



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

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MARRIAGE GUIDELINES & PREPARATION



WELCOME

Greetings and welcome to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. While small in size, our church provides a very intimate and beautiful setting for a marriage.

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding and on your decision to make a commitment to each other through the sacrament of marriage. You and your future spouse have fallen in love, and together you have discerned that God is calling you to commit yourselves to each other for the rest of your life. Your wedding is meant to be a happy, beautiful and meaningful celebration, on a religious setting, one that you will long remember. Your wedding day marks the beginning of this commitment that you will make through the Christian sacrament of Matrimony.

The following guidelines will assist in your preparation for marriage, as well as the celebration of the wedding day itself. Therefore, please read them carefully. We are looking forward to the day when, before God and each other you will say in the presence of the priest, you will seal a covenant for the rest of your life.

INITIAL CONTACT & DATE OF THE WEDDING

Please contact our parish office as soon as possible; ideally you should call us at least six months in advance of the proposed wedding date. We will help you establishing a wedding date, having all the paperwork, discussing the liturgy (ceremony) and schedule a rehearsal.

If you are a visitor, the next thing you must do is to contact your local Catholic priest/deacon/church staff who will prepare you for marriage. **He must sign the form below and you should mail it to us together with the wedding offering. Your marriage will not be scheduled until these two items are received by the parish office.**

Afterwards, your local priest/deacon will complete all the necessary church paperwork and send it on to us through the diocesan tribunals at least three months prior to the wedding. All paperwork must be here at our church office at least one month prior to your wedding day.

Upon receiving the wedding offering and the Permission & Marriage Preparation Form, you will be contacted by our marriage coordinator who will help you prepare for your ceremony.

TIME OF THE WEDDING

To accommodate as many couples as possible, we have set aside five wedding times per weekend:

Fridays: 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM

Saturdays: 10:00 AM; 12:00 Noon, and 2:00 PM

Due to our weekend Mass schedule, we cannot celebrate weddings on Saturday later than 2:30 PM. We do not officiate weddings on Sundays. We do, however, consider other weekday days and times – just call the parish office to find out the availability of the church. For your planning, our church seats comfortably 150 people.

PUNCTUALITY

Please know that our church schedule is busy, especially on the weekend. Therefore, we ask that you please respect the clergy's time by arriving on time for the rehearsal and wedding. As bride and groom, it is your responsibility to ensure that your entire wedding party is at the rehearsal at least 15 minutes before the rehearsal begins, and at least 20 minutes prior the wedding ceremony. Rehearsals and weddings which are more than 30 minutes late are cancelled and/or postponed.

If you are more than 15 minutes late, then your ceremony will be shortened; if you are 30 minutes late there will not be a Mass but a ceremony outside the Mass; if you are 45 minutes late then we will be celebrating only the Rite of Marriage, which is the minimum necessary for you to get married civilly and religiously. So, please make sure that everyone is punctual.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal allows the bridal party to become familiar with what will take place during the wedding liturgy; it also provides the bride and groom with a more relaxing and calm wedding day. To avoid any confusion at the wedding, we ask that all members of your wedding party be present at the rehearsal, including readers and other participants in the celebration.

Be sure to bring your marriage license no later than the rehearsal time, and give it to the presiding priest.

A wedding rehearsal generally takes about 20-30 minutes. Rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening prior the wedding date. The normal time for a rehearsal is 5:00 PM. If there are multiple weddings, rehearsals will be at 4:00 PM, 5:00 PM and 6:00 PM scheduled on a “first come, first served” basis. To avoid any embarrassments please provide us with all the information needed prior to the rehearsal. If a visiting priest is officiating at your wedding, he must be here for the rehearsal, or the rehearsal is cancelled.

RESERVATION & MARRIAGE FEES

Please note:

Your wedding is not scheduled until we have the entire wedding offering plus your letter from the priest/deacon that you are free to marry in the church and that he will prepare all paperwork with his signature as mentioned in the paperwork below.

The wedding offering (see below) includes the following: the use of the church, marriage preparation (if local), marriage coordination, rehearsal, and the marriage ceremony, be it with or without the Mass.

Active Parishioner Fee: \$700

Non-Parishioner Fee: \$1,200

An active parishioner is registered, attends Mass regularly, is easily recognized by our parish priest, and he/she or the parents support the parish on the regular basis.

A non-parishioner is a person who is not active and registered in the parish as described above. A non parishioner is anyone who may live in the area, go to a different parish, not practicing the faith or live outside the area and want to marry in our church or/and in our jurisdiction.

The wedding offering is payable to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. The wedding offering applies to all weddings, including weddings taking place outside the church such as Holman Ranch, Gardener Ranch, Stonepine, or any other local venues.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION - ONLY

If you are a parishioner planning to marry in a different Catholic Church, and would like to have your marriage preparation here, please contact our parish priest. The fee for this marriage preparation which includes all paperwork and marriage preparation is \$300, payable to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. He will prepare and mail all your documentation to the Catholic Church of your choice.

MUSIC

Music is a very important element of your wedding ceremony. Since your wedding is a religious event, all musical selections are to be of a religious nature. Anything from the secular repertoire must be performed before the ceremony begins as your guests are being seated. Our music directors are responsible for music and will help you decide your music selections. It is your responsibility to pay all musicians.

You may bring outside musicians and soloists. We do not control their charges and fees. If you choose outside musicians/vocalists, the music selection must be pre-approved by the presiding priest. Pre-recorded music is never allowed in our church.

BRIDE'S ROOM

We don't have a special bridal room. However, the conference room can be used by the bride and bridesmaids. It is located adjacent to the bathrooms. Please let us know if you are planning to use the room. Also, plan on having a friend who is not in the bridal party take all your personal items to the car as you leave the room, as we are not responsible for lost or missing articles.

FLOWERS & DECORATIONS

Our parish provides fresh flowers for the Church on a weekly basis. A large arrangement is placed in front of the altar. Please note the following policies if you choose to have your own floral arrangement.

We generally recommend two arrangements on either side of the altar. We suggest using the services of The Flower Market. They are very familiar with our church since they deliver flowers to us on a weekly basis. Their phone number is (800) 931-5678 or (831) 375-1061.

For save-security reasons we cannot allow aisle runners, lighted candles, throwing of rice, birdseed, candy, etc., inside the church or on the grounds. Also, flower petals may not be thrown down the aisle during the processional, or anytime on the church's grounds. We would also ask that decorations may not be taped, nailed, glued, tacked or stapled to the end of pews. Some florists have clips that work nicely and others simply tie them on with beautiful ribbons.

Make sure flower arrangements are on display at least 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. Pew decorations must be removed immediately after the ceremony.

You may not change, alter, or move the liturgical décor within the church. Furnishings and settings in the sanctuary are not to be disturbed, obscured or altered.

We do have weddings during Lent. Please be aware the Lenten color is purple and there may be a Lenten banner with this or similar Lenten color behind the altar. These Lenten decorations or any other liturgical décor are not to be removed.

PHOTOGRAPHS & VIDEOS

Your photographers and videographers are welcome and we ask them to respect the sacred nature of the wedding ceremony. Photographers and videographers should never interfere with the celebration of the ceremony or distract those in attendance. Their movement and noise should be held to a minimum, must be discreet and respectful of the church and not interfere with the flow of the ceremony. Flash photography is allowed in our church. It is never permissible to run extension cords around the church, since it creates a safety hazard. If needed, all electrical cords must be securely taped down.

OTHER CUSTOMS

We respect your culture and your specific traditions. If you would like to have, for example, cord (lasso), coin (arras) and flowers to Mary (ramo) ceremonies, we will joyfully accommodate these beautiful traditions into the main liturgy. Please discuss with the presiding priest if you have other cultural wedding traditions.

MISCELLANEOUS

You are responsible for your marriage license. You must bring the license with its self-addressed envelope to the rehearsal.

If you are going to have a unity candle, it is a good idea to bring it to the rehearsal as well. Please be aware that the unity candle should include two smaller candles – usually lit by the mothers of the bride and groom.

All paperwork and documentation must be completed and submitted to the parish office no later than 30 days prior to the wedding date. It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to make an appointment to see the priest and to consult with him before making any commitments with caterers, reception halls, etc.

In conclusion, we are looking forward to this great day of rejoicing and celebration for you and your family. We will work hard to make this the first of many happy days that you will share together. Our parish community prays for you and asks God to bless you with many, many, happy years of marriage and love.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

At time of reservation:

- Call the parish office to check the wedding time availability.
- If non-parishioners, a signed letter (see below) from your own pastor or local priest/deacon is needed stating that he will be preparing you for marriage and will mail all documents here at least one month prior to the wedding.
- The wedding offering. Make check payable to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, and mail it to: 9 El Caminito Road, Carmel Valley, CA 93924.

During the time of your marriage preparation the following documents should be provided together in one package:

- Baptismal Certificates. Contact your church of baptism to obtain a new copy of your baptismal certificate.
- Freedom to Marry Forms. These are required when you are not active members of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Two witnesses for each bride and groom will be asked to testify and sign that you are free to marry.
- Church Pre-Nuptial Inquiry for both the bride and the groom will be completed by the priest/deacon responsible for the marriage preparation.
- Dispensations, or special permission, if applicable. (For example one party is not Catholic.)
- A copy of the Engaged Encounter Certificate (Pre-Cana or any other marriage preparation equivalent) received at the completion of the retreat weekend. Please schedule your weekend as early as possible in your marriage preparation as space and dates are limited. For registration dates and information, visit www.engagedencounter.com.
- California State Marriage License. This is required by law for marriages taking place within the State of California. A marriage license is valid

for 90 days from the date of application. A Catholic priest cannot marry any couple without possession of a marriage license.

There is no reason to wait on this! You can bring your marriage license to the rehearsal, if not obtained earlier.

You can buy a regular marriage license anywhere in the state of California. To obtain a marriage license in Monterey County, both prospective parties must appear together at our county office location: Monterey County Clerk, County Government Administration Building 168 West Alisal Street, 1st Floor Salinas, CA 93901; Salinas Office: (831) 755- 5450 Monterey Peninsula Residents may dial: (831) 647-7850; Marriage License hours: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Once again, if you don't live in the area, you can purchase your marriage license in the State of California in any other county. Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days.

- If the marriage is a convalidation (you already married civilly), a copy of your civil marriage license is needed.

It is the couple's obligation to be sure that all paperwork is received by the parish office at least 30 days prior to the ceremony. By civil and canon law we need the above documentation prior to any marriage. For more information, please contact our parish office Wednesday – Friday 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM; 2:00 - 4:00 PM.