

Dear bride and groom,

First and foremost, congratulations! It is a joyous occasion that we prepare for as you move from engagement to matrimony. We are excited to be part of your wedding and support you in the commitment you are making joining together as husband and wife.

These next steps mark the beginning of your more formal preparation for marriage. Ultimately, this is formation that builds upon the strengths of your relationship. The Church has much experience in marriage (2000 years and counting!): it is our hope that what we have to offer in this program of preparation will help build the strongest foundation for your marriage.

Included in this packet, we have included a few resources to help answer questions and prepare for planning:

Welcome letter
Wedding preparation checklist

Rite of Marriage
Wedding policies
Stipend and fees sheet

Please take some time to go over these together; they are references for planning as well as a way of keeping track of what steps have been completed and which ones are to come.

Thank you for your witness of love, both to each other and of God, as you prepare for marriage. It is a joy to participate with you in this sacrament. Please don't hesitate to call our offices as you continue on.

your brother in Christ,

Father Jacob Maurer, pastor
Saint Mark, Shoreline

Wedding preparation checklist

I. Initial preparation

- _____ ___/___/___ 1. First meeting with priest
- _____ ___/___/___ 2. Bride and Groom interview w/ priest
(Canonical Prenuptial Investigation / Form 29.1)
- Bride interviewed Groom interviewed

Groom: _____
Full name & age on date of marriage

Bride: _____
Full name & age on date of marriage

Date & time desired: _____

Location: _____
(parish & city)

Rehearsal: _____
(parish, city, date & time)

II. Remote wedding preparation (six to twelve months before proposed date)

- _____ ___/___/___ 3. Sacramental documentation turned in (baptismal certificate, dated w/in 6 months)
- Bride (baptized: **yes/no** & confirmed: **yes/no**) GROOM (baptized: **yes/no** & confirmed: **yes/no**)
- Currently married: **yes/no** Civil marriage certificate received
- _____ ___/___/___ 4. Witnesses interview w/ priest (Canonical Prenuptial Investigation / Form 29.2)
- Bride's witness ___/___/___
- Groom's witness ___/___/___
- _____ ___/___/___ 5. Wedding classes completed (if attended 'Engaged Encounter', include certificate)
- _____ ___/___/___ 6. FOCCUS exam completed
- _____ ___/___/___ 7. FOCCUS exam reviewed with pastor

(A wedding date may not be scheduled until the above steps have been completed)

III. Proximate wedding preparation (two months before proposed date)

- _____ ___/___/___ 8. Necessary pastor permissions received
- Must be obtained no earlier than six months in advance of proposed date**
- _____ ___/___/___ 9. Choose readings & music
- _____ ___/___/___ 10. Set rehearsal date w/ wedding host
- _____ ___/___/___ 11. Parish stipend offered
- _____ ___/___/___ 12. Marriage license delivered to office
- 3-day waiting period, valid for 60 days from issue – apply accordingly***
- _____ ___/___/___ 13. Parish stipend & minister fees due

*Without explicit permission from the archbishop, clerics are forbidden to marry a couple without a valid marriage license (see MR 7, CIC 1071§1 3°).

Obtaining a marriage license is the responsibility of the couple.

IV. Final preparation (week of wedding)

- _____ 14. Clergy stipend for deacon and visiting clergy offered (if applicable)

Clergy

Pastor Vicar Deacon Other

presiding preaching promises

Guest clergy _____

archdiocesan faculties received _____

presiding preaching promises

Rite: Mass Outside of Mass

Scriptures (chapter, verse & ref. number)

Reading #1 _____

Responsorial Psalm _____

Reading #2 _____

Gospel reading _____

This record will be kept at the parish office, with a reference copy given to the couple.

It is the responsibility of the couple to inform the parish office of steps completed off-site (e.g., classes, retreat)

Dear Father,

In preparing this couple for marriage at my parish, we have discovered that the Catholic party lives within your parish boundaries and – as defined in Canons 102 & 107 – is your proper parishioner. In light of this, I am in need of your permission to celebrate their marriage at my parish.

On the reverse side of this letter is a pre-prepared form. In it I am asking for permission for the following:

- **Per Canon 1115, I am requesting your permission for your parishioner(s) to be married outside his/her/their proper parish**

Additional permissions, if applicable (see my notations below)

_____ Per Canon 1125 and the faculties granted you in Appendix A of *Many Gifts, One Spirit – Priestly Ministry*, your permission for your parishioner to engage in a mixed marriage with a baptized non-Catholic.

or

_____ Per Canon 1086 and the faculties granted you in Appendix A of *Many Gifts, One Spirit – Priestly Ministry*, your permission for your parishioner to engage in an interfaith marriage with a non-baptized person.

The form on the reverse side of this letter simply needs your initials (where applicable), your signature and date. In the interest of minimizing work for you, **the couple will return it to me** when it is complete. And of course, should you know of any reason why this marriage should not take place, please inform me immediately.

Thank you,

Father Jacob Maurer
Saint Mark, Shoreline

Permission for marriage outside of one's parish of domicile

(may be completed no earlier than six months before proposed date)

Groom: _____

Bride: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Proposed place of marriage: _____

Date of marriage: _____

Presider: _____

I, _____, pastor of _____, give permission
pastor's full name & title parish name

for _____, a Catholic living within the territorial boundaries of
parishioner's full name

_____, to celebrate their marriage at Saint Mark parish in Shoreline,
parish name

Washington.

Additional permissions **(only if applicable – see notations on reverse)**

_____ I give permission for my parishioner to engage in a mixed marriage with a baptized non-Catholic (*please initial*)

or

_____ I give permission for my parishioner to engage in an interfaith marriage with a non-baptized person (*please initial*)

pastor's signature

date

Please return this form to:

Parish: **Saint Mark Catholic Church**
Mailing address: 18033 15th Place NE
City, State, Zip: Shoreline, WA 98155

A handy checklist of the things to do after your first meeting with the priest

Once you have met with the priest (or his delegate) and each of you have completed the initial interview with him, these are your next steps. These may be completed in any order – but all must be completed before your wedding date will be finalized on the parish calendar.

Paperwork

- Recent baptismal certificates (must be dated no more than six month ago)
 - Bride's baptismal certificate
 - Groom's baptismal certificate
- Civil marriage certificate (**Only if already civilly married**)

Tasks

- Arrange for witnesses to be interviewed at a Catholic parish – one witness for each of you (witnesses must be well-acquainted with you, family is preferable)
 - Bride's witness
 - Groom's witness

Only if applicable (when neither Catholic party lives in Saint Mark parish's territory)

- Receive necessary permission(s) from the pastor(s) of the Catholic party or parties (see enclosed request form)
 - Bride (if applicable)
 - Groom (if applicable)

Formal preparation

- FOCCUS exam (online or at the office) – you will need to provide the parish office with a unique e-mail address for the bride & the groom to receive the exam
 - Bride's FOCCUS exam
 - Groom's FOCCUS exam
- Call office to make appointment after both have completed FOCCUS exam – the results will be reviewed and discussed together
- Wedding classes, 12 hours minimum (Engaged Encounter fulfills this requirement)
- Wedding retreat, 1 day minimum (Engaged Encounter fulfills this requirement)

Rite of Marriage during Mass

I. Entrance rite

- a. *Groom stands at front of church, near first pew*
- b. *Priest and servers enter (usually from sacristy)*
- c. *Bride processes in, customarily with her father*

II. Liturgy of the Word

- a. *Up to three readings may be chosen, with a minimum of two*
 - i. The first is always from the Old Testament
 - ii. Between the readings is a Responsorial Psalm
 - iii. The second (**optional**) is always from the New Testament
 - iv. The third reading is always a Gospel reading
- b. *The priest offers the homily*

III. Rite of Marriage

- a. *Father invites the couple forward*
 - i. Father questions the couple regarding their freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other and the acceptance and upbringing of children
- b. *Consent*
 - i. Father invites the couple to declare their consent
 1. Bride and groom join their right hands
 - a. Bridegroom repeats vows (given by the priest)
 - b. Bride repeats vows (given by the priest)
 - ii. Father recognizes their consent
- c. *Blessing and Exchange of the Rings*
 - i. The best man (most commonly) brings the rings forward
 - ii. Father blesses the rings
 1. The bridegroom places his wife's ring on her ring finger, repeating the words given by Father
 2. The bride places her husband's ring on his ring finger, repeating the words given by Father

IV. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- a. *The Mass continues as normal, with the propers for marriage*
 - i. The bride and groom, or their guests, have the option of bringing the bread and wine to the altar
- b. *Nuptial Blessing*
 - i. After the Lord's Prayer (*Our Father*), the nuptial blessing is offered
- c. *Sign of Peace and Communion*
 - i. The sign of peace is exchanged and communion is celebrated as normal

V. Solemn blessing, introduction of couple, and dismissal

Rite of Marriage outside of Mass

I. Entrance rite

- a. *Groom stands at front of church, near first pew*
- b. *Priest* and servers enter (usually from sacristy)*
- c. *Bride processes in, customarily with her father*

II. Liturgy of the Word

- a. *Up to three readings may be chosen, with a minimum of two*
 - i. The first is always from the Old Testament
 - ii. Between the readings is a Responsorial Psalm
 - iii. The second (**optional**) is always from the New Testament
 - iv. The third reading is always a Gospel reading
- b. *The priest* offers the homily*

III. Rite of Marriage

- a. *Father* invites the couple forward*
 - i. Father* questions the couple regarding their freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other and the acceptance and upbringing of children
- b. *Consent*
 - i. Father* invites the couple to declare their consent
 1. Bride and groom join their right hands
 - a. Bridegroom repeats vows (given by the priest*)
 - b. Bride repeats vows (given by the priest*)
 - ii. Father* recognizes their consent
- c. *Blessing and Exchange of the Rings*
 - i. The best man (most commonly) brings the rings forward
 - ii. Father* blesses the rings
 1. The bridegroom places his wife's ring on her ring finger, repeating the words given by Father*
 2. The bride places her husband's ring on his ring finger, repeating the words given by Father*

IV. General Intercessions and Nuptial Blessings

- a. *The priest* offers the invitation to prayer for the general intercessions (prayers of the faithful)*
- b. *Nuptial Blessing*
 - i. After the general intercessions, the priest* offers the nuptial blessing

V. Our Father

- a. The priest* leads the congregation in praying the Lord's Prayer

VI. Solemn blessing, introduction of couple, and dismissal

***For a wedding outside of a Mass, a priest or a deacon may preside**

Wedding policies

The dignity of the sacrament of marriage is testified to throughout the Scriptures. It is noteworthy that Jesus' entrance into His ministry and His first miracle took place at a wedding celebration (John 2). He later testifies to the sanctity and lifelong bond of marriage: "Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Mark 10:9) – words that are repeated in the celebration of the sacrament.

The Church, universally and locally, lays out for our consideration many guides in the celebration of marriage. In the course of your preparations as bride and groom, it is never too early to review these and plan accordingly!

Location

In accordance with the Code of Canon law (universal, worldwide Church law), marriage is to be celebrated in a parish church. (CIC 1118, §1, §2)

What this means for you

- Marriages may not be celebrated outside of a parish church without the express permission of the local ordinary (currently Archbishop Etienne). Couples should be aware that **exceptions are extraordinarily rare and generally not given**. Do not plan on a wedding outside of the church.
- Marriages may not be celebrated outside of the parish church **where one or both parties are members** without the express permission of their pastor. (CIC 1115)

Time

In accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese of Seattle (*Many Gifts, One Spirit*, MR 16 and 17), the sacrament of matrimony is set apart from other major celebrations of the Church and given its own dignity, whether in Mass or outside of Mass.

What this means for you

- Marriages **may never be celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday**. In our parishes, marriages are not offered during Lent except in **extraordinary circumstances** and at the pastor's discretion.

- Marriages are not celebrated on or near major holidays and feast days. The seasons of Christmas and Easter (generally the week after each) are also excluded.
- Marriages are not celebrated in the place of Sunday Mass, including the vigil Mass (Saturday evening after 4:30pm).

Liturgy

Matrimony, whether celebrated in Mass or outside of Mass, is a liturgy given by the Church. It is important ensure that the sacrament is celebrated according to the norms of the Church.

What this means for you

- The form of the liturgy is passed down to us by the Church, ensuring that the Sacrament of Matrimony is validly and licitly celebrated. Therefore, **no changes may be made to the Mass**, either in additions ('unity' candles, mixing of sands, et cetera) or subtractions (replacing Scripture readings with poetry, literature, et cetera).
- Music may be chosen by those participating according to their preferences, however all music must be liturgical – hymns or other approved liturgical music.

Ministers

The sacrament of Matrimony is always witnessed by a Catholic deacon or priest. Ordinarily weddings are celebrated by the pastor of the parish (Father Maurer) and assisted by ministers trained at our parish. Outside clergy and ministers are permitted with proper testimonial paperwork.

What this means for you

- Deacons and priests not currently given faculties to serve in the archdiocese of Seattle are **required** to have their bishop or religious superior complete the Archdiocesan Testimonial Form (PM 94). **There are no exceptions to this policy.** This must be completed **3 months in advance.**
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Altar Servers from outside of our parish must provide a letter of recommendation from their pastor in order to assist at Mass.

Attire

Recognizing the dignity of the sacrament celebrated, all of those participating in the liturgy are expected to attire themselves accordingly.

What this means for you

- The dresses of both the bride and bridesmaids must be modest. **Shoulders must be covered** (veils are acceptable and encouraged) and **dresses must extend to or below the knees.**
- The clothing of the groom and groomsmen should be in the category of **formal dress.** It is customary to wear suit and tie, dress pants and dress shoes.

Environment

The church building, by virtue of its function and what it contains – namely the Eucharist and the people of God – has of its own right a dignity and value.

What this means for you

- Floral arrangements, though a welcome addition to the liturgy, must be approved by the wedding host. It must be remembered that they are an accompaniment, not the focus. Accordingly, they should never be on the altar or side altars, nor placed in such a way as to become a distraction.
- Banners, signs or other displays are never permitted in the church. They may be placed in the narthex (entry way) of the church **at the pastor's discretion.**

Photography

Memories, though important, are secondary to the Sacrament being celebrated. Photography is to be done in a manner that is unobtrusive and respectful.

What this means for you

- **Hire a professional who knows how to take photos so that no one notices them.**
- **Photographers are expected to dress professionally.**
- **Flash photography is not permitted during the liturgy.**

Stipends

While no marriage will be refused due to financial hardship, there are costs to celebrating a wedding. In the course of planning for their wedding, couples should include in their budget compensation for the parish and all those who contribute their time and effort to the celebration.

What this means for you

- **Stipends must be turned into the parish office and made out to the parish.**
- **The stipend for the church is to be offered within two months of the wedding day.**
- **Individual stipends (see attached sheet), are to be offered at the rehearsal.**
- When the resident priest is celebrating the Sacrament, no stipend is expected or necessary. A gift may be offered if desired, but is purely at the discretion of the couple.

Stipend and fees sheet

A stipend is a means of financial support to the Church and Her clergy. It is different from a fee in a number of ways, but most importantly in that it is meant to be voluntary. No one is denied the sacrament because of financial burdens (*Many Gifts, One Spirit*, MR 15).

Nonetheless, it is just and equitable that both clergy and parish be offered remuneration for the work done in preparation and celebration of the sacraments.

At our parish there are three standard stipends and two standard fees. These allow our volunteers, ministers and the parish to continue in their work, alleviate costs and express support for the effort offered:

- **Parish stipend***, \$300 for parishioners, \$500 for non-parishioners
- **Visiting clergy stipend**, \$200 (if applicable – set by archdiocese)
- **Altar server stipend**, \$15-25 (if applicable)
- **Organist fee**, \$175
- **Cantor fee**, \$50

Why no stipend for the resident clergy?

In the early ages of the Church, no provisions were made for the maintenance of the clergy, particularly priests. Early Church history records that priests commonly took up jobs to provide for themselves. Given the circumstances of those times, it was always an expectation that priests would receive a stipend for sacraments celebrated in order to support them.

In the modern age, all regularly assigned priests (pastors, priest administrators and parochial vicars) are given a regular salary. **What this means for you is that no stipend is necessary or expected if your marriage is celebrated by a priest of the parish.** A gift may be offered if desired, but is purely at the discretion of the couple.

A final thought on stipends

Many will recognize the word **tithing**, a principle from the Old Testament (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:24; 2 Chronicles 31:5). The general idea is in recognition that everything we receive is a gift from God, we offer ten percent of all we have back to Him.

Consider what you have and will be spending on your wedding: the rings, the dress, the bridal party's attire, the photography, the invitations, the reception. Ten percent of this amount would generally be quite extraordinary!

At our parish we annually examine our stipends and fees so that they are both fair and reasonable. If you sincerely can't afford them, please let us know. (... but please don't show up with a limo the day of the wedding!)

Please offer them knowing that your support gives us the means to celebrate the sacraments, how our community continues to be able to support couples before, at and after their marriage and in the not-so-distant future how your children will be able to celebrate their sacraments here.

Thank you for being married at our parish and for your support of our ministry! We are honored to be part of your new life together.