

GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE



Congratulations!

- † Congratulations and blessings to you as you begin your preparation to enter into the sacred bond of marriage according to the rite of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.
- † The preparation and celebration of marriage concerns you and your families, but also, it is governed by the laws of the Catholic Church (Canons 1055 & 1056) and those of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- † Through the eyes of the Church, marriage is a covenant in which one says to the other “*You are mine and I am yours*”. This marital union is both sacred and serious.
- † It is sacred because God himself is thus its Author. Christ our Lord added to the holiness of marriage an even deeper meaning and a higher beauty. He referred to the love of marriage to describe His own love for His Church, that is, for the people of God whom He redeemed by His own Blood. It is serious, because it will bind you together for life, in a relationship so close and so intimate, that it will profoundly influence your whole future!
- † These guidelines are for couples who wish to undertake the Sacrament of Marriage at St Ambrose Church, Concord West.



1. Scheduling

- † Couples should contact the Parish Priest at least 6 months in advance of any anticipated date for the wedding (12 months is ideal).
- † The church wedding date and time can only be set in a meeting with the Priest or someone delegated by him.



2. Required Papers

All paperwork (Church & Civil) must be supplied to the Priest and are required for both bride & groom:

- † Proof of Baptism: If Catholic – a Baptism Certificate from the church of Baptism (dated within 6 months of the proposed marriage). If Baptised Non-Catholic - a newly issued Certificate of Baptism (copy acceptable).
- † Certificate of Confirmation.
- † Affidavit concerning the freedom to enter into sacred marriage, provided by your parish Priest.
- † Pre-Cana Certificate/Marriage Preparation Certificate – issued at completion of course.
- † A letter from your Parish Priest, permitting your wedding to be held at St Ambrose.



3. Marriage Prep (Pre-Cana)

- † Given the sacredness and seriousness of marriage, the Archdiocese of Sydney has made it mandatory that every couple undertake marriage preparation.
- † Ideally, the marriage preparation will be pastoral, spiritual, liturgical and canonical in nature (C 1063).



4. Other Essential Documents

Other essential documents: Current Passport, Driver's licence, Birth Certificate (copy acceptable).



5. Prenuptial Investigation

- † Once you have completed the Marriage Preparation/Pre-Cana Course and collate the required paperwork, an appointment must be scheduled with the officiating Priest.
- † In this meeting, which is completed under oath, the Priest will complete various Church and Civil marriage forms. These forms officially record your ability and intention to enter into a True Catholic Marriage.

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6. Marriage Ceremony

The Marriage Ceremony in the Roman Catholic Church celebrates the Christian faith of the couple that is nourished by:

- † the Word of God (proclaimed in the Scriptures).
- † the Body and Blood of Christ (shared in the Eucharist, for two Catholics).

It celebrates God's grace at work in the life of the couple uniting them in the self-giving love that Christ has called us to have for one another. For this reason, the music, clothing, decorations and activities that have come to be part of the Church Wedding Ceremony are to draw attention to and highlight the spiritual dimensions of the ceremony, never overshadowing or distracting from it.



7. Visiting Priests & Deacons

- † The officiating priest/deacon must advise the parish, in writing, that he will be officiating the wedding ceremony. He must present his Ministry Card on arrival to the rehearsal and wedding.
- † Priests/deacons outside Greater Sydney (Broken Bay/Wollongong/Parramatta), must apply through the Chancery to officiate or assist.



8. Witnesses

- † Church and Civil Law require two witnesses to be present at the time of the consent and they will function as the authorised signatories.



Matthew 19:6

“So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder”.



9. Liturgical Ministers

- † Anyone who has a liturgical role in the wedding (such as a lector or reader) is expected to have a sense of reverence for that role and reasonable competence in fulfilling it.
- † They must be a practicing Catholic.



10. Photo – Video - Livestream

- † Photographs at a wedding ceremony are very important. Therefore, all efforts will be made by the parish priests to accommodate the photographer's needs within the limitations of what is sacred and holy.
- † All photography and videography must follow the setup guidelines of the Parish and must be agreed to with the Priest prior to the ceremony.
- † An additional is payable to the parish for livestreaming and videoing in addition to the usual stipend to the parish.
- † ABSOLUTELY NO PICTURES CAN BE TAKEN FROM BEHIND OR WITHIN THE SANCTUARY.



11. Music

- † In planning music for the church, please keep in mind that the liturgical celebration is a religious and sacred event.
- † As a guide, any music that may be heard in the context of sacred liturgy throughout the church year would typically be appropriate.

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12. Decorations

- † Flowers and all decorations for the church are the responsibility of the bride and groom.
- † Flowers and all decorations are not to be placed on the altar table.
- † It is appropriate to have two arrangements of flowers on the high altar.
- † If you wish to use pew bows or pew flowers, you may attach them **only by a rubber band, string or special clip.**
- † Tape is not permitted as it will further damage the finish on the wood of the pews.
- † You may supply your own “unity candle” or other candles, if desired, however, please ensure they come with a protective holder.
- † PLEASE NOTE: CANDLES MAY NOT BE PLACED ON THE ALTAR ITSELF.



13. Offerings & Fees

The standard fees for wedding ceremonies are as follows to cover administration costs including electricity and cleaning costs:

- † For parishioners \$300* (*effective as at July 2021)
- † For non-parishioners \$500*

Also:

- † A non-refundable deposit of \$ 100 is due upon reserving your wedding date.
- † Additional fees are applicable for videography and/or livestream.
- † The balance is paid two (2) weeks prior to the wedding celebration, unless previously agreed to in writing. Please remit payments to St Ambrose Parish, Concord West.
- † PLEASE NOTE: THIS PAYMENT IS SEPARATE FROM THE USUAL OFFERING (STOLE FEE) WHICH IS GIVEN TO THE CELEBRANT.



14. Wedding Rehearsal

- † The time for the wedding rehearsal is arranged beforehand and reserved with the priest in consultation with the parish office.
- † There will be no extra charge for the use of the church **if it does not exceed one hour.**



Please call the Parish Office for more information 9743 1023 or email admin@stambrose.org.au

Ruth 1:16-17: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."