

“And the Two Shall Become One”

*Marriage Preparation
and
Guideline Information*



Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart

*1111 St. Joseph Parkway
Houston, Texas 77002*

Archdiocese of Galveston Houston

Looking for a Reception Venue?



Cameron Hall
Located in the Cathedral Centre
4th floor.

For more information

Email:
receptioninfo@sacredhearthouston.org

Contact Information

Mailing Address:
Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
Cathedral Centre
1701 San Jacinto Street
Houston, Texas 77002

Telephone 713-659-1561 x 131

Website address:
www.sacredhearthouston.org

Email address:
office@sacredhearthouston.org

YOUR WEDDING AT THE CO-CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART

We rejoice with you as you prepare to enter into Holy Matrimony. As you prepare for this wonderful vocation of love, there are a few things to keep in mind.

You are preparing for a life time commitment. Thus the Church asks you to prepare for this major commitment by attending a preparation process that will address the theology of marriage; communication skills; etc. Your marriage preparation and wedding day are a holy time of prayer. You will be kept in our prayers. When things seem hectic or even out of control, know that you are being remembered in prayer.

Your wedding day will take a great deal of preparation, and we are here to help since we have practical experience and are glad to share it with you. Remember to keep important things important. Important above all else is God's love for you. God truly knows what really makes us happy, i.e., to live in His ways. We only think we know. Everything else will work out!

Because this is a holy time, remember to pray. Attend Mass every Sunday and all other holy days of obligation; go to the Sacrament of Penance on a regular basis; read your bible and pray. There is no substitute for prayer. This will sustain you as you prepare for your wedding day and all the days of your married life.

THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is not just a private relationship between two spouses, but a personal relationship lived out in society. As a social reality, marriage is also a Church reality. The Church believes this “intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws...God himself is the author of marriage. The vocation of marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator.”

God who created human beings out of love also calls us to love—the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. Marital love becomes an image of the absolute and unending love with which God loves humanity. Thus, marriage is modeled on God unconditionally loving man and woman. The nature and purpose of every marriage is defined as: “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring.” This good of the spouse is understood that each spouse gives sacrificially of self to the total well being of each other and the marital partnership. Two essential properties of every marriage are unity (monogamous fidelity) and indissolubility (to make an unconditional, permanent commitment, lasting until the death of your spouse). These properties are rooted in Sacred Scripture and flow from the very nature of marriage as created by God (cf. Gn. 2:24; Mt. 19:3-9; Mk. 10:2-12; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:2-6; 10-11, 39-40; Eph. 5:32; Rom.7:2-3).

The groom and bride give freely their consent to enter into this covenant of unconditional, sacrificial love. The priest or deacon who officiates at the ceremony is the official witness of this newly formed marriage; receives the couple's consent in the name of the Church; and gives the Church's blessing. The presence of the Church's minister (and also of the witnesses) visibly expresses the fact that marriage is an ecclesial reality.

When a Catholic marries a Catholic or a baptized, non-Catholic, the groom and bride, as ministers of God's graces, mutually confer upon each other the Sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church, imaging Christ loving the Church. In virtue of their baptisms, the married couple invites Christ to be an integral reality in this covenant of love. The presence of God's grace in this union effects the reality of Christ's presence in this marriage and in the world.

PRAYER FOR ENGAGED COUPLES

Heavenly Father, in your great love, you have established marriage as a blessing and grace for your people.

Bless and assist those who are preparing to enter into Holy Matrimony. Increase their love for You, our God, with each other and with their family and friends. May they rejoice in that love. Give them your wisdom and patience during good times and bad, in sickness and in health. Give them reassurance in times of doubt. And give them your joy as the time of their wedding draws near and throughout their marriage.

May the prayerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the bridal guest at Cana, and all the other saints of heaven be theirs all the days of their lives.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



Dear Engaged Couple:

We hope you will find our parish and its staff to be a wealth of encouragement and assistance in your continual faith formation and in the preparation for the celebration of Holy Matrimony.

These marriage guidelines are intended to ensure a reverent and joyful celebration of the Rite of Marriage within the Sacred Liturgy—the Church’s praise of God. Understanding and implementation of these guidelines might require a continual catechesis on the nature of Church and its worship and the realization of what works well here at the Co-Cathedral based upon our experience.

It is our conviction that the time and patience necessary to incorporate these guidelines will benefit all who come to celebrate God’s love at your marriage ceremony.

The Co-Cathedral’s staff is here to assist and to pray for you.

Praised be the Sacred Heart of Jesus! Forever, amen!

The Staff of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart



When a Catholic marries a non-baptized person, the marriage is not considered a sacrament since by definition the Sacrament of Matrimony requires two baptized persons. Only two baptized persons can effect the unique presence of Christ and be a sign of Christ to each other and to others. Since marriage was created by God, a non-sacramental marriage is considered a holy covenant before God, imaging God the Father loving humanity. The groom and bride, as ministers of God’s grace, mutually confer marriage upon each other by expressing their consent before the Church. God is present in this union, offering His grace, just as He did in all the marriages of the Old Testament prior to Jesus or today in marriages when one spouse is not baptized. If after the wedding the non-baptized spouse accepts baptism, the marriage becomes sacramental automatically since both spouses are now baptized Christians. (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1601-1666)

P r e p a r a t i o n S e s s i o n s

The Church takes marriage seriously and invites couples to prepare adequately for the dignity of marriage. Just as one must prepare for any profession by attending college or some type of technical school, so too the Church asks for marriage preparation to assist couples to live out marriage as a faithful, loving indissoluble union open to children. Pope John Paul II wrote: “The Church must therefore promote better and more intensive programs of marriage preparation, in order to eliminate as far as possible the difficulties that many married couples find themselves in, and even more in order to favor positively the establishing and maturing of successful marriages.” Thus, the Co-Cathedral commits itself to foster loving and healthy marriages at their beginning and thereafter.

You must contact the office at and register for the marriage preparation sessions, which are held on Sunday afternoon following the 11:00 a.m. Mass, sign in begins at 12:00 pm and classes are from 12:30–2:30 p.m. in the Cathedral Centre. Attendance at Mass is expected. Couples begin their preparation by first attending the Initial Couples class and FOCCUS class. Thereafter, you may attend class A–D in any order. The Initial Couples Session occurs on the first Sunday of the month. The FOCCUS Couple Inventory is administered on the second Sunday, and the other sessions are generally on the third Sunday of every month. Topics include Communications, Finances, Sexuality/Natural Family Planning and Prayer and Spirituality. There will be individual sessions with the priest/deacon. In addition, **there is a bi-monthly Music/Liturgy Preparation meeting that is held on a Thursday evening, must pre-register for this music session at email: musicoffice@sacredhearhouston.org Failure to complete all the preparation sessions (or any approved arch/diocesan marriage preparation program) prior to your wedding will result in the postponement of your wedding.**

D a t e s A n d T i m e s

All weddings are scheduled to occur only in the new Co-Cathedral Church. As of August 2009, Saturday weddings are celebrated at 9:30 or 10:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 2:30 p.m., and 8:30 p.m. Special weekday wedding dates are permitted if the parish schedule allows. At 8:30 pm, only a Rite of Marriage outside of Mass (Liturgy of the Word with no Holy Communion) is allowed.

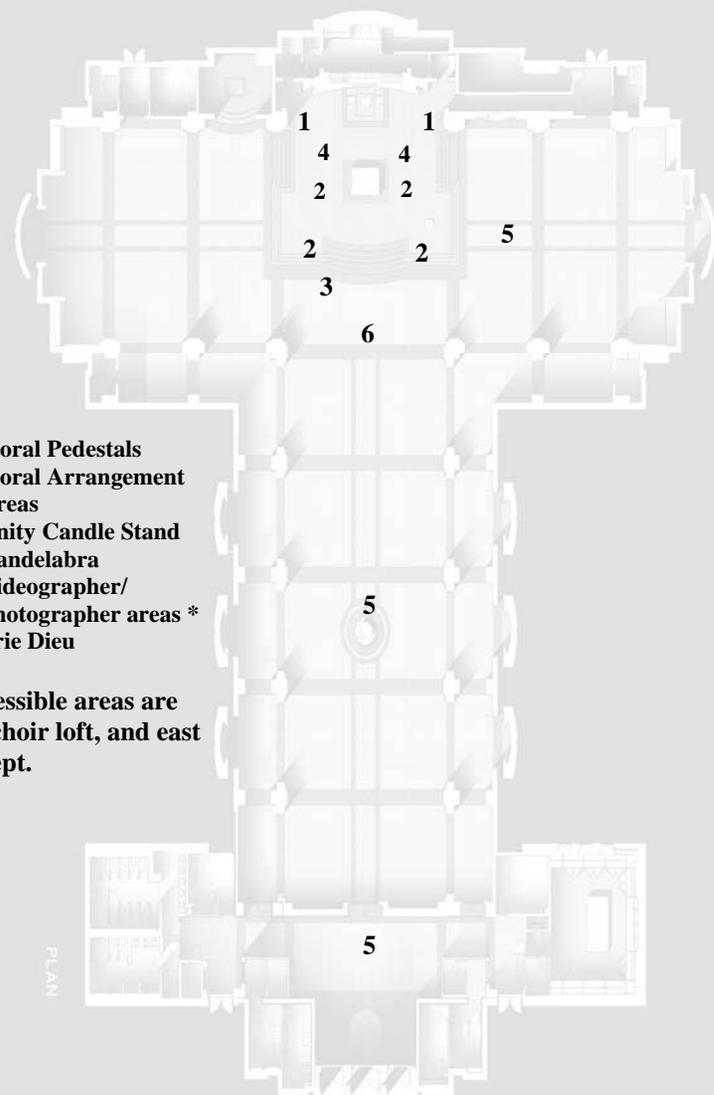
There are no Sunday weddings. Rehearsals are generally on the evening before the wedding, however, some may be scheduled on other days because of prior events already scheduled. Rehearsals are conducted by Sacred Heart staff and last no longer than 45 minutes. Rehearsal times are 4:45;

5:30; 6:15; and 7:00 pm. Failure to show up on time for a rehearsal requiring rescheduling will result in forfeiture of the deposit.

Wedding and rehearsal dates/times are scheduled, by appointment only with the parish secretary. No date can be reserved until the couple has reviewed the marriage guidelines and completion of the Co-Cathedral's Wedding Reservation Form and the deposit is received. However, the reservation of a wedding date is not a guarantee that you will marry. Issues that may arise in marriage preparation may result in the postponement or cancellation of your wedding.

D o c u m e n t s N e e d e d

- a **Baptismal Certificate or a Profession of Faith Certificate** issued within six months from the Catholic Church of your baptism or where you became a Catholic, with any sacramental notations listed on the back.
- **Proof of baptism** (certificate of baptism or letter from minister or witness) for a baptized non-Catholic intended spouse.
- two **Affidavits of Freedom to Marry** each for the groom and bride, provided by the church, completed and returned.
- a valid civil **Marriage License** can be obtained at any County Clerk's Office in Texas and be used anywhere in Texas. Texas law states a marriage license will expire 90 days from the date it is issued, and it *must* be secured at least 72 hours prior to the wedding. But the Co-Cathedral requires your marriage license to be in the parish office **one week prior** to the wedding. Without a valid civil marriage license, there will not be a wedding.



1. Floral Pedestals
2. Floral Arrangement Areas
3. Unity Candle Stand
4. Candelabra
5. Videographer/Photographer areas *
6. Prie Dieu

* Accessible areas are font, choir loft, and east transept.

Church Usage Fees

The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is pleased to have your marriage ceremony take place in our parish. As with everything else, there are costs associated with keeping these beautiful structures operational and properly maintained. The fees noted below do not cover the entire costs of having your wedding here, but they do help defray the expenses of hosting your ceremony.

Church Usage Fees

*Co-Cathedral Parishioner Rate: \$800

*A parishioner is defined by stewardship: time, talent and treasure.

- Time and Talent: Offering your time and talent to the parish (participation at Sunday Mass, parish events, ministries, etc.)
- Treasure: Using Faith Direct or your church envelopes for the previous year, a *minimum* of \$10 per week.

You must be a registered parishioner and have documented contributions for an entire year **PRIOR** to scheduling the church. (Registering and contributing at the time of scheduling the church does not count.)

*Non-Co-Cathedral Parishioner rate: \$1,600

Additional Fees

Reservation Fee	\$ 400
FOCCUS Processing Fee	\$ 40
Candelabra	\$ 200
Unity Candle Stand	\$ 50

Music

Music is not included in the Church Fees. Once you have attended the Initial Class, contact the Music Associate at 713/659-1561 ext. 152 or email musicoffice@sacredheartouston.org to arrange music for your wedding. The following are required:

Co-Cathedral Organist: \$275
Co-Cathedral Cantor: \$175

NOTE:

- A wedding date and time CANNOT be reserved without payment of the \$400 reservation fee and completion of the wedding reservation form. If the church is left in good condition, nothing is damaged or taken, and provided **ALL the wedding guidelines of the Co-Cathedral** have been followed, all church fees including the \$40.00 fee for FOCCUS has been paid 3 months prior to the wedding date, the \$400 reservation fee will be refunded.

*** If you cancel your wedding, we retain the \$400 reservation fee & all monies paid toward the church usage fee.**

The Rite of Marriage

The Catholic Rite of Marriage takes place within the Sacred Liturgy—the Church's praise of God. By its nature, Sacred Liturgy is a celebration of the universal Church. The wedding liturgy reflects this aspect when a groom and bride profess their solemn vows to each other before God and His people assembled. To manifest our corporate worship and as we do at Sunday Mass, each wedding begins with a liturgical procession with the cross of Christ leading the lectors, the priest/deacon, and then followed by the wedding party (see page 14). Then a gathering hymn unites our minds, hearts and voices as we begin our worship, praising God and asking His blessings upon the Church and the couple marrying.

The Rite of Marriage may be celebrated during Mass or outside of Mass (Liturgy of the Word with no Holy Communion)*.

- Rite of Marriage during Mass is the norm when both the groom and bride are practicing Catholics.
- Rite of Marriage outside of Mass (Liturgy of the Word with no Holy Communion)* is the norm when a Catholic marries a baptized non-Catholic.
- Rite of Marriage outside of Mass (Liturgy of the Word with no Holy Communion)* must be used when a Catholic marries a non-baptized person.
- * The norm is that an ordained deacon officiates at a Rite of Marriage outside of Mass (Liturgy of the Word with no Holy Communion).

* Since a non-Catholic groom/bride and guests do not receive Holy Communion, we celebrate what unites and not what separates.

To prepare for the Sacred Liturgy, you will be given a book that outlines all your choices for the prayers and scripture readings. Your selection of lectors are to be comfortable with reading in public. Practicing Catholics and/or practicing baptized, non-Catholics may read the first and second readings or a person of the Jewish faith may read the Old Testament reading.

With the Rite of Marriage during Mass, you are to choose two practicing Catholics to present the gifts of bread and wine. Since we as Catholics believe these gifts will become the Body and Blood of Christ, it would be inappropriate to ask a non-Catholic to present these gifts when his/her faith tradition does not believe in the real presence of the Eucharist.



W o r s h i p A i d s

Couples are encouraged to provide a worship aid (program) for your invited guests, detailing the order of worship. This worship aid can be a great help to those in attendance, especially for non-Catholics. The following outlines are to be used when preparing your worship aid for either a Marriage outside of Mass or Marriage during Mass.

M a r r i a g e o u t s i d e o f M a s s

Gathering Hymn: (List the hymn and number)



INTRODUCTORY RITE

Greeting and Collect (Opening Prayer)

LITURGY of the WORD

First Reading (Old Testament)

Responsorial Psalm (sung)

Second Reading (New Testament)

Gospel Acclamation (sung)

Gospel

Homily

RITE of MARRIAGE

Consent and Exchange of Vows

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

General Intercessions and Nuptial Blessing

CONCLUDING RITE and FINAL BLESSING

Our Father

Final Blessing

- We respectfully ask that all people maintain a prayerful reverence at all times in the church since it is a sacred place reserved for prayer and worship.
- Please refrain from taking any flash photography during the service.
- Please turn off or mute all cell phones.

W e d d i n g C h e c k L i s t

This check list is to *assist* you with marriage preparation. Deadlines are to *assist* you to plan on a timely basis versus submitting items as the last moment.

CHURCH:

- Reserved Rehearsal and Wedding Date/Time.
- Paid Deposit.
- Paid Balance 3 months prior to wedding date.
- Read and will observe all Co-Cathedral Marriage Guidelines.
- A *free will* offering for Priest/Deacon (akin to amounts for musicians, etc).

DOCUMENTS: To be turned into the Parish Office.

- Secured *recently issued* Catholic Baptismal or Profession of Faith Certificate for each Catholic groom and/or Catholic bride.
Certificates must be issued from your church of baptism/profession of faith within the last six months, with any sacramental notations listed on the back. Original certificates are unacceptable.
 - Secured proof of baptism (Baptismal certificate, letter from minister or witness) for a baptized non-Catholic if applicable.
 - Groom: Secured two Witness Affidavits of Freedom to Marry.
 - Bride: Secured two Witness Affidavits of Freedom to Marry.
- The documents for the above four boxes must be in the parish office within one month after the Initial Couples session.***
- Completed List of Wedding Party 2 weeks prior to wedding.
 - Completed selection of readings 2 weeks prior to wedding.
 - Secured marriage license and in parish office 1 week prior to wedding.
(Texas law states a marriage license will expire 30 days from the date it is issued; it must be secured at least 72 hours prior to the wedding.)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION SESSIONS:

- Initial Couples
- FOCCUS
- Session (s) with Priest/Deacon regarding Prenuptial Questionnaire, etc.
- Class A: Finance
- Class B: Communication
- Class C: Prayer and Spirituality
- Class D: Sexuality and NFP (Natural Family Planning)

MUSIC:

- Contacted Music Department - musicoffice@sacredhearhouston.org
- Attended Music Selection Seminar at least 4 months before wedding
- Paid Musicians.

OTHER:

- Contacted Florist and referred them to the marriage guidelines.*
- Contacted Photographer/Videographer*
- Catholic groom and/or bride are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance prior to the wedding.

Arrive on time for both the rehearsal and the wedding!

*Refer to applicable Marriage Guidelines

Seating of Guests
 Seating of Grandparents
 Seating of Parents (unless escorting the groom and/or bride)

LITURGICAL PROCESSION

CROSS BEARER*
 (Couple is to select someone.)

Altar Servers
 (Couple may provide servers, but they are not required.)

LECTOR(S)*

PRIEST and/or DEACON

(*Cross Bear and Lectors ought to be distinct from your groomsmen/bridal attendants.)

Option One

GROOM (Alone, with father and/or mother)

Option Two

GROOM (Alone, with father and/or mother)

Groomsmen (Single file)

Groomsmen and Bridal Attendants
 (As couples)

Bridal Attendants (Single file)

Ring Bearer and/or Flower Girl(s)

Ring Bearer and/or Flower Girl(s)

BRIDE

(Alone, with father and/or mother)

BRIDE

(Alone, with father and/or mother)

LITURGICAL RECESSIONAL

Cross Bearer
 Altar Servers (if any)
 Groom and Bride
 Ring Bearer and/or Flower Girl(s)
 Groomsmen and Bridal Attendants
 Parents
 Priest and/or Deacon
 Guests

Marriage during Mass



Gathering Hymn: (List the hymn and number)

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Greeting and Collect (Opening Prayer)

LITURGY of the WORD

First Reading (Old Testament)

Responsorial Psalm (sung)

Second Reading (New Testament)

Gospel Acclamation (sung)

Gospel

Homily

RITE of MARRIAGE

Consent and Exchange of Vows

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

General Intercessions

LITURGY of the EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer

COMMUNION RITE

Our Father

Nuptial Blessing

Reception of Holy Communion

(For those who are practicing actively the Catholic Faith.)

CONCLUDING RITE and FINAL BLESSING

- We respectfully ask that all people maintain a prayerful reverence at all times in the church since it is a sacred place reserved for prayer and worship.
- Please refrain from taking any flash photography during the Nuptial Mass.
- Please turn off or mute all cell phones.

W e d d i n g P a r t y

- Brides are to be mindful of the necessary modesty of dress that is appropriate for a sacred place and for sacred worship. Appropriateness for a sacred place is not the same as a reception, party, etc. When selecting the wedding gown and the bridal attendants' gowns, strapless, low cut dresses or sleeveless gowns, *while not appropriate*, are not prohibited as long as they are worn with a shawl or wrap around the shoulders. The cover is not required for the reception; only the wedding. The emphasis is a reverent respect for God, his ministers, and worship.
- Since the groom and bride are the focus, the number of attendants is to be limited to eight couples or less (preference given to less). Couples should strive for simplicity.
- Children are always welcome in church, but often times they find it difficult to stay still for long periods of time, or with following directions. Thus, the limit is two children in the wedding party, and the minimum age is a *mature* five years old. Children must be mature enough to follow directions and maintain appropriate behavior during the nuptials.
- The Bridal Attendants and Groomsmen are to arrive at the church completely dressed. Only the bride is permitted to use the Bride's Room to dress, not the bridal party.
- At least two gentlemen, apart from the groomsmen, are to serve as ushers. Their primary duties are to welcome and seat the guests and family members, and to aid in the opening of the doors for the entrance and departure of the guests and liturgical procession. Following the service, the ushers are to ensure that the church and Bride's Room are clean and clear, by picking up any left over worship aids, waste, or other items left by the wedding party and/or guests. **Eating is not permitted in the church!**

W e d d i n g C o o r d i n a t o r s

Since the Catholic Church adheres to the rubrics for its Sacred Liturgy, hired wedding coordinators and/or consultants are not necessary. If you hire such a person, please make sure that all communication is between the Co-Cathedral staff and the groom and the bride. The hired wedding coordinators and/or consultants must honor all aspects of the Church's marriage preparation and liturgy. Moreover, he/she will not conduct the wedding rehearsal or interfere with the wedding itself. Though that person is welcome to be present, he/she will assist the Co-Cathedral's wedding coordinator (priest, deacon or designated lay person) only when asked.

S a c r a m e n t s f o r C a t h o l i c s

Those Catholics who have not celebrated all of the Sacraments of Initiation (Eucharist and/or Confirmation) are invited to receive preparation at Sacred Heart. These classes for adults and other formation opportunities are available throughout the year. Since Adult Confirmation is generally celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, it may not always be possible to celebrate Confirmation prior to your wedding. However, every Catholic should be confirmed as soon as possible.



B e c o m i n g C a t h o l i c

While a non-Catholic is not required to become a Catholic to marry a Catholic in the Catholic Church, all non-Catholics are invited to learn more about the Catholic Faith. Catholicism is a faith that is rich, beautiful and truly life enhancing. The Co-Cathedral parish wishes to

assist anyone who, after personal reflection and thoughtful consideration, wishes to become Catholic or wishes to inquire more about the Catholic Faith.

For more information, please contact the parish office.

L e a r n i n g M o r e A b o u t T h e C a t h o l i c F a i t h

The Co-Cathedral has numerous programs and wide array of presentations throughout the year. All are welcome to join us for these presentations and programs. Regularly held Bible Studies, prayer groups, and presentations on various aspects of the Catholic Faith and personal development are scheduled throughout the year. Check our website (<http://www.sacredheartouston.org>) for current offerings or call the parish office for more information.

B e c o m i n g a P a r t o f S a c r e d H e a r t

The Co-Cathedral welcomes you to come and pray with us whenever you can. We also extend an invitation to engaged couples to become part of our parish family. While it is not required to be a member of the parish to marry at the Sacred Heart, we wish to invite couples

to consider being part of our parish community, especially those who are not currently registered in a parish. As you are celebrating the beginning of your new life together with us, we invite you to allow us to be part of your faith life and for you to be a part of ours.

*“Lord,
As you
have made
this couple
one in
Holy
Matrimony
so now
make them
one in love
with each
other
forever.”*

A f t e r T h e W e d d i n g

One of the key elements that characterizes a successful marriage is an active and committed faith life.

When couples live their faith and share their faith with each other, they are strengthened.

Living marriage as a covenant with God enhances the joys and strengthens the bonds of love vowed on the wedding day. Attendance at Sunday Mass and other holy days of obligation, daily prayer and participation in the

life of a parish faith community enable married couples to more fully live a life of committed love.

The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart parish welcomes couples to join in the liturgical, spiritual, educational and social activities of the parish.

From softball to the arts to prayer groups and personal enrichment, Sacred Heart has something for almost any couple. Come and join us!

F l o w e r s , C a n d l e s & m o r e

- Flowers may be used in the designated areas (see page 17) except during Advent and Lent. Flowers may be placed on the pedestals in the back of the sanctuary; on the floor in front of the candelabra if used; or on the floor on either side of the front steps into the sanctuary.
- Flowers/greenery and/or bows may be placed on the first pew on either side of the center aisle using only special floral hangers. Pews must not be marred in any way by adhesive tape, staples, etc. No free standing arrangements or candles allowed in the aisles.
- Silk or plastic flowers are not allowed.
- It is customary to leave your flowers in the church for weekend Masses. If you choose to donate your flowers, you may request a letter for tax purposes. You may share your flowers (and expense) with others being married on the same day. To arrange this, consult the parish secretary.
- If the unity candle and/or candelabra are used, the parish set must be used.
- No aisle stanchions, lanterns or candles of any sort and no white aisle runners are permitted due to safety reasons.
- Church furnishings/liturgical decorations may not be changed or moved.
- Flowers for the Blessed Virgin Mary may be presented by both the bride and groom after the exchange of vows and rings.
- Remember, the focus of your marriage ceremony is your consent and the exchange of vows and rings. Other symbols may be used, *though not encouraged*, as long as the focus is maintained. If the unity candle (which is not part of the Catholic ritual) is used, you must use the parish unity candle stand, but you are to provide the one marriage candle itself and floral decorations for the stand. Couples may observe the Hispanic tradition of the lazo with the arras (coins) and the Catholic bible/rosary. However only the unity candle OR the lazo may be used; not both (either occur after the exchange of rings or after flowers for Mary). With the lazo tradition, those who present the arras, bible/rosary and lazo are seated in the assembly prior to the wedding (they do not process in) and are called forward to present them after the exchange of rings.



M u s i c

Please consult with the music director at least 4 months prior to the wedding date. The Cathedral Music office conducts a Couples Music Seminar 5-6 times every year, usually on a weekday evening. This seminar is for couples only. Attendance is limited and ALL couples must meet certain requirements and be pre-approved before attending. Once approved, any couples able to attend will be sent a notice of confirmation for their assigned class. **You must use the parish organist and cantor.** Outside musicians cannot be used without the permission of the Director of Music.

Prelude music begins 15 minutes prior to the wedding. Music must be appropriate liturgical music, recognized to be as prayer. Singing is always an integral part of the Church's worship. A gathering hymn unites the assembly in prayer. The Responsorial Psalm, Gospel acclamation and other Mass acclamations are always to be sung. Secular love songs are most appropriate at a wedding reception. No pre-recorded music is allowed.

Contact the music department at: musicoffice@sacredhearthouston.org

P h o t o g r a p h y & V i d e o

Since the church is a sacred place of prayer and worship, appropriate professional and reverent behavior is expected at all times on church premises. The overriding principle for a photographer/videographer is to be as inconspicuous and discreet as possible. They must receive a copy of these guidelines and must check in with the priest or deacon before the ceremony.

Pictures and video may be taken in the church prior to the ceremony but ending 15 minutes prior to the service. Please consult the parish office for the time allotted for the usage of the church.

The photographer/videographer is allowed only in designated areas (see page 17). They are never allowed in the inner sanctuary, near the tabernacle or in front of the assembly. The photographer/videographer is encouraged to use the choir loft and/or remain behind the main assembly of people. The videographer is encouraged to be stationary throughout the ceremony and for adequate recording of sound to connect into the Church's sound system.

There is to be no artificial lighting or flash photography during the ceremony. The procession is not to be stopped or interrupted once it has begun. All photos should be respectful of the sacredness of the church (no cutesy or inappropriate photos).

A p p r o p r i a t e C h u r c h B e h a v i o r

Care and respect of the church as a sacred place for prayer and worship is to be given at all times. A prayerful reverence should be reflected in speech and in actions before, during and after the wedding rehearsal and the wedding liturgy: no loud or excessive talking by anyone; no running or playing around by children; etc.

- Proper professional attire by all is to be worn at the wedding rehearsal. That means no shorts, halter tops, tank tops or mid-drifts, baseball caps, torn jeans, flip flops or other inappropriate attire.
- Arriving and/or starting late for the wedding will result in the forfeiture of your deposit.
- The throwing of real or artificial flower pedals, bird seed, rice, confetti, bubbles; the letting go of doves or butterflies; etc., are not allowed due to safety reasons.
- There is to be NO FOOD (including gum) or DRINK inside the church.
- There is to be NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES or ILLEGAL NARCOTICS anywhere on church property, including the parking lot. Anyone with such substances will be asked to leave the property.
- There are to be no concealed handguns or weapons brought inside the church or other buildings or carried in parking lots or other exterior spaces.
- Cell phones and pagers are to be turned off or placed on mute when inside the church.
- No street parking is allowed immediately in front of the church. Any wedding limousine and/or wedding van is to be parked in the drive adjacent to Fannin Street. Exit and entrance from such vehicles is to occur from that drive; not in front of the church.

