

Getting Married at Saint James Church

Congratulations on your decision to begin marriage preparation. At St. James we want to encourage good Catholic marriages and help couples celebrate beautiful and meaningful Catholic weddings. We hope that the covenant between newlyweds and the Lord Jesus will be well understood, clearly proclaimed and lovingly celebrated.

The First Step

The first step is to schedule an appointment with Fr. Terry, Fr. Victor or Deacon Raul. At this appointment you will complete a form that will provide us with basic information and will determine if you are able to be married in the Catholic Church. For example, at least one of you must be a baptized Catholic and if either of you have been previously married (and not widowed) that marriage must first be annulled in the Catholic Church before you could be married again. If you have baptism certificates, even from a non-Catholic church, it would be helpful to bring them to this first meeting.

If you are not yet 18 years of age; Oregon civil law requires parental consent and Church law requires an interview with the parents. Preparation for those under 18 may be extended and professional counseling may be required.

If you have a date in mind for your wedding we can check church and celebrant availability at this time. We ask that you make this first appointment at least 6 months prior to your planned wedding date. With busy schedules it sometimes takes awhile to complete all necessary preparation. In fact as soon as you are thinking about marriage you can contact us. You may want to use our preparation process prior to engagement to help you in your decision to marry or not.

When Weddings are Celebrated

Weddings are normally celebrated on Saturdays. We can accommodate two celebrations (weddings, quinceañeras, and funerals) on a Saturday. The morning celebration time is 11 AM and the afternoon time is 2 PM. This allows time between the services to put up and remove decorations, and finishes early enough in the afternoon so that the Church can prepare for Confessions and the Saturday evening masses. Baptisms are celebrated almost every Saturday at 10 AM so decorating for a morning wedding should begin at 9 AM and the decorations should be removed by 1 PM. The afternoon wedding can begin decorating at 1 PM and should have all decorations removed by 4 PM.

Weddings can be celebrated on other days of the week depending on the availability of the church and a priest or deacon. Friday evenings are popular with some couples. Another option for simple weddings with few guests is to celebrate your wedding during a regularly scheduled weekend mass. Because of an already full Sunday schedule weddings will not be celebrated on Sundays outside of the regular masses.

Certain times of the year, like Holy Week, it may not be possible to schedule a wedding. Weddings during Lent and Advent are allowed however the decorations, colors and music must be in keeping with the liturgical season.

Where Marriages are Celebrated

Generally if you are asking to be married at St. James Church you should either live in our parish boundaries or be attending here regularly. You may also be married here if your parents are parishioners of St. James. If not, you should contact the parish where you live to begin preparation. In some circumstances the preparation can take place elsewhere but the marriage can be celebrated here. Also if you live here we can do the preparation even if your wedding will be elsewhere.

Couples may request a priest or deacon whom they know from outside St. James to witness their marriage at St. James Church.

The celebrations of sacramental graced moments in the life of the Christian community ordinarily take place in the parish church. Baptisms, marriages and Confirmation, are examples of the critical moments in the life of the Christian community that are celebrated in the parish church. Therefore, marriages take place only in the parish church (no backyards, parks, etc.). Only under rare and compelling circumstances could a marriage be celebrated outside the church. In the Archdiocese of Portland, Catholic clergy must request the permission of the archbishop to witness a marriage outside the church.

Witnesses (Best Man, Maid of Honor)

Witnesses must be at least 14 years of age and should not be children of either the bride or groom. The witnesses do not need to be Catholic.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding. However, this can change depending on the schedule of the priest or deacon and the availability of the church. At times a rehearsal is not needed. For some simpler weddings it is sufficient to come a little early and get a briefing from the priest or deacon.

Rehearsals generally take less than 45 minutes. Because everyone is more relaxed and casual rehearsals never look like a wedding. It is only necessary that everyone has a general idea of the order of service and their places in the church. The musicians may use the rehearsal to be familiar with the timing, especially the length of processions. Rehearsals also are not the time to bring up new ideas. The basic order of the service will have been worked out between the couple and the priest or deacon in a meeting in the weeks prior to the rehearsal.

Following church etiquette no food or drink should be brought into the church, including bottled water. Please be particularly conscious of this during rehearsal, while photos are taken before or after the ceremony and while decorating. Drinks (non-alcoholic) can be kept in the hall area or in the bride's room.

Marriage Preparation

At St. James our Pastoral Associate, Patty Douglass or Deacon Raul Rodriguez generally conduct marriage preparation. This preparation may consist of a questionnaire, sessions with Patty and/or Raul, sessions with trained sponsor couples in the parish and an Engaged Encounter weekend

retreat. In certain cases you may also be asked to see a professional counselor. Exactly what sort of preparation would work best for you will be worked out with Patty or Raul.

Planning the Ceremony

At your first meeting you will be given a booklet that will help you plan your wedding liturgy. It will have suggestions for scripture readings, options for prayers and blessings, etc. One of your final appointments a few weeks in advance of your wedding will be to go over your options for the ceremony with the person who will be the celebrant (Fr. Terry, Fr. Victor, Deacon Raul or a visiting priest or deacon).

With a Mass or Without a Mass

The celebration of marriage between two Catholics should normally take place during Mass. In a marriage between a Catholic and someone who is not a Catholic, the marriage is normally celebrated without Mass.

Music

Music for the wedding must fit the Catholic liturgy and be pastorally appropriate for a Catholic marriage. The use of popular music is discouraged. It is best to select music with a musician who is familiar with Catholic weddings. The hymnals we use for mass, found in the church pew, are the most appropriate source for music at your wedding.

If you use musicians other than those listed who normally play at St. James you must still have a St. James musician there to help with set-up of the sound system, microphones, sung Mass parts, etc. You are responsible for the compensation of all musicians. You will need to negotiate any fees directly with the musicians (please see attached Suggested Compensation Schedule).

St. James musicians available for weddings:

Kathy Bernards	971-237-1558	vocals/piano/organ
Denise Bernt	503-472-1382	vocals/guitar/bilingual
Robin Windsor	503-434-5340	vocals/piano

Decorations

Common decorations are pew bows, runners, and flowers for the altar, an entrance arch and extra candles. Flowers, candles and other decorations may not be placed on the altar; no objects should be placed on the altar at any time, for example during photography, without the permission of the priest or deacon. You must make sure that pew bows do not damage the pews, e.g. no strong tape. Because of the layout of the altar, ambo and presider's chair at St. James tall flower arrangements and candles can be a problem. These arrangements should not block the view into the sanctuary; they may have to be placed to the side and to the back. Rice and birdseed may not be used because they can be a slip hazard and are messy. If the flower girl drops petals they must be picked up after the ceremony. All decorations must be removed within the hour after the ceremony.

Generally any decorations the parish has put up must be left in place. Your decorations must also be in keeping with any church seasons. For example, the colors used in Lent and Advent are violet. Your colors should at least compliment the colors of these seasons. Additionally, the use

of flowers is discouraged in Lent. They should be kept to a minimum, maybe just the bride's bouquet. Couples have been successful using non-flowering plants as decorations during Lent.

Video and Photos during the Ceremony

Video and photos are not forbidden. However, photographers must be as unobtrusive as possible, not blocking anyone's view or being a distraction. You should check with the priest or deacon for any concerns they may have about photos or video.

Unity Candle

There is no provision for the use of a unity candle in the Catholic wedding rite. If you wish to use a unity candle we recommend that you do so at your reception. It can add another sense of ritual to the reception and can be a complimentary center piece next to the cake.

Bride's Room

St James has a small bride's room with a full length mirror. This room is also used for Reconciliation and storage so space is limited. The women in the bridal party should come as dressed and prepared as possible. The groom and his attendants should also come to the church dressed.

Fees, Gifts and Offerings

There are no fees charged by St. James for weddings. However, it is customary to give the parish an offering. This offering should be in line with your other expenses for flowers, photography, etc. Donations generally range from \$100 to \$200. A gift for the priest or deacon is not expected. (Musicians will have their own fees.)

Hall and Gym Rental for Receptions

St. James's kitchen, hall and gym are available for receptions. Please see our Office Manager, Sandra VanBergen, for more details.