



Marriage Guideline

MEMORANDUM

To: Wedding Couples

From: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church

Subject: Celebration of Weddings

Date: June 20, 2011

It is in the spirit of charity and Christian simplicity that we have drawn these guidelines for those preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage in our parish. Christ invites us to be meek and humble in our actions, and modest in the celebration of the sacraments. We should keep in mind that our faith in the Lord's presence and the graces given to those who receive the sacrament is the most important aspect of the celebration.

1. Weddings take place in our parish church on Saturday mornings until 12:00 noon. They may also take place in the afternoons and evenings from Monday to Friday. We do not celebrate weddings during the Penitential Season of Lent, Holy Days, or Sundays. The parish priest or the deacons of Nativity Church are the Church witness of the sacrament. If another priest or deacon is desired, permission should be attained from the pastor of Nativity Church.
2. Wedding rehearsals generally take place on Thursdays or Friday afternoons before 4:00pm. Please call the priest or deacon who is officiating at your wedding two weeks prior to the wedding in order to set up the time and date of rehearsal. Everyone involved in the wedding party should be present for the rehearsal including the lectors. The wedding couple should have decided the proper order of the bridal party for the ceremony (going in and coming out of the church.)
3. If desired, two floral arrangements may be acquired to beautify the sanctuary for the celebration. Flower arrangements should not obstruct the view of the altar. Candelabras are used only for benediction, not weddings.
4. Music falls under the responsibility of the wedding couple. Musical arrangements should be conducive to Catholic liturgical worship. Our parish is blessed with several choirs, any of which may play at weddings. Other groups from outside the parish need the approval of the pastor or his delegated authority.

5. Rice, confetti, bird seed, flower petals, bubbles are not allowed inside or outside the church. Plastic or paper runners for the center isle are not allowed.
6. A 6 month preparation period is required for couples being married. That is, from the time a couple fills out the preliminary marriage forms with the priest or deacon until the actual wedding date. This time period may be extended for pastoral reasons.
7. No marriage arrangements will be started until the bride and groom are at least 18 of age.
8. If the bride or groom is not an active registered member of Nativity church a letter of permission from the pastor of the parish of the bride is required.
9. There is usually one couple acting as witnesses (Padrinos) to a wedding. Padrinos, if married, should have been married in the Catholic church and be registered members of a Catholic parish. Padrinos may also be single persons as long as they are living as single persons and are registered active members of a Catholic parish. Only one set of Padrinos signs the marriage license.
10. Photographers are required to meet with the priest or deacon before the ceremony for guidelines concerning pictures or videos.
11. Nativity parish hall, tables and chairs are not rented for wedding receptions.
12. In cases of mixed marriages (Catholic marrying a non-Catholic) the Mass will not be celebrated out of respect for the many non-Catholics who will not be able to participate, understand or receive the Eucharist.
13. Because of the priest shortage a deacon may perform the ceremony if the pastor is not available. A deacon will preside at mixed marriages since Mass is not celebrated.
14. The church has many expenses for the upkeep, maintenance and utilities of our worship space. Therefore we request that a donation be made to the church to cover expenses.
15. Unfortunately many contemporary fashions in bride's and bridesmaid's dresses are not suited to Catholic Christian sensitivities; and certainly not appropriate for use in a Catholic Church where our Lord is present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Discretion must be used when choosing dresses for a wedding. Mini-skirts, bare shoulders, strapless dresses, décolletage which reveals any amount of cleavage for brides or bridesmaids will not be allowed. Jackets or shawls must be worn in church with strapless or bare shoulder dresses or dresses that show cleavage.
16. Required documents: A new copy of the Baptism certificate from the parish where bride and groom were baptized. A copy of the certificate from having

attended either Engaged Encounter or Marriage Enrichment. (no other pre-marriage program is accepted.) A Marriage License from the State of New Mexico must be brought to the wedding rehearsal.

If either bride or groom were married previously by the justice of the peace, this marriage must be declared null and void by the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Consequently a copy of the divorce decree and a copy of the marriage license are required.

If the wedding couple is married by the J.P. a copy of the Marriage License is required. NO WEDDING DATE WILL BE APPROVED UNTIL ALL THE PAPERWORK HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND BROUGHT TO THE PARISH OFFICE.

After you read these guidelines, please set up an appointment with the parish priest to begin the wedding preparations. We thank you for your cooperation in these matters and we pray that your wedding day will be the beginning of a long and happy married life for both of you.

WE UNDERSTAND THESE GUIDELINES AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM.

Groom

Bride

Date

Date