



PLANNING YOUR MARRIAGE

AT

SAINT AGNES PARISH

St. Agnes Catholic Church
3966 Chestnut Ave.
Concord, California 94519
(925) 689-0838
E-mail: stagnesoffice@comcast.net

Dear Friends:

Congratulations on your engagement and decision to be married in the Catholic Church.

You want your wedding day to be beautiful and pleasing in all of its arrangements. So do we! This brochure has been prepared to help make that possible. It contains rules and guidelines. They may seem cumbersome at first, but they exist not only to help make the wedding ceremony run smoothly, but also to recognize the fact that your wedding belongs to more people than just the two of you.

Your wedding is a family event, one that gives hope for life and love from generation to generation and that brings your families together.

Your wedding is a faith event. God should be the third Person in your marriage. So, the Church has some expectations about your wedding celebration.

These guidelines are intended to help all who gather for your wedding, both family and friends to celebrate well.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Johnson Abraham
Parochial Administrator

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DOCUMENTS

Since marriage is a relationship binding in the State as well as the Church, certain documentation is required.

a. Valid California Marriage License/Certificate

This document is secured at the county courthouse and is required for the civil legality of the marriage. This document, along with the marriage certificate blank, should be presented to the wedding coordinator the night of the rehearsal.

b. Personal Testimony (Form A)

This questionnaire must be completed by each party testifying to their identity, birthplace, baptismal status, freedom to marry, etc. It must be completed by a priest or deacon and have his signature and the parish seal affixed.

c. Testimony of witness (Form B)

This questionnaire must be completed on behalf of each party to the marriage by a close relative; e.g., mother, father, etc. It, too, must be completed by a priest or deacon and have his signature and the parish seal affixed.

d. Baptismal Certificate

The Catholic party or parties must obtain a new baptismal certificate issued no more than six (6) month ago. Inform the parish of baptism that you are requesting the baptismal certificate for the purpose of marriage.

Non-Catholics who are baptized should bring a copy of their baptismal certificate from their own church. This need not be of recent issue.

e. Certificate of participation in Marriage Preparation Program

When the couple has completed the marriage Preparation Program together, they will be issued a certificate of completion. More will be explained later in this brochure about the Marriage Preparation Program.

f. Other Documents

Other documents may be required according to the circumstances; e.g., certificate of death of former spouse, marriage certificate for validation of a civil marriage, declaration of nullity for a previous marriage.

The priest or deacon will assist in securing these documents.

g. Paperwork Deadline

All paperwork should be completed one month before the wedding. If a priest other than resident clergy of Saint Agnes is preparing you for marriage, all paperwork must be completed and forwarded to Saint Agnes Parish one month in advance of the wedding so that the proper delegation can be given to the visiting priest.

PLANNING THE CEREMONY

Together with the priest and the wedding coordinator, you will plan your marriage ceremony. You have the option of having either a wedding ceremony within a Mass or outside of Mass. If you and your fiancé come from two different religious backgrounds and if there will be many non-Catholics present for the wedding ceremony, as a sign of sensitivity to non-Catholics, you may wish to consider having your marriage outside of mass.

The parish wedding coordinator will also coordinate the wedding rehearsal, prepare the church prior to the wedding ceremony and then lend whatever assistance is necessary during the wedding.

a. Time for the Ceremony

Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. All should arrive on time for the wedding ceremony.

b. The Music

Music may be a blend of classical or modern church music. Before making any decisions regarding music, or musician, the parish music coordinator must be consulted.

c. Decorations

Flowers and other decorations should be delivered between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning or one hour before the service. Flowers should not be removed from the church as this invariably leaves the church in disorder for other ceremonies. If more than one wedding occurs the same day, the wedding coordinator can help arrange shared costs and color scheme if desired.

d. Candles

Extensive use of candles is prohibited by fire regulations. All candles must be used in such a way as not to damage the rug or

the furniture. Please consult with the wedding coordinator.

e. Photography

Flash pictures may be taken during the processional and recessional only. Other photography may take place during the ceremony only if it is done at a substantial distance from the Sanctuary and is not a distraction. The wedding party may return to the church after the service for additional pictures. Please consult the wedding coordinator regarding how much time can be allowed for photographs after the ceremony. Decorum and reverence for the church as a place of worship should be maintained throughout the photography sessions. Please instruct your photographer and guests accordingly.

f. Special Ceremonies

If you are considering a special ceremony such as with candles, veil, cord, coins, etc., you must consult the wedding coordinator and the priest well beforehand. Sometimes there are time constraints, room issues, etc. In addition, these ceremonies need to be well rehearsed.

g. Ring Bearer and Flower Girl

Children under the age of five may not serve as ring bearer or flower girl as their attention span is too short.

h. Official Witnesses

Your best man and maid of honor must be at least eighteen (18) years of age according to California State law.

i. Rice, Confetti, Bird Seed, Etc.

We have no custodial help on weekends. You are asked not to throw rice, confetti, etc., on church premises. These can cause problems for other persons walking on the premises. Please advise your guests.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Catholics ought to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) before their wedding, not only as a spirit of repentance, but also to ask God's gift of healing and so enter marriage as selflessly and spiritually whole as possible.

Once you have met with the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage and a date has been confirmed with the Church and the priest or deacon, you should contact the Family Life Office of the Diocese of Oakland to arrange to participate in a marriage preparation program. In this program, you will explore, together with other couples, the vocation of marriage: how to further develop your communication skills, how a marriage relationship will change and grow and how to be persons in whom the love of God is visible.

You will also spend some time with the priest or deacon preparing you for marriage. During these sessions, you will discuss some of the spiritual aspects of marriage. The priest or deacon will also assist you in obtaining the necessary documents and completing all of the questionnaires which are required for marriage in the Catholic Church.



OFFERINGS AND FEES

It is suggested that the offering given to the church be commensurate with the cost of the wedding. This offering goes to Saint Agnes Parish, not to the priest or deacon. If you wish to give an offering to the priest or deacon who will officiate at the wedding, this should be placed in a separate additional envelope. All fees should be submitted to the wedding coordinator on the night of the rehearsal.

Fees

Offering to Parish: \$450.00 (\$100 non-refundable deposit required at start to reserve the church)

Wedding Coordinator: \$150.00

Musicians: To be negotiated separately

Priest or Deacon: At your own discretion

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Saint Agnes Parish: (925) 689-0838

Linda D'Souza,
Wedding Coordinator: (925) 689-0838

Music Coordinator: (925) 689-0838

Marriage Preparation: (510) 267-8395

