



Weddings

St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church

17775 North Bay Road

Sunny Isles Beach, Florida 33160

Phone: 305-931-0600 Fax: 305-931-0601

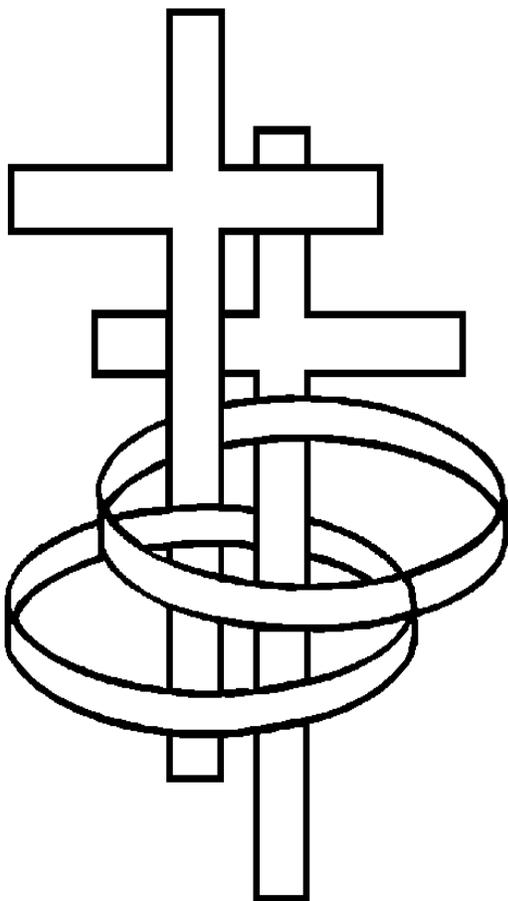
parishoffice@stmmsib.org

www.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 IN OUR PARISH**

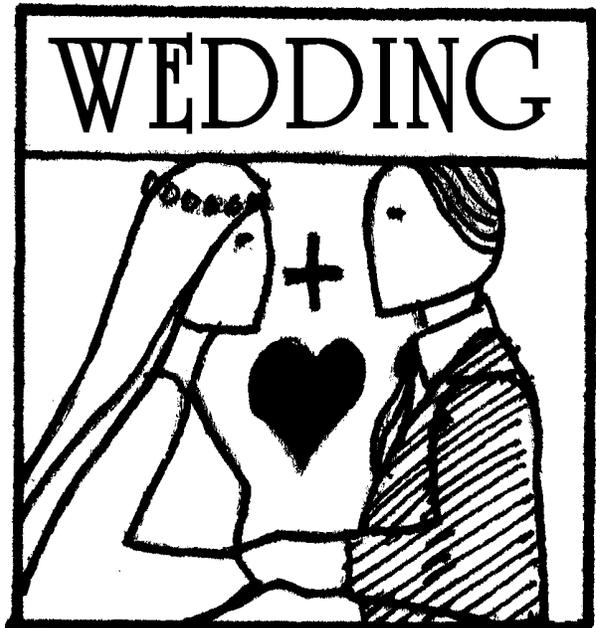
These wedding preparation guidelines are intended to help Catholics who are parishioners of St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church celebrate their wedding here. While these guidelines do not cover all the specific information about a Catholic marriage, these guidelines are structured to provide you with a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

FIRST CONSIDERATION: ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN?

It is both customary and Church law to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony within the parish of either the bride or the groom, if both are Catholic. If only one is Catholic, the wedding is normally at the Catholic's parish.

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

1. A tentative date may be set as early as the first contact with St. Mary Magdalen. A tentative date only guarantees the time and date of wedding so that no one else will be able to select that time and date. *The tentative date does not, however, guarantee the actual celebration of the marriage.* Confirmation of the wedding ceremony takes place after the reception of the documents required to demonstrate readiness and freedom to marry and the marriage preparation program has been agree upon.
2. Marriages should be scheduled six months in advance of the tentative date of the wedding.
3. All documents must be at the parish, at least, 4 weeks before wedding.



1. Archdiocesan Requirements

In order to determine that a couple is ready and free to marry in the Catholic Church, the couple must 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 neighbours 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 practising 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

1. Couples are expected to make a donation to the church as their gift to the Lord. While the donation covers the cost of marriage preparation, air-conditioning, lights, custodial services, etc., your donation should really be viewed as a gift to the Lord which should reflect a fair percentage of the total cost of the wedding (10%). Checks should be made payable to St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church. While the usual donation is \$1000, the donation should reflect a fair percentage of the total cost of the wedding (10%). The payment schedule is 50% two weeks after scheduling tentative date is set; final 50%, one month before wedding.
2. **Music** If you wish to have our parish musicians (organist and\or cantor), the cost of the musicians is between couple being married and the type of music selected. You may bring your own musicians and singers but usually the parish musicians and singer is selected. (For example the church organist receives \$150 and the cantor receives \$150. Checks should be made out directly to them and are due at the rehearsal.)
3. **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.

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. The payment schedule is 50% two weeks after scheduling tentative date is set.
- c. All preparation should be completed and documentation should be in parish office 4 weeks before wedding. Final 50%, one month before wedding.



CIVIL REQUIREMENTS **FLORIDA MARRIAGE LICENSE**

The marriage license is an important legal document. A church marriage certificate does not have any legal value. Without a Florida Marriage License, a priest or deacon can not legally witness a wedding in the State of Florida. A Florida Marriage License is needed. (A couple should not have their marriage witnessed by a notary or a Judge. If you are already married in a civil ceremony and now wish to have your civil marriage convalidated by the Catholic Church, you must submit your civil marriage certificate to the priest preparing your marriage.)

Application for Marriage licenses are usually made at a Marriage License Bureau Central Office (140 W. Flagler St) or North Dade Justice Center (15555 Biscayne Blvd.).

Both bride and groom must apply in person, with proper identification. (Valid I.D with applicant's picture signature and date of birth.) They should also take a copy of their premarital course certificate from the Archdiocese of Miami so that you obtain a discount on the marriage licence.

If either applicant has been previously married, exact date of last divorce, death or annulment must be provided.

Marriage Licenses are valid for sixty (60) days.

For further assistance call Dade County Marriage License Bureau at 305-275-1155.

The marriage license must be given to the priest by the time of the wedding rehearsal. (If a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included, the court will then automatically mail back a copy of the marriage certificate.) During the marriage ceremony, the marriage license will be signed. The officiating priest/deacon will then mail it to the appropriate Florida Courthouse.



Weddings



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Wedding Ceremony

Time of Wedding Ceremony

Wedding ceremonies normally take place on Friday or Saturday. On Fridays the wedding may take place in the evening beginning at 5:00 or 6:00 pm.

On Saturdays weddings may take place in the morning beginning at 10:00 am and into the afternoon with the last wedding starting

time at 2:00 pm. Due to weekend Confessions and Vigil Masses, no wedding ceremony can be held at a later time. These times are non-negotiable.

To have a different weekday for a wedding, the couple one must speak with the officiating priest and have the approval of the pastor.

All weddings will start at the time agreed upon. If the couple arrives late at the altar, the priest has the option of deleting parts of the ceremony. The wedding party is expected to arrive at least 30 minutes ahead of time.

No weddings will take place on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

The wedding time is the time that the bride must begin to walk down the aisle. Invitations should reflect a least 1/2 hour earlier than wedding time to allow guests to arrive on time. By starting on time, there is much less anxiety and frustration. Thus, everyone can enjoy participating in the wedding. A map of the location of the church is available. It may be helpful to include a copy of the map with the invitation.

Official Church Witness of Wedding

The priest officially assigned to St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church will officiate at all weddings. Other Catholic priests or deacons will be permitted to officiate at the wedding with the pastor's advance approval and delegation. Pastors from other religious traditions or Jewish rabbis are most welcome to take part in the wedding ceremony.

Planning the Ceremony

Approximately a month before the wedding, there will be a planning meeting with the priest or deacon to plan the actual wedding ceremony. Each couple will be expected to complete the wedding plan before meeting with the priest or deacon. All couples should be as involved as possible in the planning of their wedding ceremony.



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Rehearsal

The rehearsal is scheduled at a mutually convenient time for bride, groom and bridal party. The rehearsal must start on time. The priest will conduct the rehearsal. No bridal consultant is permitted to conduct the rehearsal.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

It is recommended that Catholics receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to their wedding. Confessions are held on Saturday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. but arrangements may be made privately with a priest to hear one's confession. The priest officiating at the ceremony will normally be available for confessions following the wedding rehearsal.

Music

All music performed in the church must be liturgical. The St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church organist usually plays for all weddings. If the organist should not be available, a competent substitute will be suggested. Please schedule a meeting with the parish music director to discuss your wedding music. If you wish to have a soloist, St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church organist will suggest names of singers for you to contact. Both the organist's and soloist's fee is directly negotiated between you and them. (If you wish your own organist to play, St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church organist must approve that the person is able to adequately use our organ).



Floral Arrangements



Floral arrangements should be kept simple. Usually one arrangement of flowers on either side of altar is sufficient. Flowers used to decorate the sanctuary are usually left in the church following the wedding. The florist is responsible for removing all floral stands, boxes, etc. immediately after the ceremony. Runners are not permitted. Costs are responsibility of couple.



Unity Candle

Some couples may wish to have a Unity Candle at wedding. If so, please bring candles and stand to the wedding rehearsal.

Photographers

Photographers are permitted to take a limited number of pictures during the ceremony. They must consult with the priest or deacon prior to the ceremony to acquaint themselves with the order of events. The Sanctuary is a sacred space, and the photographers may not enter it at any time. The Church will remain open and available for photographers for a reasonable length of time after the ceremony.

Clean and Safe

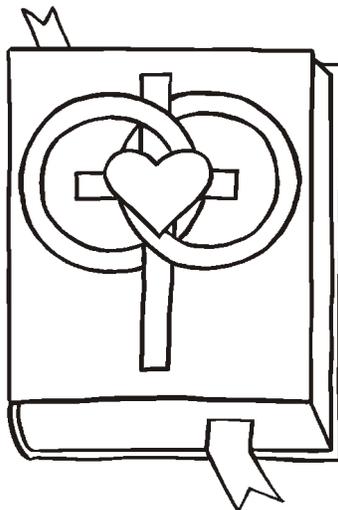
The Church must be kept clean and present no hazard to those attending the wedding. Rice, confetti, bird seed, sand bubbles, etc. may **not** be tossed or used anywhere in the Church or in front of the Church. Flowers may **not** be strewn down the center aisle by the flower girl. Nothing may be attached to the pews.

Parish Hall Rental

The Parish Hall is sometimes available for rental. Please discuss with the priest.

Honeymoon Plans

If the honeymoon takes place outside of the United States, care should be taken to insure that all visas signed correspond to the names in the passports.



GOD BLESS YOU!