

A Wedding is a Day, A Marriage is a Lifetime

Marriage Policy Booklet

Helping to Make Your Celebration Sacred, Meaningful and Beautiful



Holy Rosary † St. Mary's Church

8471 Cypress Street • Hilmar CA 95324

Post Office Box 429 • Hilmar CA 95324

(209)667-8961 • Fax (209)667-5239

www.hilmarholyroary.org

Christian Marriage

Marriage in the church is a sacred event – a sign of God’s active love within the Christian community. This love is made visible in the Sacrament of Marriage: a man and woman promising to be faithful to each other through life as husband and wife. The expression of this mutual love is a source of joy to the entire Christian community.

Holy Rosary U St. Mary’s parish looks forward to celebrating your love on the day of your wedding. In order to promote the sanctity and dignity of your marriage, we offer you this booklet of guidelines and suggestions. It provides details which will facilitate the organization of your wedding plans.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please feel free to contact the parish office.

May you find true joy as husband and wife on your wedding day and all the days of your married lives.

Father Isaque Meneses

Meeting with the Pastor

Couples planning marriage should first contact the pastor. This must precede any scheduling of dates and times.

Since you are approaching the Catholic Church to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony, we presume that your faith is alive and well. Unsure at times, perhaps – but basic enough to bring you here in complete honesty and integrity to celebrate publicly your marriage in the Lord before us all. Marrying “in church” just to please one’s family or because you want the aura of a “church” wedding is not enough. Faith and practice and some commitment to church life and worship are both desirable and just plain honest. Where faith and/or practice is weak or nonexistent for a long time, we will have to have a lot of dialogue on the subject and try to discern the wisdom of a church wedding.

Priests or deacons who are friends or relatives of the couple are welcome to officiate at the wedding. Clergy of other faith denominations may also participate in the marriage ceremony in a limited role. Visiting clergy should be asked to contact the pastor well before the wedding date to confirm their coming. If visiting priest is to perform the ceremony, the pastor cannot be expected to be on stand-by.

It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to secure the services of the visiting clergy and to take care of his stipend as well as to assure he is informed about wedding policies and rehearsal policies.

Couples who belong to another Catholic parish must secure a letter from their pastor giving permission for them to be married in this parish.

Necessary Documents

All paperwork and fees must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to the wedding date. This includes:

Baptismal Certificate

A recent copy of a baptism certificate with notations (i.e. with dates and places of other sacraments of the individual noted on the back of the baptismal certificate must be submitted for each baptized party. For Catholic, the certificate must be dated within the past six (6) months. Copies can be obtained by contacting the church of your baptism.

First Communion and Confirmation Certificates

When the Baptism certificate does not carry the notations of other sacraments received it is recommended though not required that each Catholic submit the certificate of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Usually, as noted above a notation in this regard is made on the back of a recent copy of the baptism certificate. If a Catholic has not yet received these sacraments, the priest will discuss possible ways of doing so before the wedding.

Pre-Nuptial Investigation

The pre-nuptial investigation is a questionnaire form that is completed by each party in the presence of a priest prior to the wedding day (usually done during the first appointment with the pastor).

Civil Marriage License

It is necessary to obtain a civil marriage license from the County Clerk's office prior to a church wedding. Once issued, the license is valid for ninety (90) days. The license permits the priest to officiate for the State of California. The priest and witnesses must sign the license after the wedding ceremony.

Annulment Forms

If either party has been previously married, either civilly or in a church, he/she is not free to marry in the Church without going through the Church process for dealing with previous marriages. Please speak with the priest about what process might be necessary for you under these circumstances. If necessary, this process must be completed before the wedding celebration.

Marriage Preparation

Both parties must participate in some form of pre-marital instruction well before their scheduled wedding date. This is an opportunity to consider marriage and its many aspects from a Christian point of view. You may fulfill this requirement in one of three ways:

Engaged Encounter Weekend

This weekend retreat (Friday evening through Sunday afternoon) is scheduled monthly for approximately 30-40 couples. Reservations are required and a fee is charged by the Engaged Encounter committee that hosts the program. The priest can give you more information about this very rewarding weekend. For weekend information/registration, log on to www.engagedencounter.org.

Holy Rosary / St. Mary's Marriage Prep Program

Our parish offers a marriage prep program to couples preparing for marriage. Couples will meet with a mentor couple for a series of five (5) meetings. Through the use of assessments, conversation and video, the subjects of communication, family life, finances and spirituality will be discussed. The program is designed for you and your fiancé to get to know one another better and to be truly prepared to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony. The cost for the program is \$50. Contact Odelta Cardoso for more information at (209)648-4956.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

As a way of enhancing your own spiritual preparation for your marriage, Catholics are encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) prior to their wedding. This is a wonderful opportunity to seek the Lord's blessing upon your married life and to be reconciled to the church through this special Sacrament.

Music

Music is an integral part of our worship as Christians and therefore should reflect the sacred nature of such celebrations. Care should be taken in making plans for your wedding music to ensure that it properly expresses the belief of the Christian Community about the dignity and sacredness of marriage and love. Secular songs appropriate in a church setting are permitted only before the procession begins and not during the service. The following musicians will gladly provide couples with a list of beautiful and appropriate music for Eucharist and liturgy which reflects the sacred nature of Christian love and marriage.

The parish will be happy to provide couples with the names of available musicians, or you may contact your own. The fee for use of musicians is negotiated with each musician by the couple.

The Ceremony

There are two types of wedding ceremonies available.

Nuptial Mass: The Nuptial Mass is the proper setting for a marriage between two Catholics who are active in their worship. The Mass may also be a fitting way of celebrating the marriage between a Catholic and another baptized Christian who appreciates the beauty and dignity of the Nuptial Mass. The Nuptial Mass includes reading from the Bible, the Marriage Rite, and the reception of Holy Communion. The time frame for the Nuptial Mass is approximately 45-minutes to an hour.

Marriage Rite Outside Mass: In case of a marriage between a Catholic person and a baptized non-Catholic person where one or both parties may not be actively worshipping the Marriage Rite Outside Mass is encouraged. The ceremony includes readings from the Bible followed by the Marriage Rite. It does NOT include Communion. The time frame for this ceremony is approximately 30-45 minutes.

The use of Bible readings and prayers may not be excluded from any wedding ceremony. While other secular readings/poetry may be incorporated into the ceremony, they cannot replace the use of the Bible readings and/or prayers. You should speak with the priest if you have questions about this and should receive prior permission for any use of secular literature.

Marriages in Advent/Lent

Marriages are not recommended during Advent/Lent, but in case a wedding takes place, the penitential nature of the season should be remembered and the celebration – especially at the Church – should reflect his awareness.

Environment

The sanctuary (altar area) is a sacred place which includes highly symbolic aspects of our Christian worship. The use of decorations (flowers, candles, etc.) may not cover or overshadow the altar or other sanctuary fixtures. During certain Church season (Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter), decorations already present in the sanctuary may not be removed. You are asked to be respectful in choosing your own additions to the altar area. (See note on page 10 regarding candles.)

Please share our guidelines with your wedding florist and photographer(s).

Wedding and Rehearsal Times

The usual day for the celebration of marriage is Saturday, although another day of the week may be chosen as long as it does not interfere with scheduled parish activities. Marriages are not permitted on Sunday. For smaller weddings (100 guests or less), the beautiful church of St. Mary's in Stevinson may be an appropriate setting. Couples are welcome to explore this possibility when planning the wedding ceremony.

The times for Saturday weddings are: 10am, 11am or 2pm

Rehearsals are normally scheduled on the Friday before the wedding. The office will confirm your rehearsal time.

The wedding rehearsal is conducted by the pastor or his delegate. In the pastor's absence, the delegate is fully authorized to conduct the rehearsal. The delegate is not permitted to grant exceptions to the procedures of the parish. The delegate is not a wedding coordinator and has no responsibility except for the wedding rehearsal and will be present for the wedding day to organize the entrance of the wedding party only.

Flowers may be used in the sanctuary and seating areas of the church. We do not permit strewing of flower petals, or the use of flower arches or artificial flowers. Florists should deliver flowers at a prearranged time. All flowers should be removed from the church immediately following the ceremony. Vessels belonging to the church, however, may not be removed. If you wish to donate your floral arrangements to the church, you are welcome to do so and church liners for containers are available for you.

Candles are permitted but must include appropriate drip cloths underneath. The use of a Unity Candle is acceptable during the ceremony. This is usually placed on the altar. Some covering of the altar should be in place under the candles and should be limited in size so as not to obstruct other activities on the altar. Handheld lighted candles are not permitted.

Runner/Aisle Decorum: A runner is permitted. It should be 64 feet in length. Flower arrangements and/or bows may be secured on the aisle seats as long as pew clips are used with felt underneath or ribbon. ABSOLUTELY NO tape or tacks may be used. Pews have been refinished. The use of netting on anything which might obstruct one's exit into the center aisle is not permitted.

Guest Book: The use of a guest book prior to the ceremony IS NOT PERMITTED since this may delay the beginning of the ceremony. Your guest book can be made available at the reception.

Photography

The wedding ceremony is a time of sacred worship and commands the respect of all participants. The use of photography, while an important aspect of our celebrations, must not detract from the reverence and meaning of the ceremony. Please observe the following guidelines in the use of photography:

- Photographs may be taken prior to the ceremony. Because time is needed before the ceremony to prepare the sanctuary and church, you are limited to outside areas of the church.
- During the ceremony, photographers are not allowed into the altar area.
- The use of a video camera is permitted but must be placed in a permanent position either in the side aisles or rear of the church. It must be used without the benefit of artificial lighting.
- Photographers are not to employ the church as a “studio” with excessive equipment and/or lighting.
- Thirty (30) minutes are allotted after the ceremony for posed pictures in the church as there are other church activities following. Please ask family members wanted in pictures to remain in the church after the ceremony to be present and ready for pictures.

Please be sure to abide by these guidelines for smooth and dignified flow of your wedding celebration and to avoid the embarrassment of having to be reminded during the ceremony or afterwards.

Other Considerations

Proper Conduct: The church is a place of prayer and worship. Respectful behavior and noise free environment is mandatory at all times.

Personal Attire for both the rehearsal and ceremony is to be appropriate for a place of worship.

STRAPLESS dresses WILL NOT be allowed unless accompanied by a shawl or jacket during the ceremony.

If not accompanied with the dress, one will be provided for the bride and/or attendants.

Punctuality: Please observe punctuality for the time of the rehearsal and ceremony. The church must consider its own schedule.

Rice, Confetti, Bubbles or Birdseed are NOT allowed. It is unsightly, difficult to clean and may cause injury.

Smoking is permitted outside only.

Alcohol is not permitted anywhere on the premises.

Gum, Food and Drinks are not permitted in the church area. Their use is limited to the hall or outside. Please use trash receptacles to dispose of gum properly.

Clean Up: All parties are asked to be responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Please designate persons to gather up personal belongings and wedding items after the ceremony. We are not responsible for lost articles.

Use of Church Facilities

All fees are payable four (4) weeks before your wedding date.

Church fees (includes use of church, utilities and custodian services):

St. Mary's Church in Stevinson - \$300 (registered parishioners) / \$500 (non-registered parishioners)

Mission Church - \$300 (registered parishioners) / \$500 (non-registered parishioners)

New Church - \$400 (registered parishioners) / \$700 (non-registered parishioners)

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is required to reserve the date.

Offering for Priest: At discretion of wedding party.

The use of Holy Rosary or St. Mary's Church will not be denied on financial grounds. Persons who wish to use the church for a lesser fee may make those arrangements with the pastor. Cancellation of a wedding must be made at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date if fees paid (less the \$100 non-refundable deposit) are to be refunded.

Reception

Holy Rosary church has facilities available for your reception.

Holy Rosary Hall (capacity 150 seated)

Parishioners: \$325 + \$200 Diocesan Insurance = \$525

Non-Registered Parishioners: \$325 + \$200 Diocesan Insurance = \$525

Insurance is required by the Diocese of Fresno for all private functions (not open to the entire parish). The proper form and a check payable to "Diocese of Fresno" must be sent through our parish office ten (10) days before the planned function.

All fees are due one month before the wedding date.

For clarification or further information, please contact our parish office at (209)667-8961.

*A parishioner is someone registered with Holy Rosary and/or St. Mary's for no less than one year.

Holy Rosary • St. Mary's

Marriage Prep Program Registration Form

Wedding Date: _____

Bride (*full name*): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Is this your first marriage? Yes No

Are you baptized? Yes No

Are you Catholic? Yes No

Name of your home parish: _____ City: _____

Groom (*full name*): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Is this your first marriage? Yes No

Are you baptized? Yes No

Are you Catholic? Yes No

Name of your home parish: _____ City: _____

Parish where wedding will take place: _____

Address of parish where wedding will take place:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____