

THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT MARY

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Welcome!

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

1. Holy Mass

- a) First and foremost, if you are coming to the Church to be married then you should be should actually be going to Church. Regular and faithful participation at Holy Mass is a fundamental part of our life with Christ.
- b) All those who desire to be married here at The Cathedral of St. Mary are expected to attend Holy Mass here on the Fourth Sunday of each month. You should be participating in your home parish every Sunday of the month.

2. Regular Meetings with Priest or Deacon Preparing You for Marriage

- a. The priest or deacon preparing you for marriage will schedule at least three meetings with you throughout the preparation period.

3. PRE-CANA Weekend Experience, PRE-CANA CONVALIDATION, Camino, etc.

- a) Both parties must attend together the appropriate weekend of prayer and reflection, regardless of whether one or both are Catholic. No couple will be permitted to marry at St. Mary's Cathedral until proof of attendance of one of these programs is presented to the priest or deacon. An application with pertinent information regarding dates and locations for the appropriate weekend may be obtained online at the website of the Archdiocese of Miami, Family Life office. Please go the Archdiocese of Miami website, click on Offices and Ministries, click on Ministries, click on Marriage and Family Life. Note: The Spanish version is called CAMINO. Please purchase "Together for Life" at the retreat to help plan your ceremony. Please register for the two day program. For registration and more information please visit www.miamiarch.org/FamilyLife
- b) Couples being prepared outside of the Archdiocese of Miami must complete the equivalent program in their own diocese.

4. Catholic Couple Check Up

- a) On the Marriage and Family Life page of the miamiarch.org website please complete the Engaged Couple Check-Up and forward the results to the priest or deacon preparing you for marriage. This will provide the material for one of your regular meetings with him.

5. NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP) –

- a) These classes are taken over a four-month period of time. The class schedule and locations can be found at www.miamiarch.org/FamilyLife located under the “**Marriage Prep**” tab. This is one of the MOST important things that you will do for each other during this preparation period and perhaps the greatest gift you will give to each other in your married life.

6. MARRIAGE IS A SACRAMENT

- a) Before you decide to marry in the Catholic Church, be sure that you understand and are committed to live faithfully your Catholic faith as a couple. That means turning your life totally to God through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you have not done so in the past and are seeking to start now. That is called conversion. Make a good examination of conscience and decide if you are willing make this type of commitment. It should be your free decision. Take it seriously. If you believe that you do not want it, don't do it. If you do want it, we will help you along the way. **WELCOME!**

7. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

The priest or deacon will explain each of these.

1. Both parties must be free to marry. The priest or deacon will explain what this means.
 - a) Mature enough, capable, and willing to make a lifelong commitment to marriage.
 - b) A mutual commitment to fidelity for life.
 - c) A mutual commitment to be open to children

8. WHAT IF ?

1. Living together before marriage

- a) Living together before marriage is a serious situation and cannot be justified by the fact that so many are doing it or economy. This behavior damages the preparation that God intends for marriage. If you are living together we exhort you to stop, go to confession, return to the Eucharist, and live in chastity until marriage. The priest or deacon will be glad to help you with any questions. Do not be afraid to ask.

2. One (or both of you) has been married before (even if outside of the Church)

- a) You CANNOT marry in the Catholic Church if there was a previous marriage UNLESS the Church's Marriage Tribunal has declared that marriage null and void. This is NOT automatic and it cannot be assumed. The tribunal only gives a decree of nullity if it finds reasons. The priest will explain what this means. This process normally takes at least one full year.
- b) No marriage dates can be reserved until previous marriages are determined as null and void.
- c) This law applies also to civil marriages.

3. One of you isn't Catholic

- a) If you are marrying a person who is not Catholic, part of your marriage preparation should be to learn what you have in common and what you do not. This is called an "inter-faith marriage". You will also be asked to discuss the religious education of your children.

4. If you are pregnant

- a) Whether expected or not, the life of each person is sacred. Love and care for the child is essential. But pregnancy alone is not a reason for marriage. Wait until after the baby's birth and then discern if you truly are committed to marriage forever with that person. The priest or deacon is ready to help you.

9. HOLY MASS

- a) It is expected that when two Catholics are marrying, they do so within a Nuptial Mass.
- b) Mass is permitted (but not required) for a mixed marriage (between a Catholic and baptized Non-Catholic). However you are strongly advised against a Nuptial Mass when one of the parties and significant numbers of guests are NOT free to receive Holy Communion.
- c) Only Catholics can receive Holy Communion.
- d) The priest or deacon will help to guide you.

10. VISITING PRIEST

- a) If the priest that will perform the wedding is not from St. Mary's Cathedral, please let us know from the beginning so that we can give him the proper permission. The

priest MUST bring a celebret (priest ID) if he has no faculties in the Archdiocese of Miami.

11. BANNES OF MARRIAGE

We will announce in our bulletin the fact that you are getting married. That, of course, is not an invitation to the wedding.

12. THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

a. The Cathedral Master of Ceremonies will guide you through the Wedding Ceremony. You will meet directly with him for all matters pertaining to the CEREMONY.

THE PREPARATION PROCESS

Preparation for the Wedding will take you through several steps. During the preparation period you will meet several times with the priest or his delegate.

THE ARE SOME FORMS TO BE COMPLETED:

13. PRE-NUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE (Known as “Form A”)

- a) To be filled out by the priest or deacon for each of you at the initial meeting
- b) Failure to respond truthfully to the questions may lead to cancellation of the wedding or its invalidity.

14. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WITNESSES OF EACH PARTY (Known as “Form B”)

- a) Two witnesses for him, two for her.
- b) Witnesses (preferably parents or relatives) must know the person well for many years.

15. IN A MIXED MARRIAGE, the Catholic party is required to make a written promise to attend to the Catholic upbringing of all children born of the marriage. The non-Catholic is made aware of the Catholic’s responsibility in this matter.

16. COMPLIANCE WITH CIVIL LAW

- a) The couple must secure the CIVIL LICENSE and present it prior to the wedding rehearsal. .
Note: The Church CANNOT perform the marriage without the license at hand.
- b) Marriage at Church is valid for civil law. Therefore, the couple should not have a civil wedding. If you are already civilly married, please inform the priest preparing your marriage. Your marriage in Christ is then a convalidation.
- c) During the marriage ceremony, the two official witnesses and the priest sign the license-the Parish will then return it directly to the Court House.
- d) The couple may obtain a copy of this license by providing a stamped self-addressed envelope prior to the rehearsal.

**We will be glad to assist you, but you are responsible to read and follow these regulations. Failure to do so or giving false information may lead to cancellation of the wedding.*

Updated: January 2014