

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH

4954 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90029

Tel. (323) 660-0034 Fax (323) 660-0047

Website: www.ihmcsocal.org

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR A CATHOLIC WEDDING (Wedding Guidelines)

Introduction

WELCOME to Immaculate Heart of Mary Church! Your parish priests and staff are ready to assist you in preparing for your Catholic Church Wedding. This information sheet is meant to help answer some of your questions as you get ready for your wedding day.

How Do We Begin the Process?

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles requires that a couple planning to get marriage in Church should meet with their parish priest, at least, **six (6) months** before their proposed wedding date. If either the bride or the groom has been previously married in any manner (civilly or in another Christian Church), and the former spouse is still living, no date can be given for a subsequent marriage until the annulment or dissolution of the previous marriage is granted by the Catholic Church. The priest will assist you in processing such cases. When the bride or groom is not a member of the Catholic Church, the interfaith and ecumenical issues should be addressed with the priest at the first meeting. This is so that the non-Catholic party will feel welcome and that his or her religious convictions will be respected and to be aware also of the Catholic understanding of the sacrament of marriage.

When one or both of the parties are 19 years of age or less, consideration for marriage in the Church will be given only after an in-depth discussion with the couple, consultation with their parents and a favorable recommendation from a professional counselor is completed.

Scheduling the Wedding Day

Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays at the following time: **10:00 am, 12:00n and 2:00 pm**. On the day of the wedding, the wedding party should be in the Church already, at least, **45 minutes** before the time of the wedding, so that the ceremony can start on time. Rehearsals are scheduled on the weekday evenings prior to the wedding day.

Documentary Requirements

1. **Pre-Nuptial Inquiry Interview:** This will be conducted by the Priest who prepares the Wedding.
2. **Marriage License:** Valid for 90 days from the date of issuance, it is not necessary to be married civilly before being married in the Church. This document is obtained from the Office of the County Clerk.
3. **Baptismal Certificate:** One copy for both parties issued within the last six (6) months for marriage purposes is required (not an old copy or the original).
4. **First Communion and Confirmation Certificates:** A copy of the original certificate or new certificates is required.
5. **Marriage/Engagement Encounter Certificate:** This verifies that you both have attended the Marriage Preparation Program Retreat that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, through the Office of Family Life has prepared. Either the Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend or the One Day Program for the Engaged will fulfill this requirement.
6. **Testimony of Freedom to Marry:** Two witnesses for each party are needed to comply with this requirement. They cannot be the same people for both, that is, his witnesses cannot be her witnesses as well. They can be both family members or very good friends but preferably parents or siblings. These witnesses are different from those who would attest that the actual wedding ceremony happened and would sign their names on the couple's Civil Marriage License.

Church Fees and Donations

1. Donation to the Church: IHMC requests a \$600 donation, of which a \$100 non-refundable deposit is required to secure the date of the Wedding. This donation pays for the use of the Church, the Wedding Coordinator and the Altar Servers. Money should never be a reason to marry or not to marry in the Church. If you have this issue, you may discuss it with the parish priest preparing for you for your wedding. The parish church will be glad to assist you in any way possible to ensure that you get married in the Church.
2. Wedding Coordinator: Our official wedding coordinator is _____. You may contact her directly or through the Parish Office. Once your deposit for the Church is made, you may contact the Wedding Coordinator right away to discuss the details of your Church Wedding. It is the responsibility of the Wedding Coordinator to plan the wedding ceremonies, conduct the rehearsal and supervise the actual wedding ceremony.

Music and Musicians

It is required that music be an integral part of the wedding liturgy and is expected that only the parish musicians will be used for this liturgical event. Only *religious/liturgical music* will be permitted during the wedding liturgy. If popular songs or secular love songs are being considered, they may be used before the procession begins or during the reception after the wedding liturgy.

It is recommended that you contact the musicians no later than three months prior to your wedding date to plan the music and discuss the fees required. The donation amount for the Church does not include the fees for the musicians.

I. Musician/s:

- Chris Avendaño (213) 249-5061

If you plan to have a Mariachi group play for your wedding, please contact the parish musicians to ensure that they play religious/liturgical music during the wedding liturgy.

Other Information

- The wedding party should plan to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) a week or two before the wedding day. Consult the parish bulletin for our regular schedule of confessions or they may do so in the parish where they belong. Do not wait until the last minute for confession in preparation for the wedding.
- **Flowers and other decorations for the Church are the responsibility of the wedding party.** Flower decorations should be arranged in such a way that they would not block or impede the movements of the people inside the church. Simple flower arrangements are preferred.
- Photography and taking videos are permitted. However, they must be done in a discreet and respectful manner to ensure respect and reverence to the liturgical ceremony that is going on. The photographer and videographer must remain in the designated locations around the sanctuary. It is not permitted to do it in the sanctuary itself. It is recommended that the photographer and videographer talk to the priest before the wedding liturgy begins.
- The custom of throwing rice, confetti flower petals and the like is not permitted inside and outside of the church. We request that you assist us in keeping the Church and the grounds clean and safe for all people who come after you.

These guidelines have been prepared to assist you couples in fulfilling the basic requirements for a Catholic Church Marriage at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. May this busy time of preparation also be a happy and prayerful time for you and your respective families. Thank you very much and best wishes to you.