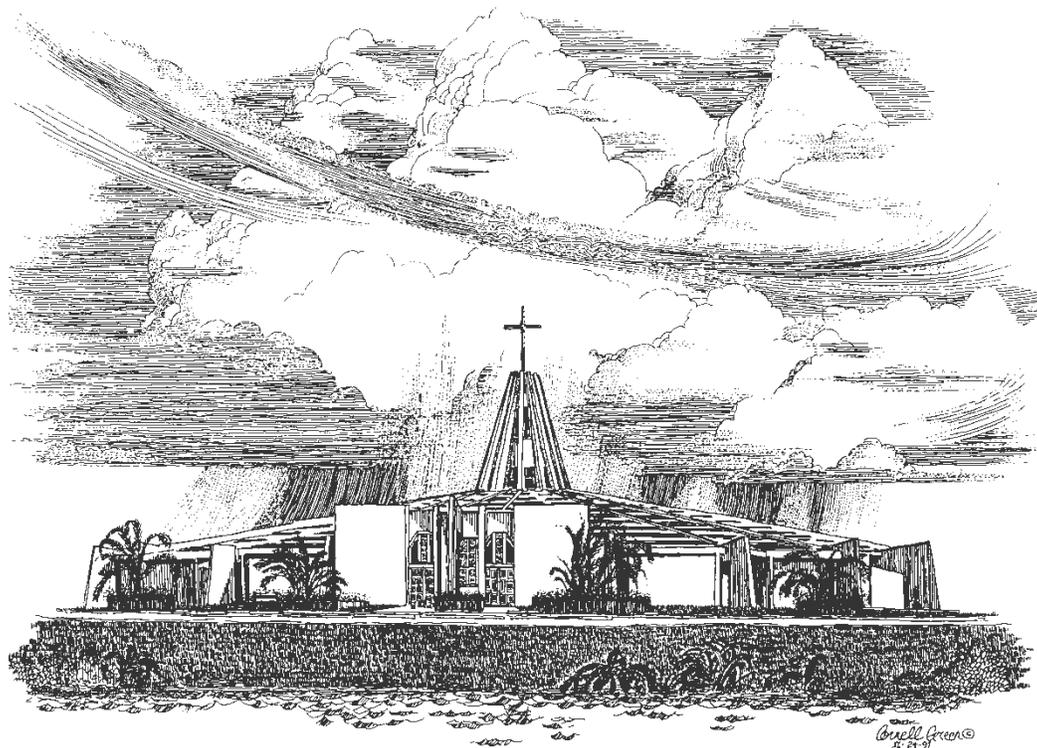


HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH

MARRIAGE PREPARATION GUIDELINES



THE RITE OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY

200 - 78th Avenue, NE
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702
Phone 727.526.5783 • Fax 727.521.2545
www.holyfamilystpete.com

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations and best wishes on your engagement. The Staff at Holy Family Parish is delighted to help you prepare for your up-coming marriage.

- * Catholics believe that marriage in the Church is a sacrament and, therefore, the ceremony is a sacred sign and as such, must take place in a church or chapel. A wedding in the Catholic Church is a faith event. As such, it is necessary that one or both of the parties be a practicing Catholic. That is, one or both parties must participate in Sunday Mass, receive(s) the sacraments frequently and support(s) the work of the Church.
- * When two Catholics are planning to marry, it is generally understood that the marriage ceremony will take place in a Church or chapel, within the setting of a Mass. When a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, the wedding ceremony usually takes place without a Mass.
- * A priest or Deacon of the parish **must be contacted at least six (6) months in advance of the proposed date of the wedding**. This period of time is essential for scheduling appointments, completing the various requirements of the marriage preparation process, and planning the ceremony.
- * A date for your wedding and rehearsal may be scheduled **only after completion and discussion of your Pre-Marital Inventory (FOCCUS)**. **No dates will be pre-arranged on the telephone**. Wedding Masses are usually scheduled on Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The latest an afternoon Wedding Ceremony can be scheduled is 2:30 using the Order of Celebrating Matrimony outside Mass. Other times may be considered depending on the availability of the church, the priest or deacon's calendar, and the scheduling of other parish functions.

PREPARATION PROCESS

Marriage preparations at Holy Family Parish are conducted with the individual priest or deacon who will witness the couple's vows and include those preparations required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Those preparations include:

Form A - Pre-Nuptial Investigation. This is completed by the bride and groom with the parish priest. This form provides basic information about the parties to be married and whether there may be any obstacles to the marriage in Church or civil law.

Form B (4) provides the testimony of two witnesses certifying that each party to the marriage is free to marry. This is completed in the presence of a Catholic priest or notary wherever the witness may reside.

Pre-Marital Inventory (PMI) - a series of questions designed to help a couple recognize the strengths and weaknesses in their relationship and guide their spiritual preparation for marriage. At Holy Family Parish, the PMI is administered and evaluated by the Priest or Deacon preparing with the couple.

Baptismal Certificates (2). The two parties are to provide a copy of their baptismal certificate. If Catholic, it may be obtained from the church of baptism and be **dated within the last six months.**

Marriage Preparation Classes. The guidelines from the Diocese of St. Petersburg require that couples attend **ONE** of the following two programs:

Journey to Matrimony - A comprehensive overnight (weekend) marriage preparation program. This is a couple-based experience led by a marriage therapist and married couples. It is usually held at the Bethany Retreat Center in Lutz, Fl.

-OR-

Pre-Cana Conference is a one-day program presented by a team of clergy and laypeople. This day is intended to focus on the various aspects of married life and to get couples to share their attitudes about married life.

Marriage Dispensations or Permissions from the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal, if needed, will be arranged by the parish, depending on individual circumstances.

Delegation by the Pastor of Holy Family Parish is required in writing if a priest or deacon from outside the parish is to witness the marriage

Civil Marriage License. It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain the civil marriage license. This is provided by the local County Courthouse. The Marriage license is valid for 90 days from date of issue.

LITURGY AND MUSIC GUIDELINES

* The parish has established certain guidelines to help you make your marriage ceremony more meaningful and to help you plan the details of your celebration. Among these are the following considerations:

Diocesan guidelines state that “Texts to songs must be sacred in nature, and conform to Catholic doctrine and should be drawn chiefly from Holy Scripture and liturgical sources. The lyrics...should express the Christian concept of life rather than one which is purely secular.” To this end, then, all songs or hymns during the ceremony should be religious in nature. To assist you in making liturgically and musically appropriate selections, music for all weddings is under the direction of Mr. Robert Todd, Director of Music for the parish.

The Music Director must be contacted at least six (6) weeks in advance of the wedding. Robert Todd may be contacted at the parish office, Monday through Thursday at 526-5783 ext. 18, or by email: music@holyfamilystpete.com.

Other musicians and instruments (such as guitar, trumpet, flute, strings, etc.) may be employed, provided that the selections are liturgically acceptable and approved by the Director of Music. The cost of additional musicians is to be negotiated and accepted by the bride and groom. Congregational singing is strongly encouraged, especially during a Nuptial Mass. The priest witnessing the vows and the Music Director must be consulted to provide direction in areas of liturgy and music respectively.

STIPENDS AND FEES

* For those marrying at Holy Family Church, the stipend of \$700 is payable to "Holy Family Church." This stipend includes a modest amount for:

- the priest / deacon
- wedding coordinator
- the organist
- cantor

All fees are due no later than the time of the rehearsal and should be given to the Wedding Coordinator.

The costs of soloists, additional musicians and/or requests for music beyond the organist's repertoire must be negotiated with the Music Director.

* Couples preparing for marriage at Holy Family Parish, but who will be married in another church, are asked to help defray the administrative costs incurred by the parish with a contribution of at least \$50.

THE REHEARSAL

* Linda Johnston is the Wedding Coordinator. She is responsible for conducting the rehearsal and assisting the wedding party on the day of their marriage. Please contact her by email at faithformation@holymfamilystpete.com. or at the Parish Office (727) 526-5783 at least six weeks before the wedding date.

* The wedding rehearsal is usually scheduled for 5:00 pm the day before the wedding. The rehearsal date and time should be set with Linda Johnston when the wedding date is confirmed.

* The civil marriage license and any fees mentioned above must be given to the coordinator no later than the wedding rehearsal. Immediately after the ceremony, the priest who witnessed the vows of the couple and their two witnesses (the best man and maid of honor) sign the license. The parish will forward the license to the County Courthouse where it will be recorded. The County Clerk then mails the civil marriage license to the couple.

* The wedding party and guests should be informed that the rehearsal and wedding ceremony will begin promptly at the appointed times.

* The members of the bridal party are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the celebration of the wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

The photographer and/or videographer must meet with the priest or deacon witnessing the wedding before the ceremony begins.

Before the wedding, photographs and portraits may be taken in and around the church, respecting the sacred character of the place and keeping in mind that the ceremony is to begin on time.

The photographer is to discuss the use of flash photography with the celebrant before the ceremony begins. Because of the organist's need for an unobstructed view of the aisle, photographers should refrain from standing behind the organist during the procession. During the ceremony, there is to be no unnecessary movement which would distract from the sacred and solemn nature of the ceremony, i.e., photographers may not do anything that would make them a distraction to the congregation during the ceremony.

Photographers are allowed thirty minutes following the ceremony for the taking of pictures and portraits.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

In order to respect the sacred nature of the place, please observe the policy of the parish that receiving lines are not to be held in the church following the ceremony.

The parish hall (Diffley Hall) is available for wedding receptions or showers. For more information on renting the hall, contact Peter André, the Parish Administrator, at (727) 526-5783.

Flowers, wedding candles, and such which may enhance your ceremony, are provided by the couple being married. The parish does not provide them.

Decorations (flowers, bows, and candleholders) may not be attached to the ends of the pews in any fashion that would mark or mar the finish. This includes any fixture or tape that could not be removed without leaving any residue or scarring the finish on the pews.

Kindly inform your family and guests that the throwing of rice, birdseed, flowers, or confetti is prohibited whether inside or outside the church. These pose hazards to parishioners arriving for services later in the weekend.

If you plan on continuing as active members of Holy Family Church, please take a moment to **re-register** at the office as a married couple. We are glad you have chosen to celebrate this most special occasion at Holy Family. We wish you the very best in the years to come. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the office at (727) 526-5783.

COUPLE'S CHECKLIST

	Date Completed
A Form	_____
B Forms (4)	_____ (Bride)
	_____ (Groom)
Baptismal Certificates	_____ (Bride)
	_____ (Groom)
PMI	_____
Journey to Matrimony - or - Pre-Cana	_____
Civil Marriage License	_____
Liturgy & Music Selections	_____