

Holy Family Roman Catholic Church



# Wedding Guidelines



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“Christ not only restored the original order of matrimony but raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, giving spouses a special grace to live out their marriage as a symbol of Christ's love for His bride the Church: 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church' (Ephesians 5:25)” (*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 341).

Please understand that all of the details in these guidelines are intended to do everything possible to assure that your celebration of the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony will, indeed, be both holy and sacramental.

**PRELIMINARY:**

1. A couple wishing to marry is expected to make an appointment with the Pastor at least six (6) months in advance.
2. At this time you should discuss
  - your proposed wedding date,
  - the celebrant,
  - your religious backgrounds,
  - any previous attempts at marriage,
  - or any other questions you may have.
3. Arrangements must have been made with the Pastor to complete:
  - the Pre- Nuptial Inquiry, obtaining all dispensations/permissions if needed;
  - Baptismal certificates—not copies—issued within the last six (6) months;
  - Completion of a prescribed *Catholic Marriage Preparation* program (e.g., Engaged Encounter, [www.CatholicMarriagePrep.com](http://www.CatholicMarriagePrep.com), **or** *To Love as God Loves\**),
  - A pre-marital inventory (e.g., *Prepare/Enrich*),
  - and Natural Family Planning classes.
4. You are entering into a holy Sacrament and, as with all Sacraments, proper preparation must be undertaken. In addition to the prescribed *Catholic Marriage Preparation* program, pre-marital inventory, and Natural Family Planning classes, the couple will meet with the priest/deacon coordinating the marriage preparation as needed.
5. Catholics should arrange for a time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) before celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.
6. Our parish marriage policy fully and completely endorses the diocesan statement in regards to a couple living together (“cohabitation”) before Marriage. It is the policy of our parish that couples who are living together **separate before entering into Christian marriage**. A state of GRACE is necessary for participation in any Sacrament.

**CELEBRANT:** We welcome and recommend that your parish priest or deacon officiate at your wedding. If you are inviting clergy from another parish or diocese to participate in the ceremony, it must be discussed and approved by the Pastor.

**SCHEDULING OF WEDDINGS:** Normally on a Saturday but any day of the week, except Sunday, is acceptable. Weddings are never scheduled on Holy Days of Obligation or major civil holidays. No weddings are scheduled on Saturday later than 2:00 p.m. if a nuptial Mass or 2:30 p.m. if there is no nuptial Mass. **Weddings may NOT be scheduled during the Lenten season.**

**CONFIRMATION OF DATE:** In order that the wedding date be confirmed and entered into the reservation book, you must speak to the Pastor who will coordinate the schedules of the church and the celebrant. In cases of a celebrant who is being brought in for the wedding, the celebrant must call or write confirming that he will be officiating, completing the Pre-Nuptial Inquiry and seeing that the preparation requirements are done.

**FEES: (Approximate)**

Church Donation (see below)	\$100.00
Clergy Stole Fee (see below)	You determine
Natural Family Planning Classes	\$100.00 - \$110.00
Engaged Encounter/ Catholic Marriage Prep Online/Pre-Cana	\$165.00 – \$265.00
Non-Parishioner fee if applicable	\$250.00 – payable before date is booked

**CLERGY STOLE FEE:** It is customary to gift the clergyman assisting at your wedding with a stole fee. The amount is left for you to decide; however, the “standard” clergy stipend for a wedding begins at \$100.00.

**CHURCH DONATION:** Couples are asked to remember that electricity and air conditioning are on almost all day of the wedding so as to accommodate decorators, florists, photographers, etc. Please consider an adequate donation to the church to cover this cost.

**REHEARSAL:** The rehearsal normally takes place the evening before the wedding day and is conducted by the priest/deacon assisting at the wedding. It is your responsibility to have planned seating arrangements, etc. **prior to the rehearsal.**

**CIVIL LICENSE:** A Marriage License issued by any county in the State of Texas must be obtained. The license must be obtained no sooner than ninety (90) days and no later than three (3) days prior to the wedding date.

**CHURCH DOCUMENTS:** All required church documents must be in the office at least two weeks prior to your wedding. The documents are your Pre-Nuptial Inquiry along with any dispensations/permissions, if needed, baptismal certificates with notations issued within the past six months and the certificate of completion from the *Catholic Marriage Preparation* program and the Natural Family Planning classes.

**DECORUM:** It is imperative that an atmosphere of quiet prayer be maintained in the church before and following the wedding ceremony. Boisterous conduct is inappropriate; so are food/drink and the use of tobacco products and chewing gum. The more doors are left open, the warmer the church will be. Please keep all doors closed before, during and after the ceremony.

**BRIDE'S & BRIDESMAID'S DRESSES:** **Discretion must be used when choosing dresses for a wedding at Holy Family Catholic Church.** Bare shoulders and strapless dresses are **NOT** acceptable in church; especially at a nuptial Mass where our Lord Jesus Christ is present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Likewise, décolletage which reveals any amount of cleavage is **NOT** acceptable in church. Jackets or shawls must be worn in church with dresses that are designed to be strapless.

**PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY:** Please see the separate *Wedding Photography Rules*. You must give a copy of these rules to your photographer and/or videographer.

**UNITY CANDLE:** A so-called “unity candle” may **NOT** be used in the Catholic wedding liturgy. The symbol of your “unity” is your rings.

**FLOWER PETALS, RICE, BIRDSEED, ETC.:** Rice, flowers petals (real or artificial), confetti, bird seed, etc. inside or outside the church are **PROHIBITED** for safety and maintenance reasons. Flower girls may **NOT** “scatter” flower petals in the aisle.

**BRIDE'S & GROOMS DRESSING ROOMS:** Rooms are available in the church for use by brides, grooms, and the wedding parties. The rooms must be left in the condition you found it when you arrived. Anything left in the rooms after the wedding will be disposed.

**MUSICIANS, EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION, READERS:** These arrangements are the responsibility of the couple and should be made well in advance. You may call the parish office for assistance (e.g., a list of available organists/musicians) if needed. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required to be properly commissioned by the Diocese of Victoria in Texas in order to serve in this ministry at the wedding.

**MUSIC:** Not all music is suitable for a Nuptial Mass. Only religious music may be used during the Nuptial Mass. All music selections must be pre-approved by the Pastor prior to the wedding. Any non-religious songs should be sung/played before the Nuptial Mass, or at the reception. Recorded music may **NOT** be used.

**ALCOHOL:** No alcohol whatsoever may be consumed on the day of the wedding prior to the ceremony. Neither should alcohol be consumed prior to the rehearsal. At no time is alcohol ever allowed anywhere on church property (including the parking lot). Weddings **WILL BE IMMEDIATELY CANCELLED** if alcohol is discovered on church property and/or members of the wedding party are thought, in the opinion of the celebrant, to be inebriated.

**CHURCH CLEAN-UP:** Someone from the wedding party (e.g., ushers) is to be assigned the responsibility of cleaning up the church after the ceremony. Programs, flower boxes, tissues, etc. should be picked up off the floor, removed from the pews, or be disposed.

**\*NON-PARISHIONERS:** A “non-parishioner” is defined as someone who has neither been registered in the parish for at least one year prior to the wedding date nor has parents and/or grandparents who have been registered in the parish for at least one year prior to the wedding date. Non-Parishioners will be charged \$250.00 for the use of the church. A wedding date reservation will not be considered “confirmed” until full payment of the \$250.00 has been made. Non-parishioners must bring their own priest or deacon to conduct the rehearsal and ceremony and who will complete all of the pre-nuptial preparation as required by the Catholic Bishops of the State of Texas.

**\*To Love as God Loves:** Is a pre-Cana marriage preparation program available only to those couples who are: 1) 40 years of age or older, 2) seeking convalidation of a civil marriage, or 3) couples seeking a second marriage or more. More information about *To Love as God Loves* is available at [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org) under the “Marriage” tab.

## Contact Information

**Church Office** 979-532-3593  
Email: [office@hfwharton.org](mailto:office@hfwharton.org)

**Family Life Center Rental** 979-532-8178  
Anton Peter (979-533-9509)  
Geraldine Peter (979-531-9507)

**Fr. Bob Knippenberg, Pastor** 979-532-3593  
Email: [pastor@hfwharton.org](mailto:pastor@hfwharton.org)

**Deacon David Valdez** 979-533-8951  
Email: [davidvaldez@valfloracademy.com](mailto:davidvaldez@valfloracademy.com)

**Local Natural Family Planning Classes**  
**Susanne Koch** 505-710-0903  
Email: [susannekoch614@gmail.com](mailto:susannekoch614@gmail.com)