

ASCENSION CHURCH, SARATOGA, CA

## Wedding Guidelines

Congratulations on your engagement and decision to celebrate your Matrimony in the Roman Catholic Church!

### Required Steps

- Meet with a priest. Schedule the *first appointment* with the priest at least six months before the desired wedding date.
- Take the *FOCCUS* (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study) inventory. It helps the couple identify their similarities and differences, and facilitates discussions on areas of concern.
- Participate in a *Marriage Preparation* (Engaged Encounter, Pre-Cana, etc).
- Attend a *Natural Family Planning* introductory session.

### Required Documents

#### - Baptismal Certificate

Obtain this certificate from your church of baptism. It should be dated within six months of your meeting with the priest. It shows all sacraments you have received.

#### - Dispensation

The priest will help you obtain a dispensation if one of the parties is not a Catholic or not a baptized Christian.

- **Self-Testimony of the Bride & Groom** (Form A): The priest will help you with this form on the first meeting.

#### - Witness Questionnaire (Form B)

Preferably a parent, or someone who knows you very well, is asked to give this

testimony before a priest or pastoral minister at Ascension or in their local parish.

#### - Marriage License

This license, good for 90 days, can be obtained from SC County Clerk- Recorder, at least a week before the wedding. If you are already married civilly, provide a certified copy of your marriage certificate.

- If either party has been married before and the marriage resulted in a divorce, an *Annulment* will be required. If the marriage ended due to the death of a spouse, the *Death Certificate* will be required.

### Wedding Celebration

#### - Wedding Date & Time

Arrange the wedding date and time with the priest before booking a reception site, etc. Weddings are at 11:00am, or 2:00pm Saturdays. The time allowed is 1/2 hour for setup, 1 hour for the ceremony, and 1/2 hour for pictures.

#### - Rite of Marriage

The couple may select their preferred prayers and readings from approved texts.

#### - Musicians

We have musicians available for weddings. Outside musicians must be experienced in Catholic liturgical music.

#### - Lectors

You may invite friends or family members to proclaim the scripture readings and the intercessions. It is important that they have the necessary gifts for the proclamation.

#### - Church Etiquette

Our church is a sacred place. Please conduct yourselves in a respectful manner whenever

you are in church. Please do not consume food or drinks in church. Chewing gum is not appropriate. Water is permitted for health reasons.

#### - Photography/Videography

No flash photography is permitted except during entrance and recessional processions. Videos may be filmed with no extra lights. Photographers and videographers should not move in a way that distracts the assembly.

#### - Flowers and Other Decorations

You may bring in flowers and fitting decorations. Any flowers, plants, and decorations already in church may not be removed. Tape is not allowed on the pews. Runners are not permitted. We are grateful for flowers left for use at weekend masses.

#### - Candles

Since the wedding rite already has rich unity symbols, and candles in the Catholic tradition are symbols of the light of Christ, the use of "unity candle" is discouraged.

#### - Throwing of Items in Church

Tossing flower petals, rice, birdseed, etc., is not allowed, either inside or outside church.

#### - Offerings and Fees

The suggested amount: \$500 for registered members; \$600 for non-members. When the priest gives a date for your wedding, please make a \$250 deposit to the parish. If our staff prepares you for your marriage, and your wedding celebration takes place elsewhere, we encourage you to make a donation to our parish.

A fee for a musician is arranged between you and the musician.