



The Sacrament of Matrimony

The sacrament of matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life.

- Catechism of the Catholic Church #1661

Congratulations on your Engagement!

Our Mission at Holy Trinity is to place God first in all things, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to grow in holiness through prayer, sacraments, and service. This mission reflects how Jesus designed the Sacrament of Matrimony. We love to celebrate God's gift of marriage at Holy Trinity! Our beautiful church provides the perfect sacred space for your holy union with your beloved in Christ.

As you continue to read below, you'll see some of the principles and requirements for a Catholic marriage as well as some helpful guidelines for your wedding at Holy Trinity.

Who Can Be Married

As Catholic Christians, we believe that marriage celebrates an unbreakable, covenantal bond of love and faithfulness which is entered into maturely and freely by a man and a woman.

If either of you have previous marriages, celebrated through a Church, or civilly, please let your Priest or Deacon know at the first meeting. One of the Priests or Deacon will work with you to make sure that you are free to marry.

Your Intentions/Vows

As you make your wedding vows to each other you are promising that you intend to have a permanent, life-long marriage. You are stating your intention to be faithful to each other, loving and honoring each other. And you are also stating your intention to be open to having kids and a family.

Wedding Date & Time

From our experience celebrating literally thousands of weddings, we know that setting your wedding date and time is foremost on your mind. Father or Deacon will set the date with you at the end of your first meeting.

Weddings at Holy Trinity are typically celebrated on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. However, please know it is possible to celebrate a wedding on another day of the week.

If getting married at Holy Trinity is important to you, please meet with your celebrant and set the date before you make a deposit on a reception venue. As you're thinking about days and times, come to your initial meeting with several options available.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are scheduled and directed by the parish Wedding Coordinator. Most often, rehearsals are scheduled later afternoon or early evening a day or two before your wedding.

A chat with your Wedding Coordinator and the celebrant of your wedding will help determine if a rehearsal is necessary.

Mass or No Mass?

The Rite of Matrimony may take place within a Mass. "Within a Mass" means that there is a celebration of the Eucharist along with the Rite of Matrimony. "Without a Mass" means there is not a celebration of Eucharist. Both are valid and beautiful in their own rite, and celebrating a marriage without a Mass is no less "Catholic".

Considering that, and as directed by the Diocese of Orange, if one of the parties is non-baptized, the wedding will be celebrated without a Mass.

If one of the parties is a baptized Christian (though not Catholic), the couple must discuss with their Priest as to whether it would be appropriate to have the wedding with a Mass or without.

If the celebrant of your wedding is a Deacon, it will automatically be a Rite of Matrimony without Mass, since a Deacon by the nature of his office doesn't preside Mass.

Initial Meeting

The first step to having your wedding at Holy Trinity is to contact the Parish Office via email at reception@holytrinityladera.org to arrange an initial meeting with one of the Priests or Deacon. In this meeting you will begin a relationship with the celebrant of your wedding. He will guide you through all the necessary steps, all the way thru the words "you may kiss the bride" (although your celebrant will not use those words exactly). He will inform you of the documents required, make appropriate liturgical decisions, and make sure that you are emotionally and spiritually ready to experience the Sacrament.

Documents

Particular documents are required to establish your sacramental status with the Church, your freedom from any previous unions, as well as sworn statements attesting to your clear understanding of the nature and responsibilities of a Christian marriage.

- **Baptismal Certificate**

Catholics must present a *new copy* (obtained within the last six months) of their baptismal record. Simply call up the parish where you were baptized and request a copy of your Baptismal certificate. Parishes get these requests every day. It is a simple thing to request.

For a baptized, non-Catholic Christian please see if you have a baptismal record. Please bring a copy and give it to your celebrant. A copy of a family record will suffice. Some non-Catholic Christian Churches keep records, other Churches don't. You can call the Church in which you were baptized and see if they have a record that they are able to send you.

- **First Communion and Confirmation Certificates**

Catholics are to present copies of the certificates that were given at the time of reception of these sacraments. The sacrament of marriage is *not* denied because of the lack of Communion or Confirmation.

- **Freedom to Marry Forms**

Each party is to have two (2) notarized “freedom to marry” forms. These forms are to be signed by two witnesses. Your celebrant will fully explain this document when you meet and give you the forms to be filled out.

- **Certificates of Marriage Preparation**

Pre-marriage preparation programs and classes are sponsored by the Diocese of Orange. Upon completion of the program you will be given a certificate, which must be presented to the Priest or Deacon. There are several options for this marriage preparation requirement. Your Priest or Deacon will explain the options.

- **Liturgical Preparation: Together for Life**

At one of your meetings your Priest or Deacon will give you a booklet titled *Together for Life*. This will help you plan your wedding liturgy with the Wedding Coordinator and Music Director

Civil Marriage License

This is obtained from the County Court and is valid for 90 days from the date of issue. This license, along with the return envelope, for civil marriage certificate must be given to the parish office or your Wedding Coordinator by the time of your rehearsal if not before.

South County Branch Office
Laguna Hills Civic Center
24031 El Toro Rd., Ste 150
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(714) 834-2500

County Clerk Recorder's Office
211 West Santa Ana Blvd.
Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 834-2500
<http://www.ocrecorder.com/>

Fees & Donations

There is no charge for the Sacrament of Marriage. You are not buying a service from an outside vendor. Please don't think about your wedding donation to Holy Trinity as a financial transaction. It is a gift, hopefully thankfully and joyously given. As Church, we gratefully rely on your generosity but we also expect your generosity. Generosity is a Christian value. So we maintain a balance. As Church law states, Sacraments are freely given to the baptized faithful. Church law also states that the faithful are required to support the mission of the parish. It takes money to run the parish, pay the bills, keep the lights on, pay musician salaries, etc. This is how your donation will be used.

So the donation asked is:

- Active-registered Holy Trinity Parishioners (couples where bride or groom has been an active, registered parishioner for 6 months or more at the time of registering):
\$1200 (includes a non-refundable deposit of \$150 required to secure date)
- Non-registered couples who live in the Diocese of Orange:
\$1400 (includes a non-refundable deposit of \$150 required to secure date)
- Couples who live outside the Diocese of Orange:
\$2,000 (includes a non-refundable deposit of \$150 required to secure date)

For couples asking for extra or special services- musicians, filming/production coordination, etc. additional fees will be requested.

From these donations the parish is able to provide a time and place for your wedding, simple music— an instrumentalist and cantor— and the services of a wedding coordinator and altar servers if required.

If making such a donation is a hardship or beyond your means, or if your planned wedding is only between a bride, a groom and two witnesses, feel free to speak with your Priest or Deacon about the donation amount.

Priest or Deacon Gift

The Priest or Deacon does not profit by these donations mentioned above. It is optional but customary to also provide a stipend for the priest or deacon. You can give that gift directly to your Priest or Deacon.

Music

The parish Music Director will provide an instrumentalist and a cantor for your ceremony. If you'd like to add other musicians – a harpist, a string quartet, a bag-piper- you can work with the Music Director who will hire extra musicians. You will cover the expense.

If you would like to bring in your own musicians – friends or family- the parish Music Director is still your musical contact with the parish. Please talk to him.

Musical selections are all liturgical in nature, and Catholic Christian in content. Other musical selections from popular repertoire are best left for your reception.

Flowers, Candles and Other Decorations

Holy Trinity Church was conceived with the idea that “Simplicity is Beauty”. We'd ask you to consider that as you anticipate the use of **flowers** or other decoration. Bouquets for the bride and bridesmaids are fine but not necessary. And a floral spray in front of the Altar on the floor is lovely. Any more than that isn't necessary so we don't allow it. Depending on size of floral arrangements, they might not be allowed.

We do not add to the liturgy with a **unity candle**. That particular symbol pales in comparison to the vows you've just made. So we don't do it to maintain the focus on your vows.

Pew bows aren't allowed because they tend to damage the pews. Runners in the aisles are a liability, thus they're also not allowed. Flower petals, real or not, aren't to be tossed.

Ultimately, realize that our Church is a sacred and holy space meant for liturgical prayer. Your reception space is where you can demonstrate your decorating skills and imagination.

Photographers and Videographers

Most certainly, it is possible to capture images of this holy day. And the very best photographers and videographers understand that the ceremony is more important than the “shot”. If they are noticed or disruptive, then your celebrant might stop the ceremony and ask for the photographer to leave. The celebrant has every right to do so, since he is most concerned about the sanctity of vows you’re making.

Please inform your photographer of this “don’t be noticed” practice.

If you desire there can be a 30 minutes window, scheduled either before or after your ceremony, for posed pictures in the Church building.

Your Wedding Coordinator will be working with your photographer and videographer to make sure that they understand the policies and etiquette that your wedding deserves.

Beginning the Liturgy

The wedding party is at least a Bride, a Groom and two adult witnesses – often the Maid/Matron of Honor and the Best Man. The wedding party is sometimes larger and that is fine. We would ask respect and cordial behavior from all members of your wedding party.

While we love children, we’ve seen too many tantrums or mishaps with babies and toddlers. So the minimum age for Flower Girls and Ring Bearers is 5 years.

Wagons or pets are not allowed in the procession.

Order of Procession

As per the newly revised Roman Missal/Order of Celebrating Matrimony, all members of your Wedding Party, **including the Groom** are part of the entrance procession.

For the Bride and Groom’s procession there are three options given in the Rite...

- The Bride and Groom walk down the aisle together
- The Groom processes down alone, followed by the Bride escorted by her father
- The Groom is escorted by his parents, followed by the Bride and her parents

Cultural Inclusions

If there is a request for arras/coins, veil, or lasso/ cord, we're happy to include these in the liturgy. It is also possible to arrange for liturgy in a language other than English, or include an appropriate song in another language as well. Please talk to your celebrant about these inclusions.

Other Considerations

Many Brides and some Grooms have been planning their wedding day with great anticipation for years. And while some components- dresses, flowers, pictures, videos, reception food and bar options, and anything else "special"- might seem terribly important, everyone at Holy Trinity hopes that you focus on the holiness of the vows you're making. That is what is truly important. And that is what can't be marketed, or sold to you to make the day special. You each make the day and the ceremony special by your intentions. So keep that in mind as you consider the "add-ons".

With that in mind, your Priest or Deacon might not allow certain trends and distractions made popular by the internet during the Church portion of your wedding. The liturgy and your heartfelt vows speaks more eloquently than a fad or a cute idea.

Finally...

We're happy to serve you both and your families and friends on your wedding day. We hope it marks a point of grace and growth for you both. Please feel free to contact the Parish Office via email at reception@holytrinityladera.org to set up your Initial Meeting when you are ready. God Bless you and yours.