HOLY TRINITY
CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Sacrament of Matrimony

Address: 1600 Corporate Drive ~ Ladera Ranch, CA 92694
Phone: (949) 218-3131 Email: reception@holytrinityladera.org Web: wwwholytrinityladera.org

Dear Wedding Couple,

On behalf of the parish community of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Ladera Ranch, we congratulate you on your decision to give yourselves to one another in Christian Marriage. In the Gospels, Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is, “to love God above all things and to love our neighbor as ourselves.” It is in Christian Marriage that this Good News of Jesus is enfleshed and made real in a special way.

As a Sacrament of the Church, Christian Marriage reveals how God Himself loves us, through the permanent, faithful and life-giving love of the Lord for His people. It is for this reason that your vocation – your calling – in the Church is so important and so special.

Because the Church looks upon this moment in your lives with such importance, it is only natural that the preparation for this life long experience is one that we take most seriously as a Church. Certainly, the day of your wedding is one that will hold wonderful memories for you as the years unfold. But it is the life-long covenant of marriage and preparation for it that is of uppermost and critical importance for us as a Church. “A *Wedding is a day, Marriage is a lifetime.”* It is our hope that the information provided will be of assistance to you in initiating the planning of both your, “marriage,” as well as, “wedding day.”

Finally, marriage never takes place in isolation. We come forth from the nurturing environment of family to reach out and continue the cycle of love and life. It is before the family of faith and this parish community to which you belong that this moment of commitment will be celebrated. It is our hope that your relationship with us will continue beyond this moment so that now united together in love you might contribute to the building up of the Body of Christ in our midst.

May the Lord bless as your love for one another continues to grow.

One in Christ,

The Priests, Deacons and Staff of Holy Trinity Catholic Church

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PREPARATION

Sacraments, as external signs of the inner life of God's grace active in our lives, are cherished by the Church. In preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony, as in the other Sacraments, reflection and preparation are essential. One does not celebrate the Sacraments of Christ, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist without having first prayerfully and conscientiously reflected on their meaning, with the hope of coming to a deeper understanding of their significance. Likewise, marriage as the special intimate bond between husband and wife and the mirror of God's divine love, requires time and reflection to fully appreciate its truly sacred and life-giving character.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Marriage celebrates the unbreakable commitment between a man and a woman who are free to make this mature decision in the community of believers. The following are required documents to establish your marriage:

- sacramental status within the Church
- freedom from any previous unions either by the Church or the State
- clear understanding of the nature and responsibilities of Christian marriage.

In addition, when a Catholic prepares to marry someone from another faith tradition, a specific document or "dispensation" is also required. The following are required documents that will need to be presented to the priest preparing you for marriage:

1. BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE
A **new** copy of your baptismal certificate is required for those who are Catholic – that is, one that has been issued in the last six months. This can be obtained by contacting the Church of Baptism and requesting a new certificate. For those baptized in another Christian tradition, a copy of the original baptismal certificate is sufficient.

2. FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION CERTIFICATES
Copies of the originals are accepted. If you do not have the original certificates, new certificates can be obtained from the Church where these sacraments were celebrated.

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3. TESTIMONY OF FREEDOM

This is a sworn statement, witnessed by a priest, minister or public notary, attesting that you have never been married before, in either a Church or civil ceremony, and that there is no known impediment to the marriage. This is normally filled out by parents, or it may be completed by others who have known you most of your lives.

4. MATRIMONIAL DISPENSATION

For various pastoral reasons, some couples may need to obtain dispensations from certain conditions to proceed with a marriage. The most common dispensation is that required of couples entering an interfaith or inter-religious marriage. An interfaith marriage is when a Catholic marries a Christian of another Tradition, and inter-religious marriage is when a Catholic marries a person who is not Christian. The priest will discuss with you the reason and the process for obtaining this or any other dispensation.

5. CIVIL LICENSE

The County Court registers all civil documents. For information regarding attaining a marriage license go to www.oc.ca.gov/recorder or call (714) 834-2710. The marriage license must be given to the priest or the Parish Pastoral Office **no later than three days prior to the wedding celebration**. Please note that it is against the law for the ceremony to take place without a civil license. Licenses may be obtained as early as two months prior to the wedding date. Both bride and groom must obtain the license together. The license is recorded in the Church Registry and sent back to the Clerk's Office to be filed. A certified copy of this license may be obtained from the County 3 weeks after your marriage, it is your obligation to request the document from the Clerk's Office.

6. PRE-NUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This takes place with the priest as part of the normal marriage preparation process. It is a series of questions that you will be asked separately to determine your freedom and appropriate intentions for marriage.

DIOCESAN MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Preparation for Christian Marriage is far more than just the gathering of required documents. At the heart of responsible marriage preparation stands the opportunity for you to seriously reflect, in a comprehensive and challenging way, on the meaning of marriage.

Part of your preparation will be to meet with your parish priest, and attend one of several options for Marriage Preparation programs offered throughout the Diocese. A complete listing can be found on the Diocesan Website:

https://www.rcbo.org/resource/marriage-preparation/

Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend
This is a weekend away with other engaged couples with plenty of time together to build a closer relationship. It is an opportunity to share honestly, intensively, and privately about your future lives together through a series of ideas presented by a team of two married couples and a priest. The weekend is Catholic in orientation with personal reflection and sharing as the main component. Engaged Encounters take place from Friday evening at 7:00 PM ending Sunday afternoon at around 4:00 PM. The weekends take place at retreat facilities in Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego Counties. The web link for the Orange County Catholic Engaged Encounter is:

http://www.eeweekend.org

Large Group Sessions
These are a series of four weekly, two- and one-half hour, evening meetings consisting primarily of a large group presentation and a small group sharing. These sessions take place in various locations throughout the Diocese of Orange.

To Trust Again
This is a special marriage preparation program for couples entering marriage after one of the partners has experienced loss through death, divorce, or annulment, is at a different place in life and face different challenges from those entering marriage for the first time. This program is offered at various times and dates at Holy Family Cathedral. For exact dates and times, please call the Cathedral at (714-639-2900).

After completing your choice of marriage preparation, **you will receive a certificate of completion which we ask you take to the priest/deacon preparing you for marriage so that it can be included with the required documents.** If you have questions contact the priest or deacon preparing you for Marriage.

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SETTING THE DATE AND TIME FOR YOUR CELEBRATION

While the scheduling of the date and time of your marriage is obviously a very important part of your preparation, it is the serious responsibility of the priest preparing you to discern mature readiness to make this important commitment in the Church. Once it is determined that there are no impediments to proceeding with marriage in the church, a date and time can be secured. Wedding liturgies are celebrated at Holy Trinity at 5:00 PM on Fridays, or 10:00 AM, 12:00 Noon, or 2:00 PM on Saturdays.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

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.

It is **imperative** that everyone in the wedding party, beginning with both sets of parents, to all attendants as well as Readers, those who will Pray the General Intercessions and Gift Bearers if the celebration is a Eucharist, be present for the rehearsal. Since we often have multiple rehearsals on a given Friday, **it is essential that the entire wedding party be present and ON TIME.**

PLEASE NOTE—THE HOLY TRINITY WEDDING COORDINATORS TAKE PRECEDENCE IN THE WEDDING CELEBRATION OVER ANY OTHER PERSONAL WEDDING COORDINATORS.

BEGINNING YOUR JOURNEY IN CHRIST

The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) is highly recommended for all who share the Catholic faith as part of your spiritual preparation for Christian Marriage. The sacrament is regularly celebrated at Holy Trinity Catholic Church as well as every Catholic parish. Kindly note that confessions are **not** celebrated at the time of the rehearsal. Liturgy of Christian marriage is rightly a moment of joy and celebration. In our Catholic tradition, we hold that the couples themselves minister this sacrament to one another. While it is necessary that an official witness of the Church preside over the celebration, normally this is a priest together with two witnesses. Nevertheless, the active involvement of the couple in every aspect of planning this memorable moment is encouraged.

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Planning should always keep in mind that the ceremony is first and foremost a moment of **prayer** for all who are present and most especially for the bride and groom! All aspects of the celebration should reflect the noble simplicity befitting Christian worship.

PLANNING

Together with the priest who will be presiding at your liturgy, you will have a part in planning your ceremony. The priest will provide you with a copy of the wedding booklet, **Together for Life,** along with a liturgy planning selection sheet. Upon the meeting with your assigned Holy Trinity Wedding Coordinator, you will discuss the specific readings from Scripture and liturgical options that you have chosen.

THE WEDDING LITURGY

Should you celebrate your wedding ceremony in the context of a Mass or a non-Eucharistic Service? First, let's understand the difference. Every celebration of Mass consists of a **Liturgy of the Word** [entrance rite, readings, homily, prayers of the faithful] and a **Liturgy of the Eucharist** [presentation of bread and wine, the Eucharistic Prayer and Holy Communion]. When a wedding is celebrated at Mass, the Rite of Marriage takes place after the homily and before the Prayers of the Faithful. The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows. When a wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, it is celebrated in a Liturgy of the Word in which the Rite of Marriage takes place after the homily and before the Prayers of the Faithful. This Rite concludes with prayers and blessings.

You should make your decision in consultation with the priest who is assisting in the preparation of your marriage. You will want to consider:

- What is our relationship to the Sunday Eucharist?
- Are we faithful to the Church's Sunday Prayer?
- Have we been away from the community's Prayer?
- Have we committed ourselves to returning to the active practice of our faith?

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MINISTERS OF CELEBRATION

Together with yourselves and the priest/deacon who will have important ministerial roles in the wedding celebration, there are others who may take part in this moment of prayer and commitment. Members of your wedding party, particularly ushers (groomsmen will greet the invited guests in a spirit of hospitality and welcome. Our parish pastoral musicians will provide a musical setting that respects both the dignity of this moment as well as support sung prayer by all who gather. Beyond these ministries, we ask you to consider individuals who might function in the following special roles in your wedding:

Priests and Deacons in the Celebration
The priest or deacon with whom you have had your initial meeting is the one who will preside at your wedding celebration. It is his responsibility to ensure that all is in order for your wedding celebration. A visiting priest, from your registered parish, must have "delegation" or permission from the Pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church as well as a set of "Guidelines for Visiting Priests" that will be forwarded to him by the Pastor prior to the celebration. Visiting priests are asked to kindly follow all the protocols of Holy Trinity Catholic Church regarding wedding celebrations.

The Wedding Party
While Church norms specifies that two witnesses are required for all marriages (best man and maid/matron of honor, it is customary to include other attendants (groomsmen and bridesmaids in the wedding party. While it is understandable that one would want to associate one's closet friends in this very special moment, large wedding parties of more than five or six attendants can distract from the primary focal point of every wedding – the bride and groom. In planning your wedding celebration, you may wish to keep this in mind. Additionally, make sure that all attendants know that time for the wedding rehearsal well in advance so that they can take the necessary steps to be on time!

Music
Music is an important part of the sacrament of marriage. Music chosen sets a beautiful tone for the wedding liturgy and must be religious in nature and character, so that a spirit of prayer and celebration can be established to strengthen the expression of faith and invites the spirit of the occasion.

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The parish Music Director will provide an instrumentalist and a cantor (Mass wedding ONLY) for your ceremony upon availability. ***Once your wedding is scheduled, your Wedding Coordinator will send you the list of approved music selections.*** All music selections must be chosen from the parish's approved song list. Please note that for weekday weddings, music may not be available due to the limited schedules of cantors and pianists.

Readers

Whether your celebration takes place in the context of a Mass or not, the Proclamation of God's Word in the Scriptures is an integral part of the wedding celebration. You may select **one** or **two** individuals, depending on the number of readings you select, to proclaim God's Word to the community gathered. Those whom you select should first and foremost be persons of faith who actively participate in the liturgy of their church. If you wedding celebration is in the context of a Mass, it is preferred that your readers be active, practicing Catholics.

Gift-bearers

For those who choose to celebrate the Nuptial Mass, it will be necessary to invite two people from the assembly to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine, which will be placed upon the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It is often the practice that the mothers of the bride and groom be asked to share this role, but others may be chosen. Again, the fullest form of participation is best served by inviting active, practicing Catholics to act as gift-bearers, however any baptized Christian may fulfill this role.

COMMUNION UNDER BOTH THE FORM OF BREAD AND WINE

The fullest and most desirable form of participation in the Liturgy of the Eucharist is in the sharing of the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of the Lord Jesus. As the Memorial Acclamation proclaims, *"When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory."* Therefore, it is highly recommended that each couple who celebrates a Nuptial Mass make every effort to make this available. You may wish to consult with family and friends to see if any two of your guests are currently commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in their parishes. If not, then you may wish to select two other guests who are active, practicing Catholics and are willing to receive special one-time permission to assist in the distribution of the Precious Blood at your wedding. They should see the priest 15 minutes prior to the wedding celebration so that he can familiarize them with the ritual details of this important ministry.

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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

OTHER ELEMENTS

Signs, symbols and gestures are intrinsic to good worship. However, an overabundance of them tends to become superfluous and redundant. The primary symbols of your marriage covenant are the exchange of vows and the rings. If a Nuptial Mass is celebrated, then the sharing of the "one bread and one cup" become an additional sign of unity and love. Together with these essential signs, others of a secondary nature are sometimes used:

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers
Normally these roles within the wedding party have traditionally been given to children. While these roles are not restricted to young people, please note that if you choose to have children function in these roles, **THEY MUST BE AT LEAST 5 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.**

Unity Candle
The so-called "unity candle" is a commercial product of which no mention is made in the liturgical books of our Church. It has no real history or tradition behind it. For this reason, it is **not** included in the wedding celebrations at Holy Trinity Catholic Church. If you wish to use the Unity candle, you may incorporate it into the Prayer of Blessing at the beginning of your wedding banquet.

Flowers to Mary, the Mother of God
While not an official part of the Catholic Ritual of Marriage, there is a longstanding custom that on the day of their marriage, a bride and groom present a simple bouquet of flowers to the image of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. At Holy Trinity Catholic Church, the

floral offering will be placed at the image of Mary the Mother of God by the side on the church. The purpose of this beautiful custom is to seek Mary's intercession for the newly married couple, in her role as a model of discipleship and a woman of unceasing prayer before the Lord. This gesture is done toward the end of a Wedding Mass ONLY.

Arras and Lasso

Within the Hispanic culture these elements symbolize mutual support and unity in love and may rightfully be integrated into the celebration of Christian marriage. In determining any additional elements into the ritual of Christian marriage, couples should be aware that where liturgy is concerned the principle, "less is often more," should be kept in mind! Focusing on doing key elements well and with care, will be much more satisfactory for both the couple and the assembly than trying to do too many things at once. Before a decision is made, discuss these elements carefully with the priest and Holy Trinity assigned Wedding Coordinator arranging your wedding.

APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR BRIDE AND ATTENDANTS

Since the wedding celebration takes place in the context of a worship service in the House of the Lord, careful attention should be given to appropriate attire for both the bride and her attendants. While modest dress is considered somewhat passé in society today, this is not the case in the House of God. Consequently, care should be taken regarding both the **length of the skirt on attendants as well as neckline for bride and attendants** that is in keeping with the dignity and sanctity of this moment of worship. Also, it is a distraction and inappropriate for the maid or matron of honor to continue to "rearrange" the train on the bridal gown during the liturgy.

DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Because we reverence the place in which the community of the Church gathers for worship, we ask that all your friends and relatives, particularly the wedding party, be aware of the sacredness of the Church building. In each Catholic Church, there is reserved the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood in the Tabernacle. This holy presence calls forth dignity and respect. **For these reasons, we ask that all who enter Holy Trinity at any time, whether before, during or after the rehearsal or during the wedding celebration itself observe these basic principles:**

- No loud talking – Reverence and respect is to be observed while in the church

- No food, drink or chewing of gum while in the church
- Absolutely no alcoholic beverages on the church grounds including the parking lot before or after the wedding celebration.

How can you, as bride and groom, help create a good wedding liturgy and good music? First, by regarding those who gather not simply as guests who need to be entertained but more importantly as participants in prayer, blessing and praise. Even more basic is your view of yourselves. You are participants, not passive recipients of this moment of grace and blessings. This aspect should be at the heart of how you plan the wedding liturgy, including the music. The most important thing on the day of your wedding is the spiritual foundation to begin the journey of love with one another. Celebrating this moment far outweighs concerns over pictures, flowers or decorations. Here are the guidelines regarding the use of these enhancements to the liturgical environment:

Bridal Room
The Bridal Room is available for the bride and bridal party beginning one hour prior to the scheduled wedding ceremony. The room is intended solely as a quiet space for final preparations and prayer. Hair styling, makeup application, and dressing are not permitted in the Bridal Room, as all preparations should be completed before arriving at the church. Additionally, no food or beverages are allowed in the Bridal Room or anywhere inside the church to help maintain the reverence and cleanliness of the sacred space.

Flowers
Floral arrangements enhance the beauty of any environment and we welcome your creativity with regard to this part of the environment for your wedding celebration. Please be mindful of the fact that as a sacramental celebration, the principal goal of liturgical environment is to help convey the mysteries of God's saving love, and not merely to decorate space.

Photography and Videography
Most certainly, it is possible to capture images of this holy day. 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

- 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.

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PROHIBITED

Livestreaming, Unity Candle, Guest Book, Pew Decorations, Aisle Runners, Rice, Confetti, Real or Fake Petals, Wagons, and Animals are not permitted at Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

- Please Note: The environment in the church reflects the liturgical season of the year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time. Occasional liturgies such as weddings can influence the environment, but they should not dominate nor replace the seasonal décor. Therefore, liturgical décor is not removed or changed for a wedding.

OFFERINGS AND FEES FOR WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

Active Registered Parishioner Fee
A parishioner is someone who has been an active, registered, and contributing member in the parish for **at least six months prior to booking a wedding celebration**.

The church fee is $1,400 for active registered **parishioners** (as defined above). A $350 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of scheduling with the balance due **60 days** prior to the wedding date.

The church fee for Active Registered Parishioners includes the following:

- The use of the church for the rehearsal and the wedding
- A wedding coordinator, who will organize the rehearsal, assist the bride and groom, and manage the wedding party to ensure all goes smoothly and according to protocols and procedures at Holy Trinity Catholic Church for you to have a beautiful, blessed wedding celebration.
- Music - A Holy Trinity professional accompanist, cantor (Wedding Mass ONLY), & music coordination. All music and musicians need to be approved and chosen by the Music Director.
- Payments can be made with cash, check (payable to Holy Trinity Catholic Church), or a credit card.

Out of Parish & Inactive Parishioners Wedding Fees
If you are not registered or inactive parishioners, listed below are the procedures for "out of parish" weddings:

- Both bride and groom are free to marry in the Catholic Church, that is, no previous marriages in the Catholic Church or one or the other party has obtained an annulment from the Catholic Church in the event of a previous marriage.
- You are responsible for providing a priest in good standing who will collect all the required documents, prepare you for the sacrament of marriage and preside at your ceremony. Please have your priest or deacon complete and sign *Agreement for Visiting Clergy*

The out of parish church fee for non-parishioners is **$2,000.** A $500 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of scheduling with the balance due **60 days** prior to the wedding date.

The church fee for Out of Parish Weddings includes the following:

- The use of the church for the rehearsal and the wedding.
- A wedding coordinator, who will organize the rehearsal, assist the bride and groom, and manage the wedding party to ensure all goes smoothly and according to protocols and procedures at Holy Trinity Catholic Church for you to have a beautiful, blessed wedding celebration.
- Music - A Holy Trinity professional accompanist, cantor (Wedding Mass ONLY), & music coordination. All music and musicians need to be approved and chosen by the Music Director.
- Payments can be made with cash, check (payable to Holy Trinity Catholic Church), or a credit card.

If you would like to proceed with the securing of a possible date and time for a wedding celebration here at Holy Trinity, please contact Lead Receptionist, Anna Moreno at:
Phone (949) 218-3131 or Email **reception@holytrinityladera.org**.