wishes to speak and offer her help. . . In a particular way the Church addresses the young, who are beginning their journey towards marriage and family life for the purpose of presenting them with new horizons, helping them to discover the beauty and grandeur of the vocation to love and the service of life.”

The preserving and fostering of the Christian ideals of marriage is one of the most important works in the total apostolate of the Church. To young men and women, mothers and fathers, caught in the current of the anxieties and pressures of the modern world, the Church wishes to bring the answer of Christ. She wishes to show forth the richness of the sacramentality of marriage and to find means of helping couples to realize the religious significance of their vocation. Moreover, she seeks to help them in practical ways to dispose themselves to the generous promptings of the Holy Spirit. (Common Policy for Marriage Preparation, written by the bishops of the Kansas Province, 1988)

Each sacrament is an important moment in the life of the Church. Marriage, in particular, is important in the life of a man and a woman. The above statement from the Kansas bishops emphasizes "the richness of the sacramentality of marriage," as well as helping a couple to "realize the religious significance of their vocation." **In keeping with these ideals, it becomes important for the engaged couple to focus on the wedding celebration, first and foremost, as a sacrament.** This sacrament is properly celebrated with a worshipping community, and becomes an experience of religious importance for the couple.

These guidelines and regulations are a supplement to the general norms for wedding celebrations found in "Rite of Marriage," promulgated by the Holy See on July 1, 1969, and the "Common Policy for Marriage Preparation," prepared by the Bishops of the Province of Kansas, and are provided to engaged couples of Sacred Heart Catholic Church to aid in the planning of their wedding ceremony. They are intended to enhance the liturgical celebration of the sacrament, and help the couple enter this celebration more fully.

# THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE TO ANOTHER CATHOLIC OR A BAPTISED NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN

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The Catholic Church establishes specific guidelines for couples who wish to be married in the Catholic faith. The Catholic party or parties should be practicing their Catholic faith by attending Mass every week and participating in the other Sacraments and life of the Church. According to Church canon law, the following may be cause for delay of marriage: a. insufficient faith, or an unwillingness to practice the faith (c. 1086.2) b. a substantial lack of appreciation for the SPIRITUAL and religious meaning of marriage (can. 1095;1101.2) c. refusal of the parties to take part in the prescribed marriage preparation program or to refuse to participate in any pre-marriage assessment, evaluation, or counseling.

The Sacrament of Marriage, like all other sacraments, is intended for the whole Church. This means that everyone attending the ceremony plays a part in the celebration. The variety of ministries and ways to enhance the celebration are spelled out in the following sections.



**The Bride and Groom** - The bride and groom actually minister the Sacrament of Marriage to each other. During the public declaration of vows, the bride and groom become the minister of Christ's love and unifying grace to each other, to those present at the celebration, and to the entire Church as well.

**The Priest** - The primary role of the priest is one of leading the various ministries within the assembly. He is called to witness and accept the vows of the couple in the name of the entire Church community and to draw all into prayerful participation of the Sacrament.

**The Assembly** - The Sacrament of Marriage is an act of public worship, and so the assembly that is gathered is called to active participation in this celebration. Through prayers, song, and their witness to the universal love of Christ, the assembly becomes a source of support for the couple as they begin their married life. Care should be taken in the planning to make sure that the assembly feels comfortable participating in the celebration.

# ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

The rate of ecumenical marriages (a Catholic marrying a baptized non-Catholic) and interfaith marriages (a Catholic marrying a non-baptized non-Christian) varies by region. In areas of the U.S. with proportionately fewer Catholics, as many as 40% of married Catholics may be in ecumenical or interfaith marriages.

Because of the challenges that arise when a Catholic marries someone of a different religion, the Church seeks to support ecumenical and interfaith couples and help them prepare to meet those challenges with a spirit of holiness. Theologian Robert Hater, author of the 2006 book, “When a Catholic Marries a Non-Catholic,” writes: “To regard mixed religion marriages negatively does them a disservice. They are holy covenants and must be treated as such.”

A marriage can be regarded at two levels – whether it is valid in the eyes of the church and whether it is a sacrament. Both depend in part on whether the non-Catholic spouse is a baptized Christian or a non-baptized person, such as a Jew, Muslim or atheist.

If the non-Catholic is a baptized Christian (not necessarily Catholic), the marriage is valid as long as the Catholic party obtains official permission from the diocese to enter into the marriage and follows all the stipulations for a Catholic wedding. **A marriage between a Catholic and another Christian is also considered a sacrament.** In fact, the church regards all marriages between baptized Christians as sacramental, as long as there are no impediments. “Their marriage is rooted in the Christian faith through their baptism,” Hater explains.

In cases where a Catholic is marrying someone who is not a baptized Christian – known as a marriage with disparity of cult – “the church exercises more caution,” Hater says. A “dispensation from disparity of cult,” which is a more rigorous form of permission given by the local bishop, is required for the marriage to be valid. **The union between a Catholic and a non-baptized spouse is not considered sacramental.** However, Hater adds, “Though they do not participate in the grace of the sacrament of marriage, both partners benefit from God’s love and help [grace] through their good lives and beliefs.”

## Marriage Preparation

Good-quality marriage preparation is essential in helping couples work through the questions and challenges that will arise after they tie the knot. Questions that the engaged couple should consider include in what faith community (or communities) the couple will be involved, how the couple will handle extended family who may have questions or concerns about one spouse’s faith tradition, and how the couple will foster a spirit of unity despite their religious differences.

Of all the challenges an ecumenical or interfaith couple will face, the most pressing one likely will be the question of how they raise their children. “The church makes clear ... that their marriages will be more challenging from the perspective of faith,” Hater writes. “... Special challenges exist as well when it comes to raising children in the Catholic faith.”

Because of these challenges, **the church requires the Catholic party to be faithful to his or her faith and to “make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power” to have their children baptized and raised in the Catholic faith.** This provision of the 1983 Code of Canon Law is a change from the 1917 version, which required an absolute promise to have the children raised Catholic.

Likewise, the non-Catholic spouse is no longer required to promise to take an active role in raising the children in the Catholic faith, but instead “to be informed at an appropriate time of these promises which the Catholic party has to make, so that it is clear that the other party is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party,” the code states.

But suppose the non-Catholic party insists that the children will not be raised Catholic? The diocese can still grant permission for the marriage, as long as the Catholic party promises to do all he or she can to fulfill that promise, Hater writes. The marriage may be legal, he notes, but is it a wise choice? Those are questions that may also need to be explored in marriage preparation.

If children are raised in another faith, he notes, “The Catholic parent must show children good example, affirm the core beliefs of both parents’ religious traditions, make them aware of Catholic beliefs and practices and support the children in the faith they practice.”

### **The Wedding Ceremony**

Because Catholics regard marriage as a sacred event, the church prefers that ecumenical interfaith couples marry in a Catholic church, preferably the Catholic party’s parish church. If they wish to marry elsewhere, they must get permission from the local bishop. He can permit them to marry in the non-Catholic spouse’s place of worship or another suitable place with a minister, rabbi or civil magistrate – if they have a good reason, according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. This permission is called a “dispensation from canonical form.” Without it, a wedding not held in a Catholic church is not considered valid.

It is popular, and acceptable, for an ecumenical or interfaith couple to invite the non-Catholic spouse’s minister to be present at the wedding. It is important to note that, according to canon law, only the priest may officiate at a Catholic wedding (at a Catholic church). A minister may offer a few words, but he or she may not officiate or preside at a joint ceremony. **It is generally recommended that ecumenical or interfaith weddings not include Communion (or a Mass).** Therefore, most ecumenical or interfaith weddings take place outside of Mass: there is a different service for a Catholic marrying a baptized Christian and a Catholic marrying a non-baptized person or catechumen (person preparing for baptism).

“The reception of Communion is a sign of unity with the ecclesial community,” he explains. “On a wedding day, the fact that one-half of the congregation does not belong to the Catholic community [and, hence, does not receive Communion] cannot

be a sign of welcome or unity on a couple's wedding day." It might be "likened to inviting guests to a celebration and not allowing them to eat," he adds.

### **Catholic-Jewish Weddings**

Jews and Christians share a view of marriage as a holy union and symbol of God's bond with his people. Stricter branches of Judaism, such as Orthodox and Conservative, forbid or strongly discourage Jews from marrying non-Jews and prohibit their rabbis from participating in interreligious marriage ceremonies. "Conservative Judaism sees only the marriage of two Jews as ... a sacred event," reported the USCCB's Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, which discussed Catholic-



Jewish marriages at a conference in November 2004. The Reform branch of Judaism strongly discourages interfaith marriages, but there is no legal prohibition against it as there is in the stricter branches.

Often, a Catholic-Jewish wedding is held at a neutral site – with permission from the bishop – so that neither family will feel uncomfortable. In such cases, a rabbi is likely to officiate. The couple

needs to have a dispensation from canonical form for such a wedding to be valid in the Catholic Church.

"Your pastor could be involved in the wedding by giving a blessing, but in Catholic-Jewish weddings, usually the rabbi will officiate," writes Father Daniel Jordan, judicial vicar for the Tribunal of the Diocese of Burlington, Vt.

As for the children of a Catholic-Jewish marriage, religious leaders agree that it is "vastly preferable for the offspring of mixed marriages to be raised exclusively in one tradition or the other, while maintaining an attitude of respect for the religious traditions of the 'other' side of the family," the conference report said.

Traditionally, Jews consider any child of a Jewish woman to be Jewish. The question of what faith in which to raise children must be an ongoing topic of dialogue between the couple and during marriage preparation. "Attempting to raise a child simultaneously as both Jewish and Catholic ... can only lead to violation of the integrity of both religious traditions," the report said.

## Catholic-Muslim Marriages

Marriages between Catholics and Muslims present their own particular challenges. Islamic men may marry outside of their faith only if their spouse is Christian or Jewish. In fact, the prophet Muhammed had a Christian wife and Jewish wife. A non-Muslim wife is not required to adopt any Muslim laws, and her husband cannot keep her from attending church or synagogue. However, Islamic women are forbidden from marrying non-Muslim men unless the spouse agrees to convert to Islam.

For Catholics and Muslims, one of the most difficult aspects of marriage is the religion of the children. Both faiths insist that the children of such marriages to be part of their own religious faith.



Such issues will continue to be challenges for Catholics marrying outside the faith in this

increasingly diverse world, Hater writes. However, with positive approaches to preparation and ministry, and a spirit of welcome to both parties, many ecumenical and interfaith marriages can be intimate, holy reflections of God's love.

“Regarding mixed marriages with hope does not minimize the challenges that they present,” he says, “but recognizes the blessings that they can afford to spouses, children and the faith community.”

## **PART II – STEP BY STEP GUIDE**

### **FOR GETTING MARRIED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AT SACRED HEART OF JESUS PARISH**

<b>Step – 1</b>	<b>Call and arrange your first appointment with the parish priest, and check availability of desired dates.</b>
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- 1) **Registered parishioners can schedule a date up to **eighteen months** in advance.**
- 2) **Non-registered individuals can schedule a date up to **six months** in advance.**
- 3) **The Pastor decides who is considered a registered parishioner based on established parameters.**

#### **PRE-NUPTIAL INTERVIEW:**

A couple wishing to be married within the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas must contact the parish priest at least six months before the desired wedding date. This will allow sufficient time to get everything completed that is required for a Catholic Marriage. **No wedding date can be set before the initial phone call and\or interview with the pastor.** Also:

Call the parish and ask to speak to the Pastor (Fr. Pat Sullivan). The pastor will gather initial information to assess your circumstances and schedule the first meeting.

*it is important to note, that if either party has a prior marriage, they must have a certificate of nullity (an annulment) before the marriage preparation process can begin, unless the previous spouse is deceased. Please advise the pastor of either circumstance as we can help with the annulment process if necessary.*

In the first meeting, the couple is interviewed and biographical information is gathered. It also contains questions about the person's beliefs, any dispensations that may be required, and the couple's freedom to marry according to the Catholic faith. In the case of an interfaith marriage, you will be asked to sign an agreement to raise your children in the Catholic faith. You should prepare yourselves for this by discussing it prior to your interview.

When the PRE-NUPTIAL FORM is completely filled out, it will be held by the parish priest until all the steps are completed. He will then send it to the main church offices to receive the Archbishop's permission to conduct the ceremony.

**PLANNING BOOKLETS** You will receive a copy of (Together for Life) which is a booklet to help you pick readings etc. for the ceremony. This book is VITAL in assisting you, the Pastor, and the Director of Music & Liturgy in planning your marriage ceremony. **BE SURE TO READ THIS BOOKLET AND CHOOSE TOGETHER THE READINGS YOU WOULD LIKE. THE PRIEST PERFORMING YOUR CEREMONY WILL PICK OUT ALL THE OTHER PRAYERS.**

## Step – 2

## Contact the Director of Music & Liturgy

Whether you use our Music Director and Vocalist, or you bring your own, you must meet with the Music Director prior to the wedding to discuss any details that a guest musician may need to know. There is a \$100 bench fee *if* you bring in your own instrumentalist *and* Evan is not used. Contact our Director of Music & Liturgy, Evan Akers, at 913-422-5700 x229 or [evan.akers@shoj.org](mailto:evan.akers@shoj.org) to arrange a meeting. **This must be completed before moving on to step three.**



I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding contacting the Music Director by my initials below:

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Step – 3

## Choose Marriage Preparation Method

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM:** In addition to meetings with the priest, the Archdiocese requires that a couple preparing for marriage attend marriage preparation classes. There are several options available (which is determined by the priest):

The preferred and normative program will require you meeting with a married couple for a seven class workshop (some married couples have fewer sessions – but the norm is seven). The sessions are approximately one and a half hours long.

The second option is an “Engaged Encounter weekend”, which begins on a Friday afternoon and ends on Sunday afternoon. The third option, and only for unique circumstances, is an online marriage preparation course.

**If option #1** is chosen, the priest will send in an application for you. You will then eventually be contacted by the Marriage Prep Coordinator to schedule dates.

**If option #2** is chosen, you will need to initiate and schedule the weekend by going to: [Engaged Encounter 2021 Schedule](#). Here you will find further info along with available dates and contact information to schedule your weekend.

**If option #3** is chosen, [Click here to register](#).

## Step 4

# Prayerfully discern the below information on cohabitation and the serious issues it can cause a marriage

It is extremely important that you read both of these articles in their entirety. There may be some similarities and/or overlap between them, but that's OK – read them anyway.

*From the Archdiocese of Phoenix*

### Article I

Cohabitation is the practice of an unmarried couple living in the same dwelling while having a sexual relationship. According to USA Today, two-thirds of married couples lived together before marriage. Some common reasons that couples cohabit include:

- **Finances:** Many couples find it easier to save money or to keep their living expenses down by living together as roommates.
- **Intimacy:** Cohabiting couples often call their situation the “next step” in the intimacy of their relationship and consider it a natural progression of their feelings for one another.
- **Stability:** Some couples use the period of cohabitation to “test drive” their relationship to see if they should marry one another.

Ironically, empirical research has confirmed that cohabiting couples actually fare worse in the areas of finances, intimacy, and stability. In regards to intimacy, couples are correct that their desire to fully and freely give themselves to one another is a good thing. The problem is that this desire becomes disordered when that full and free gift of sexual union and domestic partnership are coupled with the partial and transitory conditions of cohabitation.

Unlike the marriage covenant, cohabitation is a temporary arrangement that is akin to a business deal. With roommates who have a non-sexual relationship, it is fair to give “30- days’ notice” and simply walk away from the relationship. But the heartbreak that results from cohabiting couples doing the same thing shows that such arrangements only lead to a weakening of the ability to have romantic bonds with anyone. In regards to stability, cohabitation actually reinforces a dangerous belief about marriage; that marriage can only work if both partners have a warm romantic “feeling” towards one another. Sometimes marriage involves sacrifice that cannot be prepared for in a cohabitation setting.

Sex is intensely private and personal, but it also has deep moral and social dimensions. Sex works as a primary bonding agent in families and the family is the building block of society. Sexual rights and wrongs influence the health and happiness of individuals, families and neighborhoods. That's why sexual behavior has always been the subject of many civil laws. The Church, of course, wishes to safeguard the family and society. But, more than that, the Church wishes to safeguard the relationship with your future spouse

and with God. Sex is the act that seals and renews the couple's marriage covenant before God. Sexual sins, then, are not just between a man and a woman, but between the couple and God. And that's the Church's responsibility. Sex is not simply a private matter. If it's between you and God, it's between you and the Church. You need to ask yourself: "When do I stop being a Christian? When I close the bedroom door? When does my relationship with God cease to matter?"

The Church's teaching on cohabitation is not an "arbitrary" rule. Living together before marriage is a sin because it violates God's commandments and the law of the Church. St. Paul lists this sin – technically called "fornication" among the sins (whether within or outside cohabitation) that can keep a person from reaching heaven (see 1 Corinthians 6:9) Cohabitation works against the heart's deepest desires and greatly increases the chances of a failed marriage.

If you are honest with yourself, every practical consideration will tell you that separating before marriage is the right thing to do. It is a decision to turn away from sin and to follow Christ and His teaching. That is always the right decision. But it's a good decision for other important reasons, too:

- it will strengthen your marriage
- it will deepen your friendship
- it will foster deeper intimacy and communion
- it will build up your problem-solving and communications skills
- it will give your marriage a greater chance for success

You may think you are unique and that your passion for each other will never wane. But that's what most couples think. No one goes into marriage planning for a breakup; yet a majority of couples today do break up. You want to be one of the exceptional couples who not only succeed in marriage, but also live together in happiness and fulfillment.

Some couples who are living together think that separation before marriage is artificial or meaningless. Some fear that halting sexual activity will be harmful to the relationship. But this is rarely the case. Sometimes in marriage, too, a sexual relationship will have to be suspended for a time due to illness, military service, business travel, or the good of a spouse. Relationships not only survive this, but actually grow stronger. God rewards such sacrifices with graces for a good relationship. Abstaining from sex will also enable you to rely on other means of communication, which ultimately will empower you to get to know each other in a deeper, lasting way.

## **Article II**

*From: CatholicsComeHome.org*

COHABITATION AND CHURCH TEACHING; SOME Q&A.

### **Why does the Church teach that having sex before marriage is wrong?**

First of all, if you've ever heard anyone – a priest, layperson, or anyone else – tell you that sex is something bad, then he or she is absolutely wrong! Our Church believes that sex is a wonderful thing. In the Old Testament, the book Song of Songs features wonderful poetry about the beauty of human sexuality. More recently, Pope St. John Paul II gave many lectures about the beautiful Biblical view of sexuality in his *Theology of the Body* (also recommended is his classic book *Love and Responsibility*).

However, sex – like all gifts – has to be used appropriately. God has designed sex to occur within marriage. According to the Bible, marriage occurs when a man and a woman “become one flesh.” Thus the consummation of a marriage happens during a sexual union. When two people don't commit to be together for the rest of their lives, sexuality becomes tied to a tentative relationship, something that can be ended at any moment. If we engage in such an intimate, powerful experience as sex with someone we aren't committed to, then in effect we are using the other person's body to feel good, either physically or emotionally.

There is another reason. Sex is a delicate, intimate, emotionally charged experience. When someone experiences this extremely powerful bond and suddenly is abandoned, that causes great pain, feelings of loneliness and yearning. Instead, sexuality should be an expression of unity for life, just as newlyweds vow to be with each other until death does them apart. If you wait until marriage, having sex will truly be “making love” and will be a unique experience with that one special person.

### **So how much can I “do” with my boyfriend/girlfriend without sinning?**

There is absolutely nothing wrong with expressing your affection for a boyfriend or girlfriend. Kissing, holding hands and hugging are all perfectly acceptable ways of showing your feelings. A good rule of thumb is that if something involves genital contact, contact with other intimate parts (breasts, buttocks, etc.), leads to orgasm or feels sexual (French kissing, for example), then it just isn't appropriate for a dating relationship. Casual sex with someone you barely know is an absolute no-no. Remember that if you are engaging in inappropriate sexual contact with your boyfriend or girlfriend, then you're not only offending God, you're also taking advantage of another person, using his or her body as a tool to make you feel good.

## **I've had sex or engaged in sexual contact before marriage. What should I do? Am I somehow a worse Catholic?**

We are all sinners. Pope St. John Paul II went to confession every week; Pope Francis goes every other week. If even such holy men were aware of their sins, then that must mean that we are all sinners, just as the Church's doctrine on original sin teaches. God knows that nobody's perfect. He also gave us sexual desire with the purpose of expressing our love for our spouses in a beautiful way and creating new life. God knows that sometimes, under the influence of hormones and emotions, we can sometimes forget ourselves and do something inappropriate. This does not necessarily mean that you are a "bad Catholic." If you've read St. Augustine's Confessions (and if you haven't, you should!), then you will find out that, before his conversion, the future bishop of Hippo had a particularly strong sexual appetite! Yet after his conversion, St. Augustine became one of the Church Fathers and one of the most important people in our Church's history.

If you've engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct, first acknowledge that you did something wrong. Then go to your local Catholic parish, confess to a priest and make a commitment to do better in the future. If you haven't been to confession in a while, this might make you a little nervous. But think about the great benefits for your soul and the great reward you will have in heaven!

## **I really, really want to have sex. I can't wait until marriage. What should I do?!**

Wanting to have sex is a perfectly normal human desire. In fact, our sex drive is a gift from God. God gave us the beautiful gift of sexuality so that we can express our love to that one special person and create new life. However, all gifts have to be used appropriately. Think of your sex drive as something like your hunger for food. Food is a great thing. Look at how many cities' cultures are to a large degree defined by the delicacies that come from there: Paris, Bangkok, Budapest, New Orleans... But if we abuse food and become obese and cause ourselves other maladies threatening our life and health, then we aren't respecting our bodies, a gift from God. Similarly, sexuality is something great, but it shouldn't be abused. If you feel that you can't control your sex drive, talk to a Catholic priest and he will definitely give you advice. Don't be embarrassed; the priest is human, too! Above all, try to think about things in the long-term. What's more important: feeling good for one night, or experiencing bliss and union with God in heaven for eternity? Also remember about how the other person will feel. As Catholics, we want to treat our brothers and sisters as we want ourselves to be treated. Casual sexual encounters often lead to people being hurt. After all, people often claim they were "used" in such cases.

God gives each of us a cross to bear in life. Managing a strong sex drive while not married can be such a cross. But it is only through the cross that we achieve salvation.

## **Cohabitation**

### **Why is the Catholic Church opposed to couples living together before marriage?**

There are several reasons for this. As we have seen, the Church believes that the beautiful gift of human sexuality should be reserved for marriage. When you live with another person you are romantically involved with, you will likely share the same bed. You will shower in the same bathroom. You are likely to walk in on each other changing. These potential situations happen each day. In other words, this creates ample opportunities for temptation to engage in intercourse outside of marriage.

### **Secondly, why do people move in together without being married?**

It's because they haven't made a commitment to each other yet, but they want to try out if they would like to get married. In other words, cohabitation is enjoying the benefits of marriage without the commitments. This is a selfish approach. People are not cars that can be "tested." Such an approach objectifies the other person and, consciously or not, encourages an attitude of non-commitment towards the other person.

Living together before marriage also naturally encourages selfish treatment of the other person. It is also bad for the development of a relationship. In the first stage of a romantic relationship, you might feel like cupid struck you with an arrow. You might smile for no reason and think about your boyfriend or girlfriend constantly, getting distracted at work or school. At this point, your brain pumps tons of hormones called dopamine's that make you feel ecstatic.

Eventually, however, this feeling of being love-struck fades. This is often a challenge for couples. Suddenly, they are faced with the other person's faults and weaknesses. This is usually the make-or-break point of relationships. Naturally, part of whether or not a relationship succeeds depends on compatibility. However, another ingredient to a relationship's success is whether or not a couple works on being together. When a couple lives together before marriage, they make no commitments. Thus when the hormones die down and reality sets in, they began to see that the other person snores or leaves the toilet seat up. When a couple is married, they make a commitment to stay together during good and bad times. They won't leave each other just because of some petty thing (and even because of major challenges). When a couple has made zero commitments, then they are likely to leave each other because of some minor quarrel. In other words, living together before marriage will not teach you about commitment and tenacity, the ingredients for a successful long-term relationship. Rather, it will teach you the "easy way out" of rough times in a relationship. Remember that the Cross is the ultimate symbol of love. Love isn't just about candlelit dinners and snuggling. It's above all about staying at the other person's side at all times, including the frustrating and unpleasant ones.

**I've been seeing a guy/girl for some time. I might want to marry him/her, but I'm not quite sure. Won't living together help us test out if we want to be with each other permanently?**

Actually, research shows the exact opposite. In fact, studies by scientists demonstrate that couples who live together are 50 percent more likely to divorce when they marry and much less likely to marry at all. In fact, violence against women is more likely to occur among married couples who cohabitated before.

Several more things should be said about this. First, many unmarried couples who live together often end up having children (today, about two in five American children are born to unmarried couples). It is a basic fact of psychology that children grow up healthy when they are raised by married parents. And seeing as how previously cohabitating married couples divorce more frequently, think of the disastrous consequences that such a divorce would have on these children! Many children are traumatized by their parents' divorce and have to see psychiatrists. In a recent discussion about the Church's teaching on divorced and remarried Catholics, Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna said that his parents' divorce was the saddest day of his life, and that couples that divorce should think about the pain they cause their children.

As we saw above, living together before marriage objectifies the other person, making him or her a commodity that can be "tested out." Treating another person as something that can be thrown away at any moment can't be healthy for any relationship.

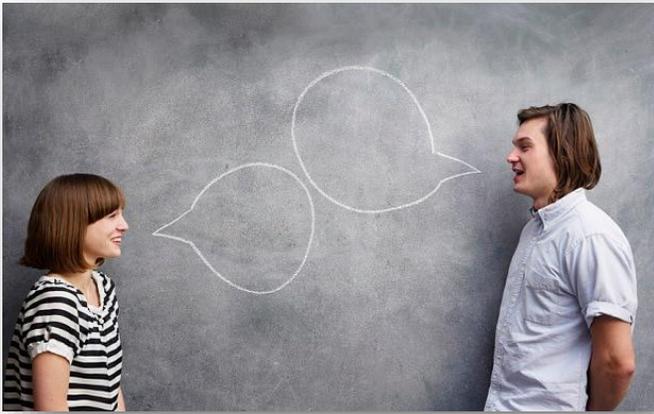
**I live with my boyfriend/girlfriend. What should I do now?**

To live in full accordance with the Church's teaching and God's will, you have to change your living situation. We know that this may not be easy. But if you really want to have a good relationship with God and with each other, you must live separately, confess to a priest and avoid such situations in the future. Don't worry; the Church is compassionate, and the priest you confess to will, in fact, likely be happy that you have decided that living together is inappropriate and want to change your ways. Naturally, this may not be easy. But think of the rewards you will receive in heaven and how your relationship with each other will be better!

*I have read both articles regarding the dangers of sexual activity & cohabitation before marriage. I understand and accept that the Church advises against these practices because of its likely harmful effects to my future marriage and my soul.*

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



*If the Priest chooses to use the Foccus inventory*, it will be administered online to take in the comfort of your own home. You will be notified when the results are available, after which the Priest may or (may not) want to schedule an appointment to discuss the results.

### **What is it...and why do we have to take it?**

This inventory, consisting of over 150 questions to which each person is asked to answer 'agree,' 'disagree,' 'uncertain,' is designed primarily to raise questions and identify concern areas so that you can think about and discuss them. It is not a test that predicts the future of your marriage, although the choice of statements and categories for study were taken from areas known to counselors and lay leaders as central to success or failure in marriage.

Focus explores basic expectations, communication and problem-solving skills along with attitudes on money, children, religion, sexuality and in-laws. In addition, it attempts to sharpen exploration on other



additional key issues: couple compatibility/match, the impact of individual backgrounds, two-career families, interfaith marriages and second marriages.

After the Focus inventory and assessment is completed, you will then be ready to move on to the next step in your marriage preparation.





Catholic individuals are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Just like a vehicle needs a tune up and oil changed on a regular basis, we all need a “spiritual tune up” from time to time. Going to Confession prior to your “big day” is one of the best things you can do for yourself. What’s more, you may not be in a state of grace (and not even realize it). Entering into marriage *outside* of God’s graces will not allow the Sacrament of Holy

Matrimony to have its intended spiritual effect, and could even be sinful.

**Don’t let this language scare you.** Your priest will talk with, and help you – even if it has been many years since your last confession. This could be one of the most powerful things you do as a part of your marriage preparation, and we look forward to giving you the peace and joy that comes from receiving it. It could be transformative to your relationship.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation brings about a change of heart through God's mercy and forgiveness. Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in His love and mercy to offer sinners forgiveness for offenses committed against God. At the same time, sinners reconcile with the Church, who is also wounded by our sins.

Every time we sin, we hurt ourselves, other people and God. In Reconciliation, we acknowledge our sins before God and His Church (Confession). We express our sorrow in a meaningful way (Contrition), receive the forgiveness of Christ and His Church (Absolution), make reparation for what we have done and resolve to do better in the future (Penance).

## The forgiveness of sins involves four parts:

- Contrition: a sincere sorrow for having offended God, and the most important act of the penitent. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.
- Confession: confronting our sins in a profound way to God by speaking about them —aloud— to the priest.
- Penance: an important part of our healing is the “penance” the priest imposes in reparation for our sins.
- Absolution: the priest speaks the words by which “God, the Father of Mercies” reconciles a sinner to Himself through the merits of the Cross.

### Before Confession

The Sacrament of Reconciliation does require preparation. We should begin with prayer, placing ourselves in the presence of God who is loving and merciful; reflecting on Jesus who is the healer who reaches out in love; and seek the help of the Holy Spirit in examining our lives.

We review our lives since the last time we received the sacrament, searching our thoughts, words and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love Him and one another through His laws and the laws of His Church.



### To make an examination of Conscience:

- ✓ Begin with prayer
- ✓ Review your life with the help of some questions
- ✓ Tell God how truly sorry you are for your sins
- ✓ Make a firm resolution not to sin again

## Rite of Reconciliation

Reconciliation may be face-to-face or anonymous, with a screen between you and the priest. Choose the option that is the most comfortable for you.

1. The priest gives you a blessing or greeting. He may share a brief Scripture passage.
2. Make the Sign of the Cross and say: "Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was..." (give the number of weeks, months or years).
3. Confess all of your sins to the priest. The priest will help you to make a good confession. If you are unsure about how to confess or you feel uneasy, just ask him to help you. Answer his questions without hiding anything out of fear or shame. Place your trust in God, a merciful Father who wants to forgive you.
4. Following your confession of sins, say: "I am sorry for these and all of my sins."
5. The priest assigns you a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
6. Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

## After Confession

Rejoice! You have received the forgiveness of Christ! What should you do when you leave? Remember the words you recited in the Act of Contrition: "I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin." Before you leave the confessional, the priest will give you your penance, which may consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy or sacrifices. These works help to join us with Christ, who alone died for us. The goal of our life's journey is to grow closer to God. We can do this through prayer, spiritual reading, fasting and the reception of the Sacraments.



*Reconciliation should happen at least once, close to the wedding date.  
That being said, you can and should take advantage earlier as well.*

## Step – 7 | Spend an hour with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration

### What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Practically speaking, you and your fiancé will sit in a beautiful chapel and spend an hour adoring Jesus; who **is truly present** in your midst. This might be completely foreign to you – that's OK. The Priest will explain this amazing encounter, where you will experience a deepening of your relationship with God and each other. If you enter into this with the right disposition, you will receive immediate grace simply from being in Jesus' presence.

### Going a bit Deeper

Eucharistic Adoration is adoring or honoring the Eucharistic Presence of Christ. In a deeper sense, it involves "the contemplation of the Mystery of Christ truly present before us". During Eucharistic Adoration, we "watch and wait", we remain "silent" in His Presence and open ourselves to His Graces which flow from the Eucharist... By worshiping the Eucharistic Jesus, we become what God wants us to be! Like a magnet, The Lord draws us to Himself and gently transforms us.

In its fullest essence ... Eucharistic Adoration is "God and Man reaching out for each other, at the same time!" The Eucharist is: Jesus truly present - Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity!



At the moment of Consecration, during the Mass, the "gifts" of bread and wine are transformed (transubstantiated) into the actual Body and Blood of Christ, at the Altar. This means that they are not only spiritually transformed, but rather are actually (substantially) transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The elements retain the appearance of bread and wine, but are indeed the actual Body and Blood of Christ. This is what is meant by Real Presence: the actual, physical presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Christ instituted this Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist in order to remain with mankind until the end of time (Jn. 14:18). The (reserved) Blessed Sacrament serves as a focal point of devotion.

Because, as Catholics, we believe that Christ is truly and substantially present in the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament has been given to us not only to receive in Holy Communion, but to also sit in His presence and adore Him. Enjoy!

I have experienced a Holy Hour with Jesus and my fiancée:

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step – 8****Schedule and attend a  
Natural Family Planning Overview Session**

Natural Family Planning is a way for a couple to monitor their fertility in order to postpone or achieve pregnancy. It is NOT your grandma's "rhythm method!" NFP is research-based, effective, free of harmful side effects and consistent with the Catholic understanding of the dignity of the human person.

Engaged couples: Please select the option that works best for you and then check dates and register through the provided links.

- 1) [Click here for more information and signing up for a local class through the Archdiocese; either in person or online.](#)
  
- 2) [Click here for third-party online option.](#)

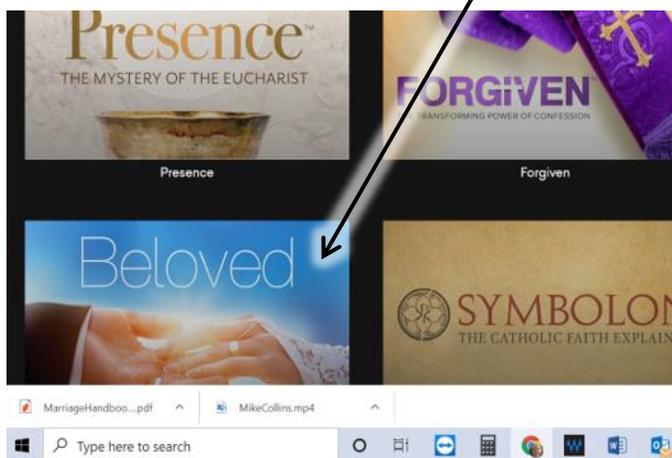
## Step – 9

## Watch the *Beloved* video series and answer the questions in the corresponding workbooks

More than a union based on romantic love or mutual fulfillment, marriage goes back to the very essence of what it is to be human – and reflects a design placed in our hearts by God himself. *Beloved* – from the producers of the renowned *Symbolon* series – explores the spiritual and eternal reality behind "I Do." Beautifully filmed and featuring acclaimed marriage experts, *Beloved* speaks to the very heart of every husband and wife, bringing sacramental truth and God-infused love into the everyday challenges of married life. *Beloved: Mystery & Meaning of Marriage* includes six inspiring and informative sessions.

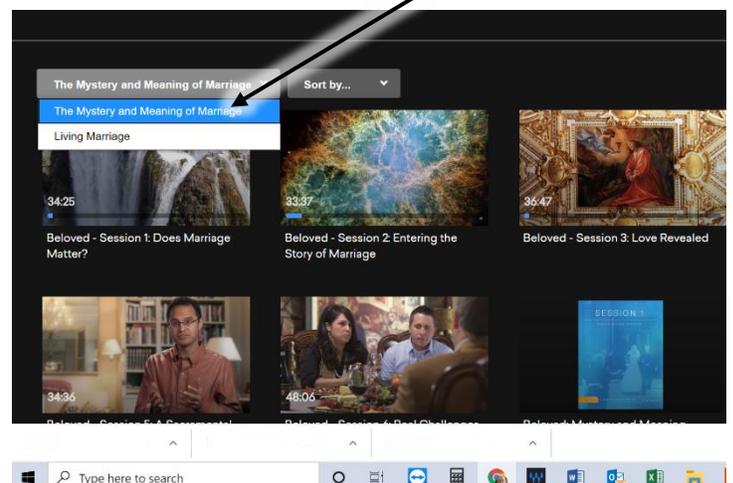
To watch these videos, go to <https://formed.org>. Once in, click "sign up." You will then be given three options; choose "I belong to a parish or organization." Next, in the search field under "Create a New Account", type "Sacred Heart Shawnee." Pick the first option that comes up (5501 Monticello Rd., Shawnee, KS 66226). You are now in and have your own account.

Next, navigate to the videos by clicking "programs" and then "Sacraments." You should now see the *Beloved* Series



After Clicking on "Beloved," the following screen will appear, where you can watch the six required videos. Make sure that "The Mystery and Meaning of Marriage" is selected. Watch the videos by simply clicking on each one. Please watch all six together (Ideally). After each one, as a couple, answer the questions together and record them.

The workbook can be found here: [Beloved Couple Workbook](#). When finished, return your answers to the priest at your next visit, or at a mutually agreed upon day\time.



**Step – 10 Provide a picture for your wedding day**

**Outside sign announcing your wedding**

Couples enjoy having a celebratory message displayed on the electronic lawn sign seen by multitudes of drivers on the corner of Johnson Drive and Monticello Road. Many of our parishioners enjoy it as well – perhaps you will too. The message is displayed on the weekend of your wedding at no charge. You simply supply a digital image and we do the rest. Below is an example of what it will look like.



If you don't want the message displayed, **it is not required**. Bear in mind many of your guests would love it when driving in. Click here to see the sign as it actually displays: [Digital Sign Sample](#)

If you would like to take advantage of this fun option, and have your picture and announcement on the sign as indicated above, initial & date here:

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step – 11 Have wedding program approved**



Most couples provide a wedding program for their guests on the day of the ceremony. It's important for you to have the Evan Akers, Director of Music & Liturgy see and approve the program before you print it. This is done to assure you have the proper order and language for the wedding.

**The couple is responsible for creating and printing the program guide and having it approved prior to distributing it at the ceremony.** I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding the program guide for the ceremony as indicated by my initials below:

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Part III - DOCUMENTS NEEDED

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### Church Documents Needed

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BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES should be obtained by both bride and groom and given to the parish priest at the Pre-Nup interview. For Catholics, a new certificate or letter from the Church of baptism dated within six months of the date of marriage is required since all marriages are recorded in your Church of baptism.

#### FOR THE NON-CATHOLIC PARTY

A baptized non-Catholic should also obtain a Baptismal certificate or a letter documenting the Baptism from the church of Baptism (NOTE: when documentary proof is not available, affidavits of parents or other trustworthy persons are acceptable). For those who are Christians of other denominations, a photocopy of proof of baptism may be submitted.

*If there has been any previous marriages by either party, regardless of religion, a Church "Declaration of Nullity" form or the case number and diocese it was issued in are needed.*

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### Civil Documents Needed

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The State of Kansas requires that a license for marriage be obtained. Such a license may be obtained in any county of the State of Kansas and is valid for six months following the date of its issue. Please obtain a State of Kansas marriage license and bring it to the rehearsal with you.

MARRIAGE LICENSE/WITNESSES: Witnesses must be at least 18 years old. *A non-Catholic may be chosen as one of the witnesses.*

Important: The Marriage license should be submitted to the Pastor at least 30 days prior to the wedding date. Please do not separate contents of the envelope that you receive but give the envelope to the Priest in its entirety. The Priest will give back the information that you need to complete after he completes his information.

#### **Obtaining a marriage License in Johnson County, KS:**

[Marriage License Information for JOCO](#)

# PART IV – THE WEDDING LITURGY

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## VISITING CLERGY

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A priest other than the parish priest (family priest, priest friend, etc.) can celebrate your wedding in coordination with the parish priest. The visiting priest can also be the one to do your marriage preparation (including all paperwork, meetings, etc. required by the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas); if you so choose. If you use your own Priest you will be required to keep the Sacred Heart Pastor apprised of the process. There is an additional fee for use of a non-parish priest. (Please refer to "Wedding fees" for a complete list.) Also, the Priest performing the ceremony will have to get a letter of good standing from the diocese he's from.

**Sacred Heart Parish cannot guarantee one of the resident priests will be available if you use an "outside priest" who cancels prior to the wedding.**

I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding visiting clergy at our ceremony as indicated by my initials below:

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## INTERFAITH WEDDING

Although a Mass is permitted in the interfaith ceremony, the Church suggests a Catholic ceremony without a full Mass. The couple should discuss this carefully since the distribution of Communion at Mass may be more of a sign of disunity and possible source of confusion for guests of non-Catholic faiths.

If a Mass is celebrated, HOLY COMMUNION needs to be considered: According to the laws of the Church, Communion is not allowed for a non-Catholic bride or groom and non-Catholic members of their families. (1 Col. 11:27 -29) It is important that the couple explain this to the non-Catholic members of the wedding party and family members. "Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united within the Catholic faith would imply a oneness which does not yet exist, and for which we all must pray" (National Council of Catholic Bishops).

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## MUSIC IN THE LITURGY

1. Each couple should contact the Director of Music at Sacred Heart immediately after setting a date for the ceremony.
2. **Musicians**
  - a. A list of vocalists, accompanists, and musicians is available through the Director of Music. It is the couple's responsibility to contact and contract with musicians not associated with the Parish.
  - b. The music should be sung and/or played well by those who will be expected to lead them during the ceremony.

- c. It is helpful if the cantor (vocalist) and/or accompanist is of the Catholic faith and are experienced at leading a Catholic liturgy. If they are not it will be required to have a church provided cantor.

### 3. Selecting Music for the Wedding Liturgy

- a. The music must be sacred, that:
  - i. Has lyrics that express a Christian view of love and life.
  - ii. Expresses not only the human love of one person for another but also God's love for all people.
  - iii. Should fit the part of the ceremony in which it is used.
  - iv. Does not cause delays in the ceremony.
- b. The music should be artistically good music, that:
  - i. Is sacred or classical;
  - ii. Has a meaningful text that fits the *sacramental moment*
  - iii. Secular music (non-sacred or popular) is not permitted during the wedding ceremony. Instrumental classical music is appropriate during the liturgy. Secular music should be kept for use at the reception. **Remember, this is not your high school prom – the music needs to be on a higher level.**
  - iv. Congregational singing is strongly encouraged (If there's a Mass)
- c. Specific parts should be sung by the cantor and congregation: Gospel Acclamation ("Alleluia"); Holy, Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen; Lamb of God.
- d. The Lord's Prayer can only be sung as a solo if no Eucharist accompanies the ceremony.
- e. Solos should never be so long that they stop the movement of the liturgy
- f. Recorded music of any kind is not permitted in the church.

I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding music at our ceremony as indicated by my initials below:

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

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### 1. Flowers

- a. In general, not a great deal of floral ornamentation is required. Since floral arrangements need to be removed from the church, it is recommended that the couple consider using flowers that can be taken and used at the reception after the wedding.

### 2. Sacred Heart has available for your use

- a. A few wooden cubes that can be placed in the space. They need to be returned where they were originally placed after the wedding.
- b. Skirted table(s) for use in the Narthex.

- c. Primary consideration should be given to the seasonal decor of the church. **Plants or displays being used and owned by the church should not be moved; especially the Christmas and Easter displays. Please keep this in mind when planning your wedding date.**
- d. Prior approval must be sought before you place anything on the pews. Typically, ribbon, rubber bands, etc. may be used as long as they do not damage the pews.
- e. Aisle runners, glitter, sequins and real flower petals (i.e. thrown from the flower girl onto the tile) in the church **are strictly prohibited!** Silk flower petals are acceptable, however, must be swept up directly after the ceremony.
- f. Sacred Heart has two seven-candle candelabras if you want to use them.
- g. Nothing may be strewn in or outside of the church. Insurance regulations prohibit the use of rice, grains, bird seed, confetti, etc.
- h. Bubbles may be used outside the church (on the cement or grass areas).

I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding the liturgical environment at our ceremony as indicated by my initials below:

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

The proclamation of the Word of God and the homily are integral to the celebration of marriage. Three readings are chosen from the Scriptures: one from the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Gospels. These may be chosen from, but not limited to, those found in the book **Together for Life** given to you by the priest. The Psalm Response is encouraged to be sung and could be chosen with the Director of Music.

- a. Readers do not have to be Catholic, but it is preferable that it is someone who has read at a Mass and/or spoke publically.
- b. You have these options for readers:
  - i. One person to do the first & second reading and the Petitions
  - ii. One person to do first reading and a different person to read the second reading and petitions
  - iii. Three persons – one to do each task

#### **4. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

The Eucharist is the center of Christian life and marriage between two Catholics. The Eucharist is optional in the ceremony of a Catholic and non-Catholic. Archdiocesan regulations regarding the reception of the Eucharist are followed at Sacred Heart and can be explained to the couple by the priest.

#### **5. PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE CHURCH**

- a. While photographs are important, the sanctity of the sacrament and the sacredness of the house of worship must also be taken into account.

- b. Guidelines for Photography in the Wedding Liturgy:
  - i. Video cameras and still cameras may be set up in the open space in the pew area to the left of the altar or in the back of the church.
  - ii. All photography must be handled as unobtrusively as possible. There should be minimal movement throughout the ceremony. Photographers should not stand on the church pews.
  - iii. Photographers should be properly dressed and not “stand out.”
  - iv. Photographers are not allowed in the sanctuary area (altar) during the ceremony. Any exceptions need to be discussed with the priest.
  
- c. **Please have the photographer(s) introduce themselves immediately to the Priest prior to the ceremony starts to make sure they’re on the same page.**

I understand and accept the information regarding photography during our wedding

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MISCELLANEOUS/ACCESS TO THE FACILITY**

Wedding times are 6:00 p.m. on Friday, and 10:00 am or 1:00 pm on Saturday if having a Mass (1:30 or 2:00pm wedding start time can be requested but only if there is no Mass. Approval needs to be granted by Pastor). Check with the priest for any variation.

ACCESS TO THE FACILITY: Due to 8:15 am Mass on Saturday mornings, no decorating can take place until after 9:30 am on the day of the wedding. Any deviation from that must be approved by the Pastor.

WEDDING GOWNS: Please be aware that during most of the wedding ceremony the bride is kneeling. For modesty purposes, it is encouraged that brides wear either a shawl, short jacket or shell if the wedding gown is strapless

REHEARSAL: is ordinarily held the evening before the wedding (usually between 5:00-6:00 pm), and lasts from 45 minutes to an hour. *It is very important that all participants in the ceremony be on time for rehearsal. The Priest has other commitments besides your wedding rehearsal; please be respectful of this reality and the agreed upon rehearsal time.* **Rehearsals will start on time and we WILL NOT wait for those who may be running late. If someone is late and we have started rehearsal, they may miss something and perhaps slip up on wedding day. Bottom line – BE ON TIME.**

*The rehearsal needs to be scheduled with the priest celebrating the wedding.*

I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding access to the facility, times, and the rehearsal policy for our wedding as indicated by my initials below:

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW LONG WILL THE CEREMONY LAST? A full Nuptial wedding (with a Mass) usually lasts 60 minutes. A Marriage ceremony with Scripture readings, homily, petitions, exchange of vows and rings, lighting of the unity candle, songs, and nuptial blessing (but without a Mass) usually lasts approximately 35-40 minutes.

FLOWER GIRL/RING BEARER: We strongly urge you to be realistic when adding young children to an already emotionally charged moment. Young children can become frightened and disruptive, especially if mom and dad are also in the wedding and unavailable to tend to the child. If young children are used, please make sure to have an adult ready in the front pews to get the kids when they reach the front (NOT SOMEONE IN THE WEDDING PARTY)

ALTAR SERVERS: Altar servers are not required for your wedding unless you have a Mass. Discuss this option with the priest. If you have family that can perform this function it is acceptable, or the parish can provide them.

CANDLE LIGHTERS: If you wish to have friends or family members light candles please discuss this option with the priest.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: is encouraged for couples prior to their wedding day. The Priest will talk to you about this. See page 13 (Step 6) of this document.

BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM: This room is located to the left of the main gathering space. The dressing area contains large mirrors, multiple plug-ins, and chairs. It is attached to the women's restroom. It is also secured with a combo lock entry for the security of your items while the ceremony is going on or if you leave. **Please make sure to shut the door when you are away from it. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church and its agents are not responsible for any lost, damaged or stolen items stored in this or any other room in the church during your rehearsal or ceremony.** The code to the door is 9333 (wedd).

GROOM'S DRESSING ROOM: We have a large meeting room off to the right of the Narthex that the men and others can gather. Please clean up and dispose of any food containers in the wastebaskets prior to the ceremony. **Please make sure to shut the door when you are away from it. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church and its agents are not responsible for any lost, damaged or stolen items stored in this or any other room in the church during your rehearsal or ceremony.** The code to the door is ???.

THE CHURCH is a place of worship. Preparations, photography, and celebrating are a part of your 'joyful experience,' but please keep in mind that you are in the Lord's House where Jesus is truly present in the Tabernacle. Please maintain an appropriate decorum, especially in the worship areas of the Church. Do not bring food or drink into the worship areas of the church, or allow children to play in the sanctuary or around the altar. *Food and non-alcoholic drinks are allowed in the bride and groom rooms.*

## WHAT USHERS NEED TO KNOW

Every wedding must have at least two ushers. USHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE THAT THERE ARE NO loud noises, running or playing, smoking, food or drink before, during, or after the ceremony.

### 1. BEFORE THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- a. Be there on time for pictures. Stop the photographer 30 min. before the wedding. Be at the church entry 40 minutes before the wedding to seat early arrivals.
- b. Know where the restrooms are located.
- c. Invite people to be seated. They visit in the narthex until an usher gets them going. Everyone needs to be out of the Narthex and in the Church at least 15 minutes before the start of the wedding.
- d. If you are escorting a group of people, offer your arm to the eldest woman with the others in the group following behind.
- e. Hand programs to the guests as they enter their pew.
- f. You will offer your arm on the side closest to the row. Know how many rows are to be reserved for family and special friends and seat the remaining guests behind that point. Know the number of people so they can be seated in the special areas and not scattered around the church.
- g. 5 minutes before the ceremony begins, ask the person at the guest book to be seated and to take the guest book along to the reception.
- h. Men and women of the wedding party are encouraged to assist ushering guests at the "rush" 5 minutes before the ceremony begins.

**There is to be NO rice, confetti, rose petals birdseed. etc. present before, during, or after the ceremony.**

### 2. DURING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- a. It is wise not to plan any "extra activity" (car decorating etc.) before or during the ceremony.
- b. Late arriving guests should be asked to seat themselves via the side aisles. (They should not be seated during the processional.)

### 3. AFTER THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- a. After the wedding party exits, the Ushers return to the front and help with escorting guests out. Check each row for any left behind purses, cameras, etc. Pick up any discarded tissues, film boxes, flower boxes and/or fake flower petals, programs and other debris.
- b. Please remember that confessions begin promptly at 3 pm every Saturday. Be mindful of parishioners coming in at that time.
- c. Please leave our church as you originally found it. It is much appreciated!

**CLEANING:**

**The wedding party is responsible for cleaning up all areas used (dressing rooms, church, etc.) in consideration for other weddings and church events which follow.**

- **Any area used by the Bridal Party MUST be cleaned prior to departure; this entails leaving the area exactly as it was found.** The bridal party, to include anyone else in the meeting rooms, are not allowed to use any items in the cabinets or kitchenette area. Nor is any other items in the Meeting Rooms, to include but not limited to the A\V equipment is to be used. However, the refrigerator\freezer may be used, as well as tables and chairs.
  
- **The bride & groom are required to assign volunteers who are in charge of this task,** having at least five individuals that understand this responsibility, and are specifically assigned for this duty. The volunteers need to begin immediately after the ceremony, and the priest needs to know who these individuals are prior to the wedding; they are to be listed on page 42 of this document.
  - The security deposit could be withheld from refund if the aforementioned requirements are not met. This will be determined by the parish staff or any of their agents. Please reference page 36 of this document for more information.

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Alcohol Policy

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At your wedding you will participate in a solemn sacrament and officially enter into your legal marriage. Your attendants will likewise be asked to sacramentally and legally witness this most important event. **It is both necessary and appropriate that you and all members of your wedding party be unimpaired.**

Therefore, the consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted at any time before or during the wedding ceremony. Moreover, no alcohol or illegal drugs are allowed on church property at any time. Likewise, your rehearsal is a time of prayer and preparation, taking place in a sacred space. The use of alcohol is prohibited before and/or during the rehearsal.

Abuse of this policy could result in cancellation of the wedding and is at the sole discretion of the celebrant. **If a member of the wedding party smells of alcohol, that person will not participate. If either the bride or groom smells of alcohol, this will be cause for cancellation of the wedding on the spot.** The bride and groom are responsible to see that all members of the wedding party comply with this policy.



Please encourage your family and friends to wait until after the ceremony/rehearsal to begin any celebrations.

I understand and accept the above mentioned information regarding the Alcohol Policy at our ceremony as indicated by my initials below:

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Fee Schedule and Due Dates

Use of Facility	
Parishioners (registered and active for at least six months prior to wedding); or the children of current registered parishioners; or past parishioners who received their Sacraments at Sacred Heart of Jesus.	Free
Non-Parishioner (required)	\$1,000 rental fee for use of the church
<p>There is a <b>\$500.00 required</b> deposit for use of the church for both parishioners and non-parishioners, which is due upon agreement of the date. <b>The deposit will be refunded after the wedding date, provided all guidelines have been met; to be determined by Sacred Heart Staff or one of its' agent(s).</b> For Non-Parishioners, the remaining fees can be paid anytime; no later than 30 days prior to wedding.</p>	
Music	
Music Director Fee (required)	Whether you use Sacred Heart's Music Director or not, it is still required to make an appointment with him as soon as possible as he has his own fee structure. Evan Akers: <a href="mailto:evan.akers@shoj.org" style="color: white;">evan.akers@shoj.org</a> or 913-422-5700 x-229
Vocalists	\$75.00-\$100.00/each (this should be paid directly to the individual)
Other Musicians	\$75.00-\$100.00/each (this should be paid directly to the individual(s) and discussed with Music Director)
Clergy and other liturgical fees	
<b>Priest Stipend (required)</b>	<i><u>If using a check, make it payable to Fr. Pat Sullivan</u></i>
<b>Parishioner wedding at Sacred Heart</b>	.....\$150.00
<b>Parishioner wedding at a different church</b>	.....\$200.00
<b>NON-Parishioner married at Sacred Heart</b>	.....\$300.00
Visiting Clergy Fee	\$150.00 (Required if Parish Priest is not the Celebrant). This check is to be written to Fr. Pat Sullivan
Altar Servers (Two required if having Mass)	If using non-family members as servers (in other words – servers borrowed from the parish) \$20.00 per server required.
Non Parishioner Marriage Preparation for a wedding happening at a parish other than Sacred Heart.	Non parishioners can receive marriage preparation at Sacred Heart even if they are getting married somewhere else. The cost for this service is \$200.00. If paying with a check, please make it out to the Priest.

- Whether you use our Music Director and musicians or you bring in your own, you must meet with our Music Director prior to your wedding to discuss any details that a guest musician may need to know. There is \$100 bench fee if you bring in your own instrumentalist.
- Marriage License is also due at this time. See page seven of this document for full information.
- All fees due 30 days prior to the wedding; and can be paid at the last meeting with the Priest (typically scheduled within one month of the wedding).

***I have reviewed all policies and guidelines in the forty-four pages of this document, and understand, accept and agree to follow all of them:***

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “TO DO” LIST FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

	Reserve the church and date for your wedding at your initial meeting with the Pastor. (Receipt of this Marriage Handbook and Together for Life)
	Confirm which Priest will perform your ceremony.
	Set up an appointment with Evan Akers, Sacred Heart's Music Director ( <i>if you would like Evan to play at your wedding you will need to confirm with him his availability. Reserving the church and the Pastor for your wedding date does not confirm Evan's availability</i> ). Also, you need to meet with the Music Director <u>even if you're not using him</u> .
	Schedule your Marriage Prep (six sessions with married couple, or engaged encounter overnight weekend – <i>to be determined by the Priest</i> (please allow enough time to take your classes prior to your wedding date. Time will sneak up quickly and it is best to try and attend this as soon as reasonably possible.))
	Prayerfully read the section on cohabitation and sex outside marriage
	Take FOCCUS Inventory and schedule assessment with the priest.
	Schedule a time to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. <i>*Catholics Only</i>
	Schedule a time to spend in Eucharistic Adoration with your fiancé.
	Watch Beloved videos and do the questions at the end of each session. <i>*If required by the Priest</i>
	Schedule an appointment for the Natural Family Planning overview. <b><u>This is a requirement.</u></b> The class is usually a one session class for approximately one hour. Contact: Kim Fiest at 913.387.7073 or <a href="mailto:kimfeist1@gmail.com">kimfeist1@gmail.com</a> .
	Provide a digital picture for the electronic outdoor lawn sign.
	Have wedding program approved by the Director of Music & Liturgy
	Request a record of Baptism issued by Church within the last six months. Once received, please forward to the Priest handling your Marriage Prep. This is acquired by calling the parish you were Baptized at and then having them mail it to Sacred Heart.
	Request your Civil Marriage License (please refer to section “Church Documents Needed” for information.
	Sign the fee schedule (page 24), initial and date all sections that require it, bring this booklet along with all fees due, along with marriage license 30 days prior to wedding to your last meeting with the priest.

# WEDDING PROGRAM TEMPLATE

It is your responsibility to provide a wedding program if you so wish. Here is a template of what information should be included in your wedding program. On the following two pages are examples of wedding programs; one with a Mass, the other without a Mass.

## **Wedding Program Information:**

Bride/Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding colors: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrant: \_\_\_\_\_

Organist: \_\_\_\_\_

Musicians: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Ceremony Order: (information can be found in the Together for Life booklet)  
Hymns should be selected with the guidance of our Director of Music with the couple.**

Processional Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride Processional: \_\_\_\_\_

Liturgy of the Word:  
First Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Alleluia: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

Rite of Marriage:  
Statement of Intentions and Consent  
Vows and Exchange of Rings  
Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional)  
Flowers to Mary and/or mothers (optional)  
Song?? \_\_\_\_\_

Full Mass? {If so, complete this part, if not, go to "continued"}

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Offertory Song:\_\_\_\_\_

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations:\_\_\_\_\_

Nuptial Blessing and Sign of Peace

Communion Songs:\_\_\_\_\_

**Continued:**

Presentation to Mary: (Optional): Yes or No: (Please verify with the Priest performing your ceremony on his preference of when you present to the Virgin Mary – it is proper either after the Exchange of Vows or directly after Communion.) What song would you like during this time?\_\_\_\_\_

Recessional Hymn:\_\_\_\_\_

**The Wedding Party Information:**

Parents of the Bride:\_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Groom:\_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents of the Bride:\_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents of the Groom:\_\_\_\_\_

Maid of Nuptial Blessing:\_\_\_\_\_

Honor:\_\_\_\_\_

Bridesmaids:\_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl(s):\_\_\_\_\_

Best Man:\_\_\_\_\_

Groomsmen:\_\_\_\_\_

Ring Bearer:\_\_\_\_\_

Ushers:\_\_\_\_\_

Program Attendants:\_\_\_\_\_

Any other people recognition for program?\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you to include:

Reception Information?

Names of Individuals assigned to clean up (See Part V, under "Cleaning")