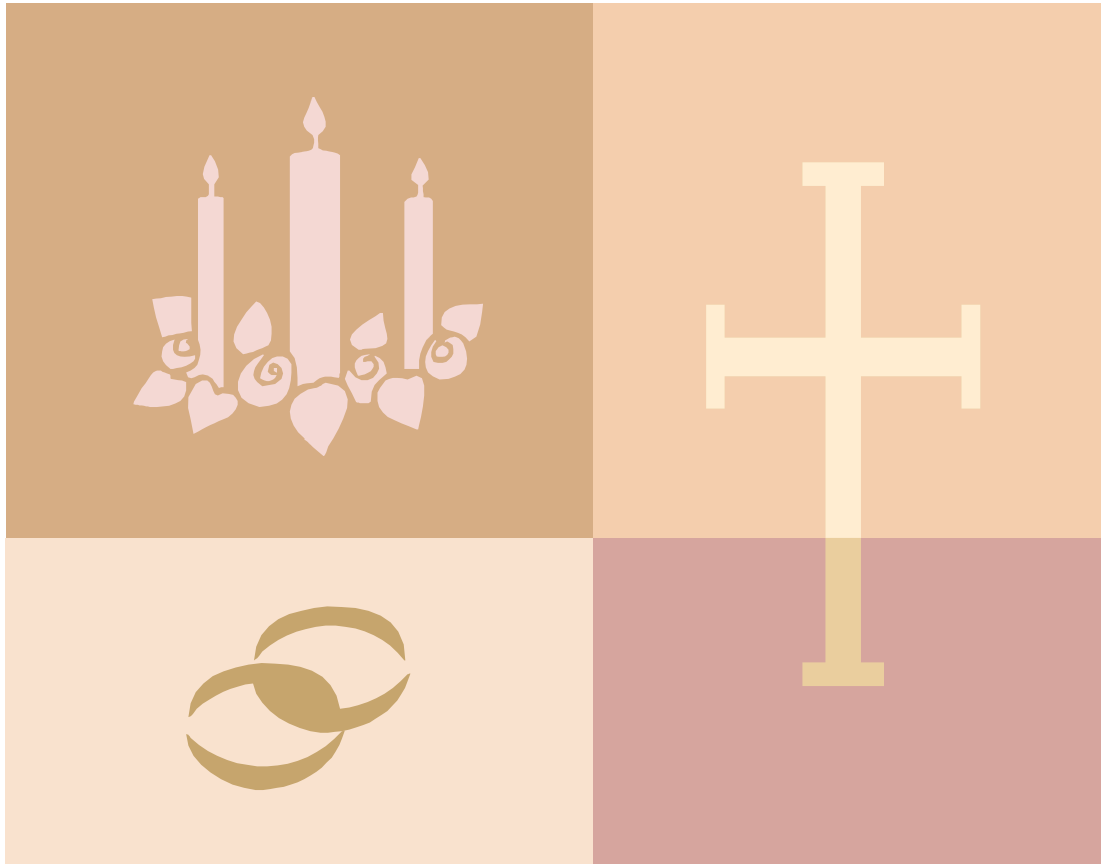


Marriage Preparation Guidelines



St. Anthony Catholic Church
401 S. Parker
Bryan, Texas 77803
(979) 823-8145

Introduction

WELCOME to the Marriage Preparation Program at St. Anthony Parish. The Parish Community involved in your program wishes to congratulate you and offer assistance in making your wedding and married life as happy and successful as possible.

Preparing for marriage is more than just selecting the right attire, beautiful flowers and planning a wedding reception. We encourage you to take considerable time preparing for your long-term vocation in the Sacrament of Marriage.

The Catholic Diocese of Austin recommends that you contact your **parish of registration before setting the date of your wedding**. This contact is to be at least **six (6) months before** your proposed date of marriage. In this preparation we invite you to do the necessary **prayer, reflection, dialogue and growth in understanding your relationship with God and each other**. We encourage you to read these guidelines carefully. It will give you the necessary information to continue your preparation. You will also be requested to sign and return the agreement on page 13.

TO BEGIN

Your preparation process begins by contacting the Business Administrator at St. Anthony Parish. You will be asked to obtain updated records of your Sacramental history:

- 1) Recent Baptismal certificate/s (issued within the last six (6) months). You may obtain these by contacting the parish where you were baptized. Request that the Church of Baptism include **all notations** on the certificate.
- 2) First Communion and Confirmation certificate/s. In many cases these sacraments will be noted on the back of the Baptismal certificate. If not, then contact the Church of First Communion and Church of Confirmation.

When you have your documents, contact the Business Administrator for your first appointment.

In our initial meeting we will discuss your plans and review the Marriage Guidelines. At this time, we will also discuss the Pre-Marital Inventory and structured marriage program. **Reservations for the Church or Chapel will be set after your first meeting and you have obtained all the necessary paper work.**

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Registration:

The couple (at least one of the pair) must be either living inside St. Anthony's Parish Boundaries (OR) **ACTIVE** and **REGISTERED at St. Anthony's parish**. **A person is also considered registered if he/she is still has a parent who is a registered member of St. Anthony.**

St. Anthony's Catholic Church is a very beautiful and traditional church; we receive many requests for weddings. Our clergy personnel is limited and we must ask couples who are not parishioners to make arrangements with another priest or deacon to work with them in the preparation **and** celebration of their marriage at St. Anthony's Catholic Church. Once you have met with your home parish priest or deacon, contact our parish office so that the appropriate paperwork may be sent to him. This is necessary before you can schedule a date and time for the wedding. Once the completed and signed paperwork is returned to St. Anthony's parish, you may officially schedule your marriage at our parish.

SACRAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

A Catholic should have received all three (3) Sacraments of Intention (**Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation**) prior to marriage in the Catholic Church. If a Catholic lacks one of these sacraments, we will work with you to receive that sacrament. However, it is understood that all this will be done **before** the wedding.

Non-Catholics:

Non-Catholics may marry a Catholic in the Catholic Church (1) if they are not hostile to the Catholic Religion, (2) if they will allow their spouses to continue practicing their faith and be open to having their children baptized and reared as Catholics, and (3) if they have not been married previously (either civilly or by a Church).

Prior Catholic Marriage:

A person may not marry in the Catholic Church if he/she was previously married in the Catholic Church and the first spouse is still living. (The exception is if the prior marriage has been annulled. This must be discussed with the Business Administrator well in advance of marriage plans.) If a prior church marriage is to be annulled by a church marriage court, the process can take up to a year for a decision. No marriage preparations

are begun until a favorable decision has been received from the Church Marriage Tribunal and both parties are free to marry.

Prior Civil Marriage:

Church law holds that a baptized Catholic must be married before a priest or deacon and two witnesses. Therefore, any attempt by a Catholic to marry before a civil magistrate (Judge) or Protestant minister is not recognized by that Catholic Church as a valid marriage. More information on this may be obtained from the Business Administrator.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

A priest or deacon witnesses the marriage on behalf of the Church and State. You will need a **CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE**.

The following is the procedure for obtaining the civil license:

- 1) Appear together before the County Clerk.
- 2) Present legal proof of age, (Driver's License, Texas DPS Identification, certified birth certificate or passport). You will also need your Social Security Number.
- 3) The County Clerk's Office is located in the County Courthouse at 300 E. 26th Ste 120, 979-361-4528. It is open from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday – it is best to call before going to find out how much the license is – fees change from year to year.
- 4) The license is “valid” for thirty (30) days. State law requires that the license be issued at least seventy-two (72) hours before the wedding ceremony takes place.
- 5) It is your responsibility to give the license to the priest or deacon, at the latest, on the day of the wedding rehearsal.
- 6) Unlike Mexico, in the United States, the license enables the priest or deacon to marry for the State as well as for the Church. **DO NOT** marry civilly before your Church wedding.

YOUR STRUCTURED MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

At your initial meeting with the Business Administrator, you will discuss the options for your specific Marriage Preparation Program. We suggest either the **SPONSOR COUPLE PROGRAM, PRE-CANA or Together in God's Image**.

Together in God's Image:

Together in God's Image is a Diocesan sponsored program of marriage preparation held at Cedarbrake Retreat Center in Belton. It begins Friday evenings at 7:00PM and ends Sunday at 1:00 PM. It is an intense weekend of work during which each couple is offered the time and opportunity to question, examine and deepen their relationship with each other and with God. Through a series of writing and sharing exercises, couples are challenged to explore many aspects of their relationship in a much deeper and more honest way than they have before. A team of trained married couples leads the weekend. The cost is **\$295.00 per couple**. This includes room and board.

Sponsor Couple

You are assigned to a married couple from the parish; you will meet with them approximately 4-6 times at their home. The cost is \$20.00 per couple, which covers the cost of resource books "For Better and Forever". To register and purchase the books contact Becky at St. Anthony, 979-823-8145.

WEDDING CEREMONIES

Ordinarily, weddings are scheduled on a Saturday at one of the following times: 10:00 AM, 2:00 PM, or 7:00 PM.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The décor of the Church is a part of the atmosphere for a joyful wedding celebration. We wish to give couples as much freedom as possible in choosing decorations keeping in mind that they are working in a Sacred Space. When choosing a wedding date, remember that the Church will be decorated for liturgical reasons. **You are invited to work with these colors. It is not permissible to remove seasonal decorations or themes from the sanctuary area. All furnishings in the Church and sanctuary must remain as they are placed for weekend liturgies. You may plan to decorate no more than one hour before your wedding.** Weddings are not celebrated during the season of Lent because of its penitential nature.

Because the Church is a Sacred Place, we ask that there be **NO food, drinks, Alcohol, tobacco or gum** in the Church. We also want you to be aware that **flower petals, rice and bird seed are not acceptable**. Please inform your wedding party and guests of this policy.

Candles:

Use only dripless, self-contained candelabra in the sanctuary. Since the sanctuary is small candelabras may only be placed in front of the Side Altars. Tubed candles are preferred. All candles are to have a plastic drip protector under the candle stand. You are responsible for the care of the carpet. Prevention of accidents is the best way to go.

Flowers: (See Page 10)

You may select either fresh or artificial flowers. Again, keep in mind that the Church will be decorated for the season. **Study and Review the guidelines when planning your flowers (page 10). You florist must follow parish guidelines.** The primary space in the sanctuary is for the celebrant and the wedding party. The Main ALTAR is to be kept free of extra candles and flowers, both on the surface and surrounding area. If you wish to donate your flowers to the Church, please let us know ahead of time. Your flowers may then be used for the Masses the next day and your gift will be acknowledged in the bulletin.

Aisle Runner:

Aisle runners are not permitted due to safety reasons.

Pew Bows:

If pew bows are used, they need to have either padded, non-scratch hangers or ties to attach them to the pew. **No tape, nails or tacks may be used.**

Dressing Rooms:

There is a Bridal Room in the Rectory. Groomsmen need to come dressed for the ceremony. This room will need to be cleared of personal items immediately following the ceremony. We may have another wedding or Mass following your wedding. For this reason, we request that you appoint someone to be responsible for checking this room while the wedding pictures are being taken.

THE CHURCH IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ITEMS LEFT IN THE BRIDE'S ROOM OR THE RESTROOMS.

Photographs: (See page 11)

You may have only one officially designated photographer/videographer. Please inform friends and relatives that they may not take photos during the wedding ceremony. This will help maintain the **sacredness** of the ceremony and protect your official photos. The photographer/videographer may never be in the sanctuary during the ceremony, although there may be an extra video camera positioned in the sanctuary. To clarify these guidelines, please arrange for your photographer/videographer to meet with the priest or deacon who will preside at the wedding – at least **30 minutes** before the ceremony. The priest or deacon will indicate the best position for the video camera.

1. Pictures may be taken during the ceremony as long as they do not detract from the service. (**NO flashes**)
2. Pictures taken during the ceremony (blessing of medal, presentation of flowers to the Virgin, communion, etc.) The photographer is **NOT** to take pictures behind the altar or from the balcony.
3. Pictures may be taken **IMMEDIATELY** after the ceremony and this period of time should last not more than 30 minutes. The priest will be happy to pose for pictures. It is requested, however, that the pictures including the priest be taken first so he can disrobe and continue with his duties.

----- Only **ONE** official photographer is permitted for a ceremony-----
This is to maintain the sacredness of the occasion and to prevent numbers of people from roaming around in the Church during the ceremony.

4. VIDEO CAMERAS are permitted. **ONE ONLY**. They may film from near the sanctuary. **No** videos or photographs may be taken from the balcony. No extra lighting is permitted for the video. They **MUST USE** natural light.

-----The PHOTOGRAPHER & THE VIDEO CAMERA should meet with the priest at the rehearsal or at least 15 minutes before the ceremony to clarify the instructions & to ask questions.-----

5. The PHOTOGRAPHER & VIDEO CAMERA are never to obstruct the aisle during the processional or recessional.

Pictures are usually taken immediately after the wedding. Therefore, the wedding party will need to return to the altar area as soon as possible after the recessional. We ask that, if poses with the priest or deacon are desired, they be taken first. **The entire picture**

taking session is to be completed in 30 minutes. (It helps to have a pre-planned list of photos which you give to your photographer ahead of time.)

The photographer and/or videographer should arrive well ahead of time. **ALL PHOTOS TAKEN DURING THE CEREMONY are to be taken with available light or flashbulbs (floodlights are not permitted).**

The wedding couple is responsible for making sure that the photographer/videographer has a clear understanding of these Parish guidelines.

Music and Musicians:

Remember that the wedding is a worship service. All instrumental and vocal music is to be in harmony with the liturgy. **This means that all music and lyrics should be directed to the worship of God.** Romantic and secular love songs are better suited for the reception. If you are having a Mass, your musicians are encouraged to play and sing the parts of the Mass. The Parish is able to provide you with names and phone numbers for musicians who are accustomed to providing music for a Catholic Service.

All fees for musicians, organists, and/or vocalists are to be negotiated by you with the persons concerned.

If you are planning to call on professionals for any aspect of your wedding, it is good to have contact with them at least three or more months before your wedding.

Rehearsal:

Rehearsal is a very important part of your marriage preparation. Your rehearsal will be scheduled for **one hour**, usually the night before the wedding. This time is very precious so it is up to you to make sure the wedding party members arrive on time. **Perhaps suggesting they arrive 15 minutes early will help lessen stress.** All principle members of the wedding party should attend the rehearsal. This helps the actual ceremony move smoothly. **It is recommended that any child in the wedding party be over the age of five.**

Time:

It is our desire that you have a ceremony which is beautiful and special. Frequently, with all the excitement the wedding party loses track of time. **For your peace of mind, and in consideration to all involved, please begin both the rehearsal and wedding at the**

scheduled times. It is expected that the Bride, Groom and wedding party will be at the Church at least 30 minutes before the wedding. If your wedding does not start on time, it may be necessary to shorten the ceremony.

Fee Schedule

Preparation Only:

If you are preparing for marriage at St. Anthony, but are celebrating your Sacrament at another parish, we ask for a **marriage preparation fee of \$50.00 for Parish services and \$20.00 materials fee.**

Marriage Preparation Materials:

There is a \$20.00 charge for marriage preparation materials. This fee is payable at the time you make the building deposit.

Church or Chapel Fees:

Church or Chapel fees are due **no later than 2 weeks before the wedding date.** Any cancellation after the Church or Chapel fees have been paid will result in forfeiture of ½ of the fee.

CHURCH:

Parishioners: \$100.00
(\$50 Cleanup fee, \$50 towards Utilities & Church usage)

Non-Parishioners: \$500.00

All fees may be paid at the Church Office.

Policies For Florist

You are a very special part of the wedding. We request that you comply with the following guidelines. **Rice, bird seed and flower petals (real or artificial) should NOT be brought to Church.**

General Information:

- 1) We ask you to work with the colors of the particular Church season.
- 2) Decorating may begin one hour before the wedding.

Candles:

- 1) Drip less only – tubed preferred
- 2) If on the pews, they must be contained in a hurricane lamp.
- 3) **ALL** candles must have a plastic drip protector under the stand.
- 4) Unity Candle. Only the one provided by St. Anthony Church may be used.

Flowers, Runner, Pew Bows:

- 1) Flowers in the sanctuary must be limited to the following areas: Left & Right Side of the High Altar (And) Side Altars.
- 2) Flowers or candles **may not be placed on or near the main altar.**
- 3) Flower petals are not to be used in the ceremony or thrown in or outside the Church.
- 4) Aisle runners are not permitted.
- 5) Pew Bows need padded, non-scratch hangers. **No tape, nails, tacks or glue may be used.**

Policies for Photographer/Videographer

You are the official photographer/videographer. We ask that you comply with the following guidelines.

During the Ceremony:

- 1) You are the only one taking pictures during the wedding ceremony.
- 2) The sanctuary is “**off limits**” to you during the ceremony, however, a video camera may be positioned there.
- 3) Pictures may be taken with available light or flash bulbs only. **NO FLOOD LIGHTS.**
- 4) You are required to meet with the priest or deacon who will preside at the ceremony at least 30 minutes before the wedding. He will be able to tell you the best position for the camera.

Formal Photos:

- 1) They are usually taken immediately after the ceremony.
- 2) The session in **not to exceed 30 minutes.**
- 3) If pictures are desired with the priest or deacon, please take them first.
- 4) It is a good idea to request a pre-planned list of photos to be taken.

**THIS PAGE IS TO BE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO THE PRIEST FOR
MARRIAGE.
IT WILL BE KEPT IN YOUR MARRIAGE FILE.**

Agreement

We, the undersigned, have read and have understood all of the **MARRIAGE POLICIES** of St. Anthony Parish. We agree to inform the **photographer/videographer, florist and musicians** of these policies. We agree to follow all the policies as represented to us and understand that any failure to follow these policies can result in the loss of our Building Deposit.

BRIDE: _____

GROOM: _____

WITNESSED BY: _____

DATE: _____

Revised 09/17/2010