

Congratulations !

On behalf of the parish priests, deacons, staff and the family of Sacred Heart, we pray that this time in which you prepare for your marriage will be filled with holiness and joy and we trust that these guidelines will assist you in properly preparing for matrimony. Marriage is a sacrament and a vocation. Sacraments are signs of God's presence among us. In marriage, couples are called to become signs of the never failing love that Christ has for his Church through the love they have for one another and those around them. As a vocation, a couple states that they feel called by God to be together for the rest of their life. Your parish priest or deacon considers it a privilege when asked to officiate at a wedding.



Marriage preparation at Sacred Heart consists of the following:

1. Meetings with the priest/deacon. Because of the fragile nature of marriage in our time, the Church asks that there be appropriate time taken in the preparation of this sacrament. The Diocese of Palm Beach has established a policy whereby the priest or deacon meets several times with the engaged couple. The Diocese has stipulated a **six month** preparation period. This allows sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation program. We require that all paperwork for your wedding be finalized at least **one month** prior to your wedding.
2. The **FOCCUS** program is a valuable questionnaire/survey which is designed to identify various areas of agreement and disagreement within the couples relationship, and which is administered by a trained couple. The topics which are shared with the engaged couples include, for example, the spirituality of a couple and a family, communication, human sexuality, responsible parenting, decision making and conscience formation, and a variety of family life issues. In addition, there is always dialogue regarding our faith. The priest/deacon preparing you will give you the name and number of the couple to contact for this program.

3. The **Engaged Encounter Day or Camino Weekend in Spanish** is an activity to help promote a relationship based upon open and honest communication between the two individuals. The engaged couple is responsible for arranging to attend the day and pay the appropriate cost. The priest/deacon who is preparing you will give you a calendar of dates and locations from which you may choose.
4. The **Liturgy**. The celebration of the liturgy is the single most important aspect of any wedding, and it is imperative that the couple spend some time thinking about the type of celebration they want to have. The priest/deacon who is witnessing the wedding can be of great assistance in helping to make this a sacred moment. Please inform him of any special needs you might have regarding the ceremony before your wedding day so there will be no confusion at the last minute. The priest/deacon will provide the couple with a book called *Together For Life* to help in the preparation for the ceremony.
5. **Celebrant**. Normally speaking, the presider will be the priest/deacon who helped the couple prepare for marriage in our parish. On occasion a family will have a relative or friend who is a priest or deacon. We are pleased to have them witness the couple's marriage at Sacred Heart. They must obtain the permission, proper delegation, and complete a *Certificate of Aptitude*. The priest/deacon preparing you will help you with this.



Procedures For Marriage In Sacred Heart Church

There is a SIX MONTH DIOCESEAN STIPULATED WAITING PERIOD that allows sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation program. We require that all paperwork for your wedding be finalized at least **one month** prior to your wedding.

PARISHONERS OF SACRED HEART

1. Parishioners are those who:
 - A. Have been registered in the parish for at least six months, attend Mass regularly, and who sincerely try to be fiscally responsible members by using the envelope system; or
 - B. Are children of registered families but are no longer living at home, or are presently attending college.
2. Our parishioners should contact one of our priests/deacons at least six months in advance of the proposed wedding date.
3. **Required Documents:** The priest/deacon of Sacred Heart will complete the Diocesan pre-nuptial inquiry forms with each couple. You are required to provide the following additional documents:
 - A. **Baptismal Certificate** with all notations issued within the last six months. This should be acquired from your Church of Baptism.
 - B. If previously married, a copy of the **Decree of Nullity** issued by the Church; if your previous spouse is deceased, a certificate of death. These documents are needed to establish your freedom to marry again within the Church.
 - C. You may be given **Witness Forms**. They should be completed by family members or people who have known you most of your life, testifying that they know you are free to marry.
 - C. Those under 18 years of age must adhere strictly to all Diocesan and Canonical norms in regard to parental permission.
 - D. A **Marriage License** is an absolute requirement for marriage in this state. Before your celebration of marriage can begin, the celebrant must have this license in his possession. For more information, please contact the **Office of the County Clerk**.

NON-PARISHIONERS OF SACRED HEART

Anyone who is not registered at Sacred Heart parish office is considered to be a **non-parishioner**.

1. Non-parishioners seeking to enter marriage at Sacred Heart must first contact the pastor of the parish where he or she resides to discuss their prospective marriage at Sacred Heart and obtain the pastor's permission. **This permission must be obtained in writing.**
2. This written permission must be presented to the priest/deacon here at Sacred Heart who will be preparing you.
3. **You may provide your own celebrant.** Your pastor, his associates, a priest/deacon who is a relative or family friend, (who has obtained the proper permission, delegation, and *Certificate of Aptitude*), is welcome to be the principal celebrant at your marriage liturgy. If you cannot provide your own celebrant, a priest/deacon from Sacred Heart will be provided for you according to availability.
4. In the case mentioned above, the principal celebrant of your choice should take care of all required marriage documentation and provide you with a Diocesan approved program of marriage preparation. The completed paperwork should be delivered to Sacred Heart at least **two weeks** prior to the ceremony. The required documentation is outlined under registered parishioners on the previous page.
5. No precise date and time will be reserved on the Sacred Heart calendar until **after** your pastor's written permission is obtained. We cannot insure a wedding date and time until six months prior to the proposed date of celebration. This is so we might have adequate church availability for our own parish functions.



The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Confirmation

Baptized Catholics should realize that to obtain the full effects of the Sacrament of Marriage one must be living in the state of grace. It is often recommended by masters of the spiritual life, that one contemplating marriage take a quiet day with the Lord in retreat and go to confession before entering the Holy State of Matrimony, because, truly, one is entering a new way of life. The priest/deacon who is preparing you would be pleased to make arrangements for the wedding party to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist are so related to each other that all are required for full Christian initiation. Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation combine to bring the faithful to the full stature of Christ and to enable them to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world. **Catholics who are not Confirmed are strongly urged to undertake the preparation to receive the Sacrament before marriage.** This should be discussed with the priest/deacon who is preparing you.



Scheduling

A **tentative** wedding date may be scheduled during the initial interview with the preparing priest/deacon. Only the priest/deacon who is preparing you may schedule the wedding. The date may not be finalized until all the requirements have been completed. Any changes are to be made with the priest/deacon who is making the wedding arrangements with you.

PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING:

THERE ARE NO WEDDINGS ON SUNDAY AND HOLY DAYS

THERE ARE NO WEDDINGS DURING HOLY WEEK

SATURDAY WEDDING TIMES ONLY:

10 AM

12 PM

2PM

Weddings may be scheduled in the parish at any time on **Weekdays** at times that do not conflict with other Church activities.

Some Practical Details

The fundamental principle that must guide everyone is that marriage is a sacrament, and so all must be done in a sacred and solemn manner; everything in dress, music, flowers, etc., should be guided by this basic principle.

1. **Music.** All music must be coordinated through the director of our music ministry. The priest/deacon who is preparing you will give the name and phone number of who to contact. All music must be liturgically appropriate in accordance with Diocesan policy and liturgical norms of the Church. Only sacred music and other pieces approved by the Diocesan Office of Prayer and Worship may be played during the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the director of music for scheduling and payment.
2. **Flowers.** The sanctuary and the attendant decorations of the Altar are not to be disturbed. Respect for the liturgical and physical environment of the Church must be considered at all times. While flowers are not placed on the Altar, they may be arranged around or near the Altar, always allowing enough space for proper freedom of movement. Seasonal church decorations will not be removed for weddings. Flowers, ribbons, etc., **are not to be taped, glued, wired or tacked to the pews. Please use rubber bands or cloth ties.** All flowers, baskets and stands are provided by the florist, and it is their responsibility to set up all arrangements.
3. **Photography.** Professional photographers and others desiring pictures are welcome, but they **must not enter the sanctuary**, obstruct the flow of the ceremony or the view of the people gathered, **or approach the area of the main altar during the Eucharistic Prayer.** Excessively bright lights and flash pictures during the sacred moments of the wedding ceremony are strictly forbidden. Posed photographs after the ceremony are permitted **provided the posing does not interfere with the approaching time of one of our scheduled Masses or devotions, or another wedding. We adhere to time limitations strictly.**
4. **Video.** The use of video equipment is permitted, provided your technician uses only available lighting of the church itself. Video technicians are not to enter the sanctuary during the ceremony.

5. **Unity Candle.** Though it is not part of the Catholic wedding ceremony, the unity candle, if desired may be used. Please speak about this with the priest/deacon who is preparing you.
6. **Reception Lines.** Normally reception lines at the Church delay your time for posed pictures. We recommend that they be held at the reception.
7. **Rice, Birdseed, Confetti.** There is to be **NO THROWING OF RICE, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI, OR RELEASE OF BALLONS** on church property or there will be an additional charge of \$300.00 for clean up. Flower petals are never to be thrown on the Church floor.
8. **Rehearsal.** Rehearsals need to begin promptly since several are usually scheduled on Friday nights. The priest/deacon assisting you will suggest a time for your rehearsal. The entire wedding party is expected to be in attendance **and on time.** The rehearsal is optional for the organist and the photographer. Please remember to bring to the rehearsal with you the following:
 - A. **A copy of your selections from Together For Life.**
 - B. **Marriage License.**
9. **Donation.** The following fees and donations should be finalized **one month** before the wedding:
 - A. The organist's fee and all other musician and soloists fees (if any).
 - B. Church donation.

Recommended Donations for use of the Church are as follows:

Parishioners: **\$250.00**

Non-Parishioners: **\$350.00**



It is our fervent hope that these guidelines will help you in preparation for your wedding. The priests, deacons and parish staff of Sacred heart want you to feel our concern for you and your lives together. We are always ready to help you now and in the future.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are the number of pews down the center aisle?**

20

2. **How long is the center aisle?**

70 feet

3. **Who should come to the rehearsal?**

All parties who are participating in the wedding ceremony

4. **Can I have friends or family do the readings?**

Yes. They must be Catholic and should practice the reading at the rehearsal.

5. **What time should I arrive before the ceremony?**

The bridal party should be at the Church 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time for the wedding. If the participants are late, this will shorten your wedding celebration and may force the priest or deacon to curtail some aspects of your ceremony due to other scheduled parish activities.

6. **Can my Protestant fiancé have his or her minister participate in the wedding ceremony?**

Your Minister is welcome to participate in certain aspects of the wedding ceremony. Please discuss this with the priest/deacon who is preparing you.



Checklist

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptismal Certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Decree of Nullity (if necessary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged Encounter | <input type="checkbox"/> Death Certificate (if necessary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FOCCUS | <input type="checkbox"/> Witness Forms (if necessary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage License | <input type="checkbox"/> Proper Permissions (if necessary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church and Music Donations | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selections from <i>Together For Life</i> | |