

Guidelines for Engaged Couples

Wishing to Celebrate the
Sacrament of Marriage at
St. Dominic's Church

2002 Merton Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90041
(323) 254-2519

WELCOME!

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage is the beginning of a life-long process of growing in Christian love with the person you mutually commit your love to through the Sacrament and Vocation of Marriage. We are here to assist you in that preparation, not only in the beginning stages, but throughout your new life together...



A Catholic Wedding

A wedding in the Catholic Church is a Sacrament, requiring a public act of faith by the couple who are asking the Church to witness their marriage. The Sacrament of Matrimony is a matter which concerns the whole Church and thus is not a private matter or a family affair. The priest or deacon, with the assembled community, witnesses the couple's exchange of vows and pray that this new covenant of mutual life and love will continue to be an enduring sign to others of Jesus' intimate and faithful covenant with the People of God.

Marriage Preparation

Everyone planning on celebrating their marriage at St. Dominic's is required to follow and fulfill all the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Guidelines for Couples wishing to be married in the Catholic Church. You will have already received a copy of those guidelines when you first made your inquiry about being married at St. Dominic's. The priest or deacon assigned to witness your marriage will assist you in these matters.

You will need to schedule an appointment with one of the priests or deacons at St. Dominic's no later than nine months before your hoped-for wedding date. This initial meeting is introductory and one for gathering initial information to start the preparation process. [*If you have been preparing elsewhere, documentation of the six month pre-marriage preparation must be supplied to the priest or deacon.*] Generally, it is at this initial meeting that the tentative dates for your rehearsal and wedding are scheduled in the parish calendar.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles requires that a couple planning to marry in the Catholic Church attend one or more marriage preparation programs. The priest or deacon will go over these with you.

In the Archdiocesan marriage guidelines pamphlet, a number of documents are listed which each of you will need to obtain. If you need assistance obtaining any of the required documentation, the priest or deacon will assist you.

The beginning assessment process will include the taking of the FOCCUS Inventory, a survey used by the Catholic Churches throughout the United States. This

survey helps you as a couple to see more clearly any areas of agreement or disagreement in your relationship, as well as to surface important topics that you may not have discussed as of yet. The priest or deacon will arrange a date to have you take the survey and then will schedule additional appointments to go over the results. [This may be done by one of the couples of our parish who have been trained in the instrument.] It will take about an hour to complete the FOCCUS survey.

State of California Wedding License

You will need to obtain a marriage license from Los Angeles County or from the county of your legal residence. A marriage license is valid for 90 days. Unless the marriage license is obtained beforehand and given to the priest or deacon, no wedding can take place.

You may obtain a marriage license from:

The Office of the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
4716 East Cesar E. Chavez Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90022
Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
(213) 260-2991



Planning the Wedding Liturgy

The priest or the deacon does not marry a couple; you give the Sacrament of Marriage to each other with the priest or deacon and people as witnesses. You will be expected to plan your ceremony according to the options available in the Catholic marriage rite. The Scripture readings, the music, etc. you choose should be liturgically appropriate and all have meaning to you. A booklet, *Together for Life*, will be made available to you; this booklet contains the various suggested Scripture readings that are available for you to choose. [Due to the new translation of the Mass texts, the prayers in the booklet are no longer current.]

The Wedding Coordinator

St. Dominic's uses the talents of Karen Montes or Susana Barraza as the parish wedding Rite coordinators. One of them will be present to direct your rehearsal and assist you and the wedding party the day of your wedding. They are both well-versed in the rules and regulations for marriages at St. Dominic's. No other wedding coordinator is for the Rite, although, of course, you may have whoever you wish for post-Rite activities.

The Music Director

The Music Director for St. Dominic's is Mr. Rudy Acosta. He will assist you in planning your music. He is a very capable musician, and can play the organ and/or piano for your wedding ceremony. Also, he can assist you in choosing the other musicians or you may choose your own. If you choose to use musicians other than Mr. Acosta, it will be your responsibility to pay them directly. You must keep in mind that, because Mr. Acosta is the music director of St. Dominic's, if you choose not to use

him for your wedding, you will still have to pay him a 'bench' fee.

Wedding Ceremony Guidelines

Music

All music selected for your wedding needs to be liturgically appropriate, reflecting the Sacrament that the bride and groom are entering into. Any 'secular' music or songs will have to be approved by the priest or deacon. Mr. Acosta, the Music Director, can aid you in choosing appropriate music for your wedding.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are reserved for the Wednesday or Friday prior to the wedding. They are scheduled around 7:30 PM. A rehearsal will take at least one hour, depending upon the size of the bridal party. The rehearsal date is reserved at the same time that the wedding date is scheduled.

Please note: ALL PARTICIPANTS in the wedding ceremony NEED TO BE PRESENT at the rehearsal. This includes: readers, best man and maid of honor, ushers and bridesmaids, sponsors, flower girl, ring bearer, offertory gift presents, parents of the bride and groom, etc.

Please plan on arriving 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time – we will start on time. The priest, deacon or wedding coordinator will direct the rehearsal.

The Wedding Day:

The church is reserved for three hours for each wedding. One hour before the ceremony as follows:

30 minutes prior to the ceremony for setting up flower arrangements and decorations.

30 minutes for arriving and seating of guests.

One hour for the ceremony itself.

One hour after the ceremony as follows:

40 minutes for photography

20 minutes for clean-up.

The wedding coordinator will be present the entire time.

Please note: The time before or after a wedding may be affected if there is a funeral. All parties/ministries will adapt accordingly.

Also, we start weddings **on time!** Any delays from starting on time will shorten your time for photography afterwards.

Church Decorations

Please plan according to your budget. A wedding is a celebration of God's love for you and your love for one another – it is not a show to impress your friends.

You will need to supply your own flowers, dripless candles and other decorations for the ceremony as the church does not supply these. Of course, altar candles, etc., are provided by the church.

Flower Arrangements

Flowers are allowed in the sanctuary. Florists must provide their own pedestals, if these are required. You may take your flower arrangements with you after the wedding to use at the reception, if you wish.

If you choose to present a bouquet of flowers to the Blessed Virgin, please make sure the stems are free from any water, as we want to avoid water stains on the woodwork.

Pew Decorations

Bows, silk flowers, fresh flowers and greens are permitted. They must be secured by plastic floral hooks or large rubber bands. NO TAPE of any kind is permitted. Any pew decorations need to be removed after the ceremony. Access to the center aisle from the pews cannot be blocked.

Aisle Runner (Optional)

You may use a runner made of durable materials (canvas, fabric-like or plastic). The florist normally sets up the runner. It will take twenty minutes or so to line it up and tape it, so insure they start early. The runner will have to be removed, along with the tape, immediately following the wedding. It is good to keep in mind that flimsy and cheap runners are easily punctured with heels

and can look sloppy by the time the bride walks down the aisle. Consider what you really want.

Flower Petals, Rice, Bird Seed, Confetti

All of the above are **forbidden** to be used in or outside of the church. It is your responsibility to make sure that this policy is adhered to by everyone in attendance at your wedding.

Dressing Room

St. Dominic's does not have the facilities of a dressing room. Everyone in the wedding party will have to show up at the church already fully attired for the wedding ceremony.

Wedding Ceremony Programs (Optional)

Some couples like to have a program to give to their guests. This is entirely up to the couple. However, if you do wish to have a program printed, a draft of it will need to be submitted to the priest or deacon for final approval. You would need to appoint someone to distribute them and collect them if they are left in the pews.

Photography/Videography

The wedding coordinator will need the name and phone number of your photographer and/or videographer; she will need to go over the guidelines for St. Dominic's with him or her.

Flash may be used before the ceremony begins and may be used once the ceremony ends. The photographer will be instructed to use non-flash film

during the ceremony. Likewise, the videographer will be instructed not to use a spot or floodlight while the ceremony is in progress.

We recommend that all formal church pictures be taken and completed within 40 minutes after the ceremony. The photographer and/or videographer should arrive 30 minutes before the ceremony begins in order to have everything set up. **NO** photographs are to be taken before the ceremony begins – this is the time for the bride and groom to recollect and prepare themselves to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage that they are about to confer on each other.

Fees

Registered parishioners are asked to make a donation to the Church of \$500.00. (*Please note: no one is denied a Catholic wedding for lack of finances.*) The donation for the Church is to be paid in full 3 months before the wedding date. In addition, the fee for the Director of Music is \$150.00 and the fee for the Wedding Coordinator is \$150.00. If you wish to have altar servers at your ceremony, it is customary to pay them each \$25.00. The fee for the Director of Music and Wedding Coordinator must be paid by the time of the rehearsal.

Catholics not registered at St. Dominic's, but desiring to be married here, are to make a donation to the Church of \$750.00. The fees for the Director of Music and for the Wedding Coordinator remain as above.

Couples being prepared for marriage at St. Dominic's but planning on being married elsewhere are asked to make a donation to the Church of \$150.00 to help defray the cost of their preparation.

In the event a check is returned due to lack of funds, the couple will be responsible for covering the cost of any bank fees that are charged.

An Outline of the Marriage Ceremony

Music Prelude

The Procession – The wedding party enters the Church

Greeting & Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Alleluia (sung or recited)

Gospel

Homily

Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage

Exchange of Vows

Blessing and Exchange of the Rings

Prayers of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Offertory – Presentation of Bread & Wine

Eucharistic Prayer

Our Father

Nuptial Blessing

Exchange of the Sign of Peace

Communion

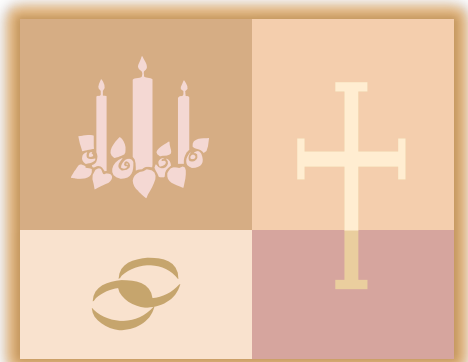
Prayer after Communion

Final Blessing

Recessional

This is the simple Rite for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.

There are some customs that certain cultures like to add to the wedding ceremony. While not part of the official Roman Catholic Rite for Marriage, some are able to be incorporated in the ceremony; for example: the Presentation of Coins (arras); the Presentation of a Bible and/or Rosary; the Cord (lazo); and the Presentation of Flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary. None of these are required or expected to be part of the wedding ceremony. However, if you have a desire to include any of these cultural additions, please inform the priest or deacon. Keep in mind that if you opt to use any of these customs, the sponsors will need to be present for the rehearsal.



Checklist for Engaged Couples

Use this checklist to help you organize your planning.

Appointments	Date	Time
Initial visit with priest or deacon		
Schedule FOCCUS Instrument		
Tentatively reserve Church for rehearsal and wedding – day and time for both		
Contact Director of Music, Mr. Rudy Acosta (323)-258-9854		

DOCUMENTS	BRIDE	GROOM
New copy of Baptismal Certificate – dated no more than 6 months before the marriage date		
First Communion Certificate		
Confirmation Certificate		
Pre-nuptial Witness Form (2 for the bride, and 2 for the groom). Preferably the parents of each or members of their respective immediate family.		
Dispensation(s), if necessary.		
Completion of Archdiocesan-approved Engaged Preparation Program or Pre-Cana		
Civil License		

TO DO	DATE	TIME
Register for Engaged Preparation Program		
Submit all required documents		
Schedule to meet with Wedding Coordinator		
Plan Wedding Liturgy – turn in Liturgy Planning Sheet to the priest or deacon		
Turn in fee payments and Church donation no later than 3 months before the wedding date		
Meet with Director of Music to select music		
Give the civil marriage license to the priest or deacon or wedding coordinator no later than the rehearsal. Remember: no civil license means no wedding!		



We have read the Guidelines for Couples Planning on Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Dominic's Church. We agree to abide by and observe all the norms as written.

Groom

Bride

Date

Priest or Deacon