

SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGE AT THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARK



Congratulations on Your Engagement!

Welcome to the Church of Saint Mark! Whether you have been parishioners for years or are just getting to know us, you are a blessing to us and an answer to prayers. That's right: we have been praying for you even before knowing you and we consider you part of this parish family already.

We want your time of preparation for married life together to be lived to the full. We know that there will be many "to do" lists on the way to your wedding day. The time you spend here preparing for that day should give depth and meaning to those lists and, more importantly, the sacramental reality you are preparing to enter. Lived well, your time of preparation for marriage will bear fruit not only in your own marriage, but in all those who will come in contact with the family you are about to establish together. Please be assured of our continued prayers for you. We are grateful for your presence among us, and look forward to sharing this important time with you.

May God Bless you richly,

Fr. David Hottinger, PES

Pastor

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Getting Started

*And I will espouse you forever; I will espouse you in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.
– Hosea 2:19*

The Sacrament of Marriage is a visible sign of God's love to the world. When a man and a woman are married in the Church, they receive the grace needed for a lifelong bond of unity. We at the Church of Saint Mark are honored to help you prepare for the celebration of this sacrament in your lives and for your life together as husband and wife.

To be married at the Church of Saint Mark, either the bride or the groom must be a practicing Catholic. Additionally, both parties must be free to marry in the Catholic Church, which will be established by the priest assigned to your wedding at your first meeting. If either of the persons have been married previously (civilly or religiously), notification of a final declaration of nullity or certificate of death must be given to the priest prior to beginning any preparation. If you are not a registered parishioner, we hope that you will consider making the Church of Saint Mark your parish home. Please note that we will give our registered parishioners priority when it comes to reserving a wedding date.



Setting Your Wedding Date

We know that setting your date and time is an important decision to guide the rest of your planning process. Please know that we will do our best to arrange a meeting with a priest as soon as possible after you complete the inquiry form online at www.onestrongfamily.org/sacraments, but we do not confirm dates prior to that initial meeting, at which it will be determined if you are free to marry in the Catholic Church.

For your information, weddings are usually held at St. Mark's on Saturdays at 2 PM.

We ask that you do not schedule any other vendors before you meet with your priest and confirm your desired date is available.

Marriage Preparation Process

Because the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is such an important event in the lives of those who are receiving it, and because the validity of the marriage depends on the intentions of the couple, the marriage preparation process is vitally important to the celebration of the sacrament and sets the foundation for a lifelong bond of unity between husband and wife. There are four main elements to your formation:

1. **Meeting with your priest** | You will meet several times with one of our priests, who will help you to grow in your understanding of God's plan for marriage and see the important mission God gives you in the world.
2. **MERCY: Marriage Enrichment Retreats for Couples** | You should plan on attending at least one of our Half-Day retreats for young couples, offered periodically during the academic year at the parish.
3. **FOCCUS Inventory and Mentor Couple** | You will work with a Mentor Couple to learn practical tools for living the Sacrament of Marriage, through taking and discussing the FOCCUS marriage online inventory.
4. **Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Retreat and NFP Class** | You will also have the opportunity to attend an Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Retreat and will learn about Natural Family Planning methods.

Timeline & Checklist

This timeline is based on the ideal 12 month preparation period. The minimum preparation period is 6 months.

12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY

- Complete Inquiry Form on parish website and we will be in touch about registering for Sacramental Marriage at St. Mark's
- Meet with one of our priests to verify freedom to marry and initiate preparation
- After first meeting, contact Audrey Koval at akoval@onestrongfamily.org with your desired date to check availability
- Pay \$250 deposit to reserve your date

9 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY

- Sign up for the Archdiocesan [Living God's Love](#) retreat and a [Natural Family Planning](#) (NFP) class
- Attend at least one MERCY Retreat (held October through April, see flyer for details)

6 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY

- Contact church of Baptism for bride and groom to mail your Baptism certificate with all sacraments notated to our office
- Complete FOCCUS online inventory
- Meet with Mentor Couple
- Continue to meet with your assigned priest for preparation.

3-4 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY

- Review FOCCUS results with Mentor Couple

2 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY

- Confirm the assignment of a wedding coordinator with Ann Marie (amheimel@stthomas.edu)
- Submit your [Wedding Worksheet](#) to your Wedding Coordinator and Music Worksheet to the Music Director (2 months before the wedding).
- Meet with Kathy our Music Director (khandford@oenstrongfamily.org) to finalize the plan for the music at your wedding

- Pay remaining wedding balance to front office

1-2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY

- Obtain Marriage License from the county
- Update Wedding Coordinator on any changes
- Contact wedding party and family to remind them of the rehearsal date and time (ask them to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time)
- Find time with your preparing priest to participate in the Sacrament of Confession

WEDDING REHEARSAL

- Bring your Marriage License to your Wedding Coordinator to be locked in the sacristy
- You may bring any programs or small decor items (reserved signs, program baskets, Kleenex for wedding party and family pews) to be locked in the sacristy. Please know we are not responsible for any lost or damaged items.
- Pray together for the graces you need as you enter into the Sacrament of Marriage!

AFTER THE WEDDING

- Contact the parish center to update your address in the parish database. Register as parishioners if you are not already and intend to stay in the area!
- Continue to attend the MERCY retreats and remain in contact with your mentor couple to strengthen you in your first year of marriage.



Encounter the Lord Together

To be married in the Catholic Church you are required to actively participate in the sacraments and this time between your engagement and the wedding day is a wonderful opportunity for you to deepen your faith as a couple and put Jesus Christ at the center of your future marriage.



Mass

Daily Monday | 10 AM
Daily T-F | 7 and 10 AM
Daily Saturday | 8 AM
Saturday Anticipatory | 5 PM
Sunday | 9 AM, 11 AM
(July-August there is no 7 AM)

Adoration

Monday from 10:45 AM to Friday 10 PM.
Please use door code 1976# to enter after 7 PM.

Rosary

After daily Mass, M-F in the Adoration Chapel and every Saturday in the church.

First Saturday Rosary the first Saturday of every month by Mary's altar.

Confession

Daily T-F | 9:30 AM

Saturday | 3:30-4:30 PM

Sunday | 30 minutes before each Mass

“The path of holiness lived together as a couple is possible, beautiful, extraordinarily fruitful, and fundamental for the good of the family, the Church and society.” - Saint John Paul II

Fees

Deposit - \$250 | Once you have contacted Jill to check on the availability of your date, we ask that you reserve your date with a \$250 non-refundable deposit. Payment can be made at the parish website for your convenience.

Remaining Balance - \$275 | Due one month before your wedding and includes: Wedding Coordinator, use of the church, and operational expenses.

Music | Saint Mark is able to provide a cantor from its pool of singers and an organist/music director for your wedding. The fee for each is \$125 and \$250, respectively, and is due by the day of the wedding (payable to the parish).

Preparation Outside of Parish or Preparation Only | If you plan to go through marriage preparation with a priest or deacon outside of the parish or will be getting married out of state and would like to be prepared by a Saint Mark's priest, please contact Fr Patrick Evans at <mailto:frpatrick@onestrongfamily.org> or (651) 645-5717.

Additional | The Archdiocesan retreat and NFP classes have additional fees payable to those organizations. It is

customary to pay an honorarium directly to any other ministers involved in the wedding (celebrant, other musician's, servers, etc.)

Cancellation Policy | If a couple cancels their wedding reservation they will forfeit the \$250 deposit, but any remainder paid will be refunded. A couple may change their wedding date without submitting a new deposit.

Liturgy & Music Planning

Engaged couples are encouraged to take an active role in choosing the scripture readings, music, and other aspects of the wedding celebration. In your preparation meetings with the priest, you will receive a wedding worksheet and the "Together for Life" book to assist you in selecting your readings and prayers.

Readings

Couples are asked to prayerfully review the Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel readings in the "Together for Life" book. The choice of readings expresses the faith of the couple and conveys their values and the meaning of marriage. If you have other scripture readings in mind, please discuss those with your preparing priest. He will make the final decision on whether your selections are appropriate to the theme of the liturgy. The choice of non-scripture readings is never allowed.

Music

Music is an integral and important part of the celebration of marriage and its selection should be a thoughtful and collaborative process between the couple and the parish Music Director. In a Catholic wedding, the music should be musically and textually suitable for Mass- that is, it should reflect the dignity and importance of the sacrament taking place, not a mere celebration of the couple. While popular, theatrical, or cinematic music certainly has a place at other parts of the wedding celebration, there are many options for beautiful liturgical music suitable for Mass. Another important aspect of music in the Catholic Church is that it fosters communal prayer and is not simply entertainment. Therefore, the use of recorded music is not allowed and there should be opportunities for congregational participation.

Each couple will have a separate meeting with the Music Director to explore music options for the ceremony. After that meeting, all final music selections must be submitted to the Music Director for approval and guidance no less than six weeks before the wedding. The Church of Saint Mark can provide an organist/pianist and cantor (singer) for the Mass. If other instruments or singers are desired, it is the couple's responsibility to. The participation of outside singers or instrumentalists must be approved by the Music Director, and should be compensated. Please note that it is not the Music Director's responsibility to serve as choir director or oversee rehearsals of outside singers, or to acquire the musical notation or licenses of pieces not at her disposal. A word to the wise: extravagant plans for wedding music and the involvement of many signers or instrumentalists, especially if amateur, inevitably becomes a source of stress in the days leading up to the wedding and increases the likelihood of the distraction that poor performances can cause.

Liturgy programs

It is the responsibility of the couple to design and print any programs/worship aids to be used in the wedding Mass. If music (lyrics or notation) is to be contained in the program, the proper license must be obtained from the publisher.

Wedding Coordinator

The Church of Saint Mark will assign each couple a Wedding Coordinator to ensure that everything runs smoothly on your wedding day. The Wedding Coordinator's role is to be available to answer any questions the couple may have prior to the wedding ceremony and to assist in your liturgy planning as needed. You will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator and after they have looked over your wedding worksheet they will contact you to discuss any details and

introduce themselves.

The Wedding Coordinator will be present at the rehearsal to provide instruction on how wedding ceremonies are handled at the Church of Saint Mark. She will be present on the day of the wedding to oversee details during the ceremony, unlock the church, turn on the lights, prepare the sanctuary, inform your photographer/videographer about policies, and facilitate the procession.

Sacramental Marriage Outside of the Mass

In general, it is the norm for weddings between two practicing Catholics to occur within the Mass. A wedding outside of the Mass might be preferable for an interfaith couple (where one person is not Catholic). If you are concerned because your guests are of different faiths, please speak with the priest preparing you for marriage. Celebrations like the Sacrament of Marriage can be a life changing experience for a non-Catholic to be in the presence of the Eucharist and witness the reverence of the Mass. It is also a time for the bride and groom to be strengthened at the Eucharistic table for your journey together.

Decor Policies

The Church of Saint Mark is a beautiful church and does not need to be overly decorated. All seasonal flowers and decorations are to remain in place. Please keep in mind that you only have two hours before the ceremony and approximately thirty minutes after the ceremony to use the church. Other events may be scheduled on the same day and we have Confessions immediately following on Saturdays. If you have questions about decor, please consult your Wedding Coordinator.

Floral Arrangements

Flowers are not to be placed on the altar directly. No floral or decor should impede the priest's ability to walk around the altar. Two medium sized arrangements on either side of the altar are recommended if desiring floral decor. All plants and flower arrangements should come in their own vases; the parish does not provide containers. You are welcome to present a small flower arrangement to the altar of the Virgin Mary as part of the liturgy. We do have vases available for this. Flowers may not be delivered prior to the wedding date. Please work with the Wedding Coordinator to arrange a time for the flowers to be delivered, so that they can be sure the church is unlocked.

Aisle Runner and Aisle Decor

The use of an aisle runner is not permitted by the Church of Saint Mark. Aisle decorations must not obstruct your guests from entering or exiting the pews and must be removed immediately after the celebration.

Unity Candle

The Church of Saint Mark does not permit the use of a unity candle or sand during the ceremony, as it is not a part of the wedding liturgy.

Pew Decor

If pew decorations are to be used, they are to be attached to the pew using pew clips. No tape of any kind is permitted on the pews. Pew decor must be approved prior to the wedding day by the Wedding Coordinator.

Attire Policies

Your choices should reflect the dignity of Christian marriage. Some styles that are appropriate for your reception

simply are not appropriate for a sacred event such as the Sacrament of Marriage. Contact your wedding coordinator if you have questions.

Bride and Female Wedding Party

All wedding attire must be modest. Low necklines, high slit dresses, and spaghetti strap or strapless dresses are not in keeping with the appropriate guidelines for a religious service. Many bridal stores offer beautiful cover ups or modifications that can be removed for your reception.

Groom and Male Wedding Party

Suits or tuxedos should not detract from the ceremony. "Costume" style tuxedos or accessories are not appropriate for a sacred event.



FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Do we have to be registered parishioners to get married at the Church of Saint Mark?

If you are not a registered parishioner, we ask that you meet with one of our priests initially, so they may get to know you and so you can decide if Church of Saint Mark is a good fit for you as a couple. We encourage you to get married at the parish where you will continue your sacramental life as a married couple. If you plan to regularly attend our parish after your marriage, we are happy to help you become registered members of the parish family. Please register online at www.onestrongfamily.org or contact the parish center at parishcenter@onestrongfamily.org.

How much does it cost to get married at the Church of Saint Mark? The total fee, when cantor and organist are used, is \$900 and includes a non-refundable \$250 deposit to reserve your date. The payment is not for the sacrament, but for the professional services, materials, and facilities involved in a wedding Mass. We ask that this be paid in full one month prior to your wedding day. See the "Fees" section on page 4 for details.

How many bridesmaids and groomsmen can we have? The maximum number in the wedding party is six on each side; however, four to five fit comfortably on the steps. There are many other ways to involve friends in the ceremony such as: readers, gift bearers, ushers, and greeters.

May we throw rice, flower petals, confetti, or use bubbles? We do not allow any of these (or other) items to be used inside or outside of the church as it is a liability and we have limited time to clean up before Confessions and Mass.

Can we have a visiting priest or deacon celebrate our marriage? If you would like a visiting celebrant to preside at your wedding you may submit a request through the priest who is preparing you for marriage. You will be notified if your request has been granted. If the visiting celebrant is from outside of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis there is additional paperwork involved (namely, a letter of good standing from his diocese).

If we want our priest friend to prepare us for marriage can we still get married at St. Mark's? If you wish to be prepared outside of the parish by a priest or deacon, please contact Fr Patrick Evans at frpatrick@onestrongfamily.org. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and you will be notified if your request has been granted.

My cousin has a great voice. Can she sing at our wedding? There are two roles for vocalists in the nuptial liturgy. One is as cantor for the Psalm, Mass parts, and congregational hymns. The second is singing a solo work at appropriate

times throughout the Mass. If your cousin wishes to serve as cantor, they should have experience as a cantor in a Catholic Church, or at the very least, be very familiar with the Catholic liturgy. If this is not the case, a properly trained singer may be permitted to serve as soloist, subject to approval of the Music Director, provided the selection is liturgically and musically appropriate.

I've gone to many weddings that include the favorite pop songs of the couple, or popular love songs. Why can't we do them here? The Catholic Church has a rich musical heritage that is an important part of the liturgy, and therefore it is important the music that is selected be sacred in nature, always lifting the hearts and minds of the assembly beyond everyday life. Pop music, while perfectly acceptable at a reception, is often a celebration of everyday life and sometimes does not give due reverence to the Sacrament of Marriage. While it is tempting to see this restriction as limiting, the Music Director will work closely with you to select music that is beautiful and appropriate, and is an opportunity to open your minds and ears to new musical genres.

Can the bride wear a strapless dress? We ask that your wedding attire be appropriate and respectful of the Holy Mass and keep with the standards of modesty in the Church; this means that shoulders should be covered and there should be no plunging necklines. Many bridal stores offer beautiful cover ups or modifications that can be removed for your reception. Please see the "Attire Policy" section on page 6 or contact your Wedding Coordinator once they have been assigned to you.

Is there a place for the wedding party to get ready before the ceremony? We offer a bride's room and a room for the gentleman to get ready. These are located in the lower level of the church. These rooms are available to you two hours before your ceremony time.

Final Thoughts...

The staff at the Church of Saint Mark is excited to begin this preparation journey with you! If you have any questions please contact Fr Patrick at frpatrick@onestrongfamily.org or (651) 645-5717. Know that many Masses, Rosaries, and hours of prayer are being offered for you during this exciting time of your engagement.

Resources

Marriage: the Mystery of Faithful Love by Dietrich Von Hildebrand

Man, Woman, and the Meaning of Love: God's Plan for Love, Marriage, Intimacy and the Family by Dietrich Von Hildebrand

Three to Get Married by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

Letter to Families by Pope John Paul II

Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married by Gary Chapman

Heaven's Song: Sexual Love as It Was Meant to Be by Christopher West



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