

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE



AT THE PROTO-CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAMES THE GREATER
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

*THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE
LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD!*

A Message from the Pastor

God and Mary be with you. Congratulation to you from your Proto-Cathedral Parish Family on your upcoming marriage! On the day of your marriage, you will become one in Christ and, with your families and friends, we pray that the Lord will seal and strengthen your love of God and love of one another in the presence of the Church's minister. May you remain in this love both now and forever!

In Jesus and Mary,

The Reverend W.R. Harris, Pastor



I. Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage

The Sacrament of Marriage establishes a sacred and irrevocable covenantal bond between the spouses, forming a lifelong intimate partnership of love and mutual support aided by divine grace. Couples are to begin their formal preparation for this solemn commitment at least six months before the wedding date.

Marriage preparation includes:

- An initial meeting with the Pastor or his Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation to understand the couple's particular circumstances, discuss the couple's understanding of marriage, review this wedding policy and specific marriage preparation requirements
- Submission of sacramental certificates
- Completion of interviews to demonstrate freedom and consent to marry
- Receive all required canonical dispensations or permissions
- Completion of a Marriage Preparation Program
- Completion of an introductory course in Natural Family Planning
- Obtaining a Washington State marriage license from Clark County

Submission of sacramental certificates

Provide a Certificate of Baptism (with notations indicating the reception of any subsequent sacraments such as Eucharist and Confirmation) issued within six months by the church where the baptism was celebrated (for those who were baptized Catholic). For a baptized non-Catholic, a copy of the baptism certificate will suffice.

Interviews to demonstrate freedom and consent to marry

The bride and groom (and one witness for each) are required to complete a private interview with the pastor or his representative to demonstrate their freedom and consent to marry. The interviews are documented on standard forms and signed by the interviewee and the interviewer. Please note that the witnesses for these forms should be chosen based on their extensive knowledge of the bride/groom and of their relationship, but the witnesses do not necessarily need to be part of the wedding party. Contact the Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation to coordinate these interviews.

Pax Family Counseling Marriage Preparation Program

This program offers five sessions of pre-marital counseling which the couple attends with a Vancouver-based Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Associate.

The confidential counseling sessions are unique to each couple and focus on practical discussions regarding a comprehensive range of topics designed to assist the couple with the discovery of information and skills necessary to ensure the success of their lifelong commitment. This program also includes a FOCCUS compatibility assessment for each couple. Topics addressed in sessions include, but are not limited to, the couple's plans and expectations, individual and family backgrounds, identification of unresolved issues, attitudes toward religion and children, the Catholic understanding of marriage as a covenant and sacrament, along with topics related to emotional, physical, and spiritual intimacy. Sessions are typically scheduled once per week over a five-week period.

- www.paxfamilycounseling.com; cost: \$395 per couple
- 601 Main Street #503, Vancouver, WA 98660; (360) 619-2275

Natural Family Planning (NFP) Course

NFP includes several methods which identify the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's cycle. This provides the couple with a source of essential information to use in their efforts to either achieve or postpone pregnancy. This safe, effective, and healthy alternative to artificial birth control reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage & family life, promotes openness to life, and enriches the bond between the spouses.

The following NFP courses are available in the local area and will satisfy the requirement for marriage prep. These courses offer the benefits of face-to-face instruction, an easily facilitated relationship with your NFP Provider, and the opportunity to ask questions of your Provider and of the other couples.

Creighton Model:

The course begins with a 1.5-hour introductory group session; couples will then schedule four one-hour private sessions with the instructor over the next two months at their mutual convenience. Four follow-up sessions are available over the course of the year to ensure the method is fully understood and to address any questions or unique circumstances.

- New classes are typically offered each month; cost: \$270 per couple
- Certified Instructor Caitlin Elder; Vancouver, WA; (509) 995-9081
- creightonwithcaitlin@gmail.com

Sympto-Thermal Method:

Northwest Family Services offers a course consisting of three two-hour classes which meet over the course of one month with personalized follow-up. These classes do not ask that you share any personal information with the other class participants.

- New classes are typically offered once each quarter; Cost: \$110 per couple
- Northwest Family Services; 6200 SE King Road, Portland, OR 97222
- Call 503-546-6377 to learn current class dates and to register

If you or your fiancé do not live near Vancouver, it is also possible to complete an equivalent marriage preparation course in another area. Contact the Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation in the parish office to discuss options.

II. Preparation for the Wedding Ceremony

Selection of a Date and Time

Weddings are scheduled in the Proto-Cathedral on Friday evenings and on Saturdays at 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. They are **not** scheduled on Saturday evenings, Sundays, Holy Days and Solemnities, the Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent, the Friday or Saturday following Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, the Sacred Triduum, nor the First Friday or Saturday of each Month. Couples should avoid setting a specific date before contacting the parish office to discuss their specific situation, preparation requirements, and the availability of church, priest, and supporting elements.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are scheduled on the Thursday or Friday prior, and normally take **30 minutes**. Rehearsals at other times are available in consultation with the Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy. Rehearsals cannot take place on the First Friday of the Month due to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Dress

It is important to remember that your wedding takes place within the house of God, and therefore, should be conducted with the utmost reverence. The dress of those in the wedding party should show reverence through modesty and dignity. No jeans, t-shirts, or sneakers are permitted to be worn by the groom and groomsmen. Neither the bride's nor the bridesmaid's dresses may be strapless. Dresses which are strapless must be worn with a shawl covering the shoulders at all times while in the church. Dresses should not reveal cleavage,

have mini-skirt-like bottoms, low cut backsides, or open midsections. Be attentive and choose modest, beautiful dresses for yourself and the bridesmaids. Modesty is a virtue that shows forth one's inner beauty and keeps intact one's dignity.

Music

Please call the Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy before planning any music. As with all Liturgies at the Proto-Cathedral, music plays an integral role in the celebration of the Sacrament. The Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy is responsible for the music at the Marriage Liturgy and will assist you in choosing and approving the music for the celebration of the Sacrament. Because of the unique acoustics of the Cathedral, it is necessary to require that the Cantors for the celebration be qualified Proto-Cathedral Cantors. The professional choir at the Proto-Cathedral (*St. James Collegium Musicum*) may also be hired if you desire choral music. Possible musical selections can be found in the *Adoremus* Hymnal in the pews of the Proto-Cathedral or by meeting with the Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy. All pieces must be Sacred in text and composition. If the wedding will be celebrated in Vietnamese, then the arrangements for music will have to be conducted with the Vietnamese Choir. All music will be planned with and approved by the Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy. **Please do not make any independent arrangements with other musicians.**

The Liturgy

A primary concern as you come to the preparation of the Liturgy is how this event will not only be a visible sign of your love for God and for one another, but also a celebration that includes your family, friends and the Proto-Cathedral Parish Family in the Liturgy. During the Rite of Marriage, you declare your love to each other before God and The Church. This public declaration, witnessed by a prayerful people that actively participate in the Liturgy, is the fundamental nature of good liturgical celebration. This is the prayerful celebration of the whole Church. You have an opportunity not only to express the love between yourselves, but also to strengthen the faith of those who come to worship with you.

The best model for the Wedding Liturgy is the parish Sunday Mass. Like any Liturgy of the Church, it involves active participation of the people in spoken and sung prayer.

The Rite of Marriage of the Catholic Church offers two options. The "Rite of Celebrating Marriage during Mass" is used when both the bride and groom are

active and participating Catholics. When a Catholic marries a person that is not baptized, the "Rite for Celebrating Marriage outside Mass" is the choice selected. If an active and participating Catholic marries a Baptized Christian of a different denomination, they may choose between Marriage during Mass or outside of Mass depending upon which best reflects the choices of both future spouses as well as their expectations.

In the positive spirit of ecumenism, great care must be taken to respect the integrity and faith of both people in "interfaith" Marriages. Celebrating the Rite of Marriage outside of the Mass is preferred for interfaith Marriages because it contains elements in which both the bride and groom and their families can fully participate.

The Rite of Marriage celebrated during Mass, sometimes referred to as the "Nuptial Mass," is modeled after the Sunday Mass with its full complement of ministries. The Rite of Marriage is celebrated after the homily. It should be remembered that one of the unique features of the Rite of Marriage is that the bride and groom are the ministers of the Sacrament. This is their ministerial function, and therefore, they do not serve as Readers or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

The Rite of Marriage celebrated outside of Mass, begins with the Liturgy of the Word, followed by the Rite of Marriage. The General Intercessions, Lord's Prayer and Nuptial Blessing conclude the Liturgy.

Couples are welcome to provide an *Order of Worship* for the Faithful attending the Marriage Liturgy. The Order of Worship lists the names of musical selections, acclamations and responses, as well as the names of the participants of the Marriage Liturgy. If you wish to provide this service, the Pastoral Assistant of Music and Liturgy, will assist you with this option and approve your format.

Participants

The Faithful – this is the congregation, the guests that you have invited to the celebration. The faithful take an active part in the celebration, and so their role is not to be neglected or are they to be thought of as spectators. Please remember that this Sacramental Celebration is not "outside of the Parish", but one more grace-filled encounter with the Lord within this Parish and the Faithful who are the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.

The Bride and Groom – As ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage, it is your consent and exchange of vows that forms the focus of this celebration.

"Marriage arises in the covenant of Marriage, or irrevocable consent, which each partner freely bestows on and accepts from the other" (General Introduction to the Rite of Marriage).

The Celebrant – is the Priest or the Deacon who leads the faithful in prayer to God and presides at the exchange of vows. In an interfaith Marriage, the minister of the non-Catholic spouse may be invited to participate in the Liturgy, offering prayers and blessing the couple. The Pastoral Assistant for Liturgy will give instructions for their participation.

The Servers – Function as cross-bearer and candle-bearers, assist the Celebrant as book-bearer, and prepare the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There are usually two or more servers at the Marriage liturgy. Servers are young men who are trained and active in the Proto-Cathedral Parish. It is customary to make a monetary gift of ten or twenty dollars to each Server who assist at the Liturgy.

The Reader – Is the person selected to proclaim the first and second readings during the Liturgy of the Word. The second reader usually leads the General Intercessions. Readers are trained and active in the Proto-Cathedral Parish and are not from the wedding party unless active prior at the Proto-Cathedral.

Flowers and Decorations

The interior of the Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater is a grand setting for any Liturgy. Very little is needed to enhance the Proto-Cathedral for the celebration of Marriage. The following guidelines have been provided to help you as you prepare for the celebration of Marriage.

On the Altar, there are four candles and a crucifix which are not to be moved regardless of the celebrant. Please note that the Unity Candle is not a prescribed element of the Marriage Rite and therefore it is not permitted during the Marriage Liturgy. Floral arrangements are never placed on the Altar of Sacrifice. Green plants or flowers may be placed in front of and below the Altar of Sacrifice. Flowers can be placed on the High Altar and the side altars. Flowers cannot be placed on or in front of the Communion rail.

Floral arrangements placed in the Proto-Cathedral for the Marriage celebration are frequently left as a gift to the Proto-Cathedral parish for the

weekend Masses. Couples should coordinate their flower selection with the parish flower decorators through the Pastoral Assistant of Music and Liturgy.

If bows or small flower decorations are to be used on the pew ends, please notify the florist that tape may not be used to attach them to the pews. These must be removed after the ceremony.

The use of aisle runners, balloons, or any other informal party decorations are not in keeping with the dignity of the Church's Liturgy and may not be used.

Please note that decorations in the Proto-Cathedral during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Easter may not be changed to accommodate a particular wedding. If you have any questions regarding the decorations particular to each Liturgical Season, please call the Pastoral Assistant for Music and Liturgy at the parish office. Church furnishings and fixtures may not be re-arranged without consultation and approval. As it is presently arranged, the sanctuary provides for the flow of the Liturgy and for the greatest visibility.

Hospitality and Dressing Rooms

The Proto-Cathedral provides a dressing room for the bride and bridesmaids to gather and prepare prior to the celebration. We are unable to provide changing rooms for the groom and groomsmen; however, they may use the upper or lower hall which does have a restroom.

Alcoholic Beverages

Alcohol (and other drugs) affects one's ability to freely give consent, which is necessary for the validity of every marriage. Consequently, consumption of alcoholic beverages (or other drugs) prior to the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is strictly forbidden. It is the responsibility of the couple to inform the entire wedding party of this rule and to comply with it. Any infraction of this policy by any member of the wedding party will result in the automatic forfeiture of the deposit and the exclusion of anyone who is intoxicated from the wedding party. If the bride or groom is found to have broken this policy, **the wedding will be canceled.**

Care of the Proto-Cathedral

The Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater is a holy place of prayer and therefore must be regarded as such. With this in mind, a prayerful atmosphere is expected during the rehearsal, prior to the Marriage Liturgy and after the

Liturgy. Please assign one or more of the wedding party to clean up the dressing area, vestibule and pews following the Marriage.

Please note that the use of rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals, or bubbles within the Proto-Cathedral or outside, is considered a safety hazard and is prohibited.

Wedding Fees

The fee specified for your Marriage Liturgy helps defray the cost of the services of the Parish Staff as well as the expense of maintaining the facilities, lighting, utilities, etc. Couples often ask whether it is appropriate to make a monetary gift to the Priest or Deacon who celebrated their Marriage. It is certainly customary, and many couples find this a good way to express their thanks, although it is not required.

There are two fee schedules at the Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater: one for parishioners and another for non-parishioners. Normally, a parishioner shall be defined as someone who has been registered, actively participating in the life of the parish, and contributing to the financial support of the Proto-Cathedral Parish for at least one (1) year prior to the proposed Marriage date. A parish staff member will help you determine your status should there be any questions. All fees must be paid in full to have a date placed on the calendar.

No active parishioner of the Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater is ever turned away from having his or her Marriage Celebration in the Proto-Cathedral because of an inability to pay the fees. If you have financial difficulties in meeting the fee plan, please discuss the matter with the Pastor.

The Payment of fees is not to be understood as either paying for the Sacrament or the renting of the Proto-Cathedral building for the celebration of the Sacrament. The fees are to offset the rising costs of maintaining the Proto-Cathedral and to adequately reimburse those ministers who offer their assistance. In all honesty, they are, or should be, a small percentage of the overall expenses that arise in Marriage celebrations in our culture and society. National statistics tell us the average cost of a wedding is well over 25 thousand dollars!

Wedding Fees

Fees for parishioners: \$500 Contribution for the Proto-Cathedral

Fees for non-parishioners: \$1500 Contribution for the Proto-Cathedral

Musician Fees: Organist: \$175
Cantor: \$125
St. James *Collegium Musicum*: Contact
Pastoral Assistant of Music and Liturgy

If you wish to have a priest/deacon other than the Pastor of the Proto-Cathedral perform the wedding, a \$500 refundable deposit is required. The Pastoral Assistant of Music and Liturgy and the wedding coordinator will approve the refund of the deposit to the wedding party if the wedding policy has been followed. No changes to the policy can be made by a visiting celebrant.

If you wish to use the Upper Hall for your reception, please obtain a Facility Use Policy and fee schedule from the Parish Office.

III. Convalidation

A simple ceremony in accordance with the Roman Catholic Rite of Marriage for couples previously married outside of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church believes and teaches that Jesus Christ raised the institution of marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. Catholics are therefore obliged to have their marriage witnessed in the Catholic Church by a bishop, priest, or deacon and celebrated according to the Catholic form of the ritual as required by canon law. Any marriage entered into by a Catholic outside of the Catholic Church is considered invalid, although the marriage is considered legal by civil authorities. (Marriages entered into by non-Catholics, or wherever they may take place, are considered valid.)

It may be that the Catholic who entered into marriage outside the Church did not realize that these requirements existed, or because one or both of the spouses was not free to marry in the Catholic Church because of a previous marriage, or because one or both of the Catholic partners may not have been actively living their Catholic Faith at the time of the civil marriage.

Whatever the reason, the Church encourages all Catholics to return to full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. If married in a civil ceremony, Catholics are asked to refrain from receiving the Eucharist until the marriage is recognized as valid by the Church.

When these couples are ready and free to do so, they celebrate what is called a convalidation, from the Latin word meaning “to firm up” or “to strengthen.” This is sometimes referred to as the blessing of a marriage. But it is important to realize that a convalidation is not merely a renewal of vows made previously but is a new act of consent by each spouse. This new act of consent is essential to marriage, and the words that the couple expresses are the outward sign of the gift of self that they exchange.

The convalidation ceremony is usually celebrated outside of Mass. Customarily, since the couple’s married life is a known and public fact and may have been so for many years, a simple celebration with just a few friends and family is appropriate. The ceremony consists of prayers, Scripture readings, consent of the couple, exchange of vows, blessing and exchange of rings, and the blessing of the couple.

Preparation requirements are similar to those listed on page 3 of this policy. Additional documentation requirements include a copy of the civil marriage certificate. Couples civilly married more than five years are encouraged but not required to complete a marriage preparation course.

*The entire Proto-Cathedral Parish family
wishes to extend to you our prayerful
blessings as you prepare for the
Sacrament of Marriage!*