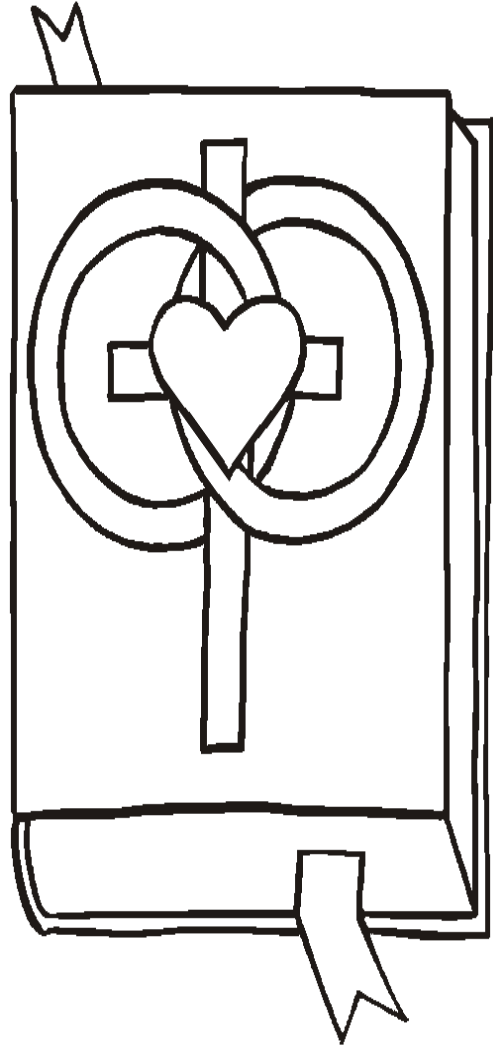


*Preparation*  
*Guidelines*

**WEDDING TO BE**  
**CELEBRATED**  
**OUTSIDE**  
**OF**  
**ST. MARY MAGDALEN**  
**CHURCH**



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**St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church**

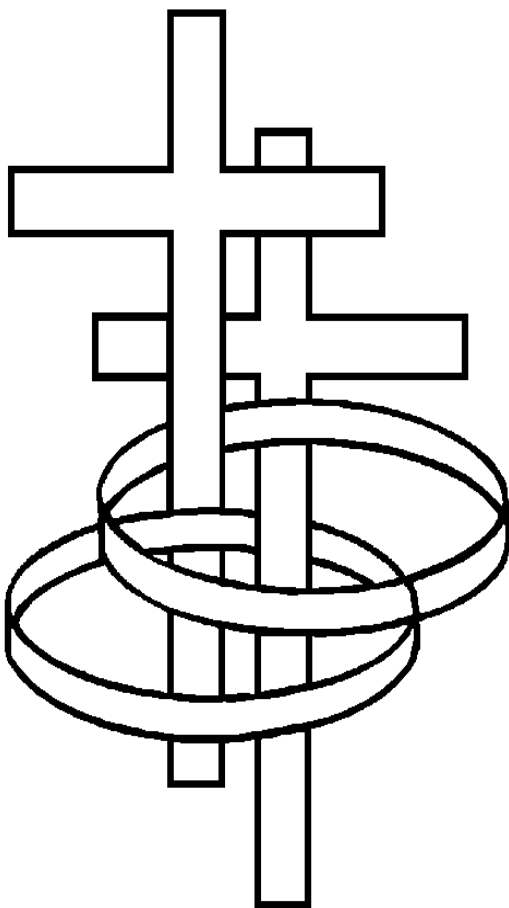
**17775 North Bay Road**  
**Sunny Isles Beach, Florida 33160**  
**Phone: 305-931-0600 Fax: 305-931-0601**  
**[www.stmmsib.org](http://www.stmmsib.org)**  
**[parishoffice@stmmsib.org](mailto:parishoffice@stmmsib.org)**



## **VOCATION TO MARRIAGE**

***Just as surely as priest are called by Christ to serve the people of God in a consecrated, dedicated live, married people are called by Christ to be the instrument through which God's love is made real for each other.***

***The essential components of both natural and sacramental marriage are commitment to a permanent union, to lifelong fidelity, and openness to children. Within the Sacrament of Matrimony, the couple commits to help each other in the fullness of life in the Lord.***



*Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. Love never fails.*

*1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8*

# **ST. MARY MAGDALEN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

## **PREPARATION GUIDELINES TO CELEBRATE A WEDDING OUTSIDE OF PARISH**

These wedding preparation guidelines are intended to help registered parishioners of St. Mary Magdalen prepare to celebrate the sacrament of marriage outside of the parish. While these guidelines do not cover all the specific information about a Catholic marriage, these guidelines are structured to provide you with a broad outline that is common to most Catholic weddings.

### **FIRST CONSIDERATION: WHERE WILL THE WEDDING TAKE PLACE?**

1. If you plan to get married in another Catholic Church, you will need to secure the permission of the pastor of St. Mary Magdalen, and the pastor where you want the ceremony to take place. Preparation can either be done at either Church.
2. It is sometimes permissible for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic in a Christian church or another faith tradition's place of worship. For such a wedding to be valid and recognized by the Catholic Church there must be a serious reason. A dispensation from the Archbishop of Miami must be obtained by the Catholic through the Catholic's pastor.

### **SECOND CONSIDERATION: WHAT IS THE TENTATIVE DATE OF THE MARRIAGE?**

1. It is important to secure a tentative date from the parish\priest where you will be married.
2. There must be sufficient time to adequately prepare for the wedding. The priest will help you to establish a realistic timeline to prepare for the wedding.

### **THIRD CONSIDERATION: WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CHURCH WHERE YOU PLAN TO BE MARRIED?**

1. Generally, if you are going to be married in another Catholic Church, that Church will want us to prepare a document called a Litterae Testimoniales/Nihil Obstat. It states that you have permission to be married, all the documentation has been secured and appropriate marriage preparation instruction has been provided.
2. Sometimes another Catholic Church only wants St. Mary Magdalen Church to do part of the preparation. Other Christian Churches or faith traditions have different requirements.

## **LITTERAE TESTIMONIALES/NIHIL OBSTAT PERMISSION TO MARRY OUTSIDE OF THE PARISH**

In order for the pastor of St. Mary Magdalen to sign a Litterae Testimoniales/Nihil Obstat , there must be:

### **1. A Determination of Readiness and Freedom to Marry**

In order to determine that a couple is ready and free to marry in the Catholic Church, the couple must to do the following:

- a. Complete a ***“Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire”*** which will provide basic information which will help determine if the couple is ready and free to marry in the Catholic Church. This questionnaire (A-Form) is completed in the parish office with a Priest/Deacon.
- b. Obtain a recent copy of ***baptismal certificate***, issued within ***six months of the marriage***.
- c. Have ***two witnesses for the bride and two witnesses for the groom*** complete and have a questionnaire (B-Form) in order to prove the freedom of the couple to marry. It may be done at the Parish Office or with a notary public.
- d. If necessary, obtain necessary annulments of previous marriages (civil, non-Catholic religious, Catholic Church).
- e. If necessary, obtain necessary other dispensations\permissions.

### **2. A Completion of Marriage Enrichment**

Marriage preparation at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church is intended to bring the couple to a deeper awareness of their relationship with each other, with their neighbors and with God.

- a. To receive the Sacrament of Marriage, Catholics are expected to participate in the life of the Church, attending Mass frequently. If you are not a practicing Catholic or have not received the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation; you will be invited to participate in a faith formation program.
- b. FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) is a self-diagnostic instrument designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It is not a test nor meant as a predictor of success or failure in marriage. It is a tool to help couples name and work through issues before marriage. Among the areas that are explored include: life style expectations, personality match, personal issues, communication, problem solving, religion and values, parenting issues, extended family issues, sexuality issues, readiness issues and marriage covenant. FOCCUS is completed and reviewed in the parish office.



- c. **ENGAGED ENCOUNTER\ EL CAMINO:** It is necessary to attend one of the following programs:
1. Engaged Encounter in English for couples marrying for the first time.
  2. El Camino in Spanish for couples marrying for the first time.
  3. PreCana II in English or Spanish for couples where either one or both parties have been married before.
  4. Special Class for those seeking convalidation.
- d. It is recommended but not required to have instruction related to *Natural Family Planning (NFP)* which is intended to help couples better understand and guide their fertility. NFP methods are in harmony with Church teaching, enrich marital intimacy and nurture couple spirituality. For further information, contact the Family Enrichment Center at 305-762-1140.

## **Parish and/or Archdiocesan Fees**

### **a. Parish Processing fee**

If the marriage ceremony is not going to be held at St. Mary Magdalen Church, the fee for marriage preparation is **\$500.**

### **b. Dispensations and Decrees of Nullity (Marriage Tribunal fee)**

If these documents are needed, The Metropolitan Tribunal who issues generally charges a service fee of about **\$100.00** each.

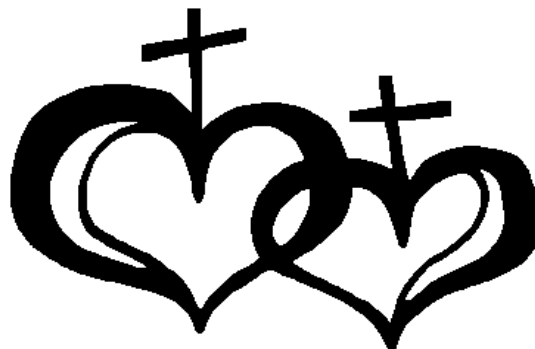
### **c. Late Mailing (Marriage Tribunal fee)**

The request for the Litterae Testimoniales/Nihil Obstat along with document should be received by The Metropolitan Tribunal no later 5 weeks before wedding.

There is a **\$80** fee for marriages that will take place outside of the country and will be using Federal Express for mailing of these documents.

## **Time Schedule**

- a. Preparation should begin 6 months before tentative wedding date.
- b. Processing fee to parish should be paid 2 weeks after beginning process.
- c. All preparation should be completed and documentation should be in parish office 8 weeks before wedding.





**ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI**

OFFICE OF THE TRIBUNAL

9401 Biscayne Boulevard

Miami, Florida 33138

**LITTERAE TESTIMONIALES / NIHIL OBSTAT FOR MARRIAGE**

GROOM: \_\_\_\_\_

BRIDE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION: \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION: \_\_\_\_\_

PARISH: \_\_\_\_\_

PARISH: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF THE MARRIAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
[NAME OF THE CHURCH]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[ADDRESS]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[CITY, STATE or COUNTRY]

PRIEST OR DEACON OFFICIATING AT THE MARRIAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF THE MARRIAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Documents being submitted: (Check which ones)

- |   |                 |               |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Pre-Nuptial Investigation: (A-Form)                          | Groom [ ]       | Bride [ ]     |
| 2. Testimony of Witnesses concerning freedom to marry (B-Forms) | Groom [ ] - [ ] | Bride [ ] [ ] |
| 3. Proof of Baptism   | Groom [ ]       | Bride [ ]     |
| 4. P.M.I. Results   | [ ]             |               |
| 5. Proof of Marriage Instruction                                | [ ]             |               |
| 6. Dispensation Request (form completed)                        | [ ]             |               |
| 7. Other documents (please list): _____                         |                 |               |

*Permission, in so far as it is required, is hereby given for this marriage to take place outside of this parish. In view of the foregoing, I respectfully request the issuance of the LITTERAE TESTIMONIALES / NIHIL OBSTAT for the proposed marriage.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
[PASTOR/ASSOCIATE PASTOR]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[PARISH]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[CITY]

**FOR TRIBUNAL OFFICE USE ONLY**

*As Delegate of the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Miami in these matters, I hereby grant the LITTERAE TESTIMONIALES / NIHIL OBSTAT as requested above.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Granted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Forwarded to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_