

Your Wedding at St. Joseph's Catholic Church

1813 Oakdale Road
Modesto, CA
(209) 551-4973

Dear Bride and Groom-to-be,

We welcome you to our Church and pray that your marriage or Convalidation will be happy and holy. St. Joseph's wants everything to go smoothly and easily for you. The rules that follow have evolved through long experience with weddings in our church. Also, keep in mind that a Catholic Church is a sacred place which bears the real presence of God. A reverent and prayerful disposition must be adhered to at all times. Please advise your guests of this.

Parish Marriage Formation Coordinator:

The Parish utilizes a Marriage Formation Coordinator to help couples plan their Nuptial Mass and to understand the details of a wedding in the Catholic Church. The Priest, together with the Marriage Formation Coordinator (MFC), will prepare the couple to be ready/disposed to receive the sacrament of marriage, forming them to fulfill God's plan to be ready for a happy, holy, lifelong marriage! Prior to making an appointment with the Priest, please provide your contact information and the Coordinator will contact you for an "Initial Inquiry" call. Once you have your paperwork in order, the MFC will have you contact the Office to schedule your 1st appointment with a Priest. After you meet with the Priest, you will be contacted again by the MFC to schedule a 1 hour meeting. Both the Bride and the Groom must attend and this meeting is an important part of your wedding preparation. There is a \$50 charge for "no shows" or cancellations less than 24hrs before the scheduled meeting.

Music:

Due to the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage, sacred music must be used. *Music in Catholic Worship* states that "Great care should be taken, especially at marriages, where all people are involved at the important moments of the celebration, that the same general principles of planning worship and judging music are employed as at other liturgies, and above all, that the liturgy is prayer for all present, not a theatrical production."

For the music at your wedding you must contact our Music Director, Svetlana Avetisyan at (209-551-4973 ext 200) or email (savetisyan@stjmod.com). Because of the delicacy of the church organ and piano only St. Joseph's musicians are allowed to play for weddings. You can choose from any of the following: English, Bilingual cantor (man or women) and TLF Choir and organ or piano. **If you would like to bring your own church music group (Mariachi group, Spanish choir, cantor or church choral groups) the group and music choices must be approved by the Music Director.** No CD music is allowed during Mass.

If no Mass is being celebrated at your wedding but you would like music for the ceremony we also have instrumentalists.

Dress Code:

Wedding Dress and Attire of the Wedding Party

Your Marriage ceremony will take place in the parish church, which is consecrated as the house of God and a house of prayer. Accordingly, **apparel for the bride, the groom, the entire wedding party, the Lector and anyone walking down the aisle should reflect a spirit of modesty, dignity, and decorum. Dresses which are backless, strapless, “spaghetti straps” or have a neckline lower than two inches below the collarbone, do not cover the shoulders, or are shorter than two inches above the knee, *are not acceptable during the ceremony itself or for photographs taken inside the church.*** If the style of dress you choose for yourself or your attendants would offend or scandalize Christian modesty, please make arrangements for alterations or a shawl, wrap or bolero type jacket that provides coverage to be worn for any activity taking place within the Church. Coverings cannot be sheer/see through/etc (tulle and sheer lace are not sufficient). The Parish has off-white wraps which can be used, at the discretion of the Coordinator, if necessary. It is advised that you consult your Coordinator before making a final decision. Also, please note that these guidelines also apply to Wedding Receptions that take place in the Parish Hall. **The parish will have you sign a form to acknowledge you understand this policy**

Flowers and Decorations:

The Parish has 4 sprays of flowers donated weekly (behind the Altar and by Our Lady of Guadalupe) and the colors vary by the liturgical season. These flowers remain in place but you have the option of donating the flowers for your week for \$145 and adding your wedding colors to the arrangement. For additional flowers, the selection of the florist and the type of flowers are left up to the Bride and Groom. Flowers may not be placed on the Altar. However, you can place a flower arrangement on the floor in front of the Altar. Please attach your decorations on the pews with ribbon or elastic bands, never with tape, wire, nails, any other metal fixtures or stands. Also, nothing can be in the aisle (impeding the walking space) The florist or some responsible person should come immediately after the wedding and remove the floral pieces, cartons, stands, bows, etc., so that our other scheduled services may start on time. We suggest you take your flowers to your place of reception. Please note that the center aisle is 65' long and has 18 pairs of pews. Runners and real flower petals are not allowed but you may use silk petals as long as someone is responsible for removing them after the wedding.

Marriage Preparation

All couples must have completed our marriage preparation procedures prior to their wedding:

1. Initial contact is with the Marriage Formation Coordinator, once complete the couple may make their appointment with the Priest
2. Couple obtains Baptisms Certificates **issued no later than 6 months before meeting with the Priest**
3. Couple meets with the Priest to become acquainted and start paperwork. After you meet with the Priest, a secretary will explain the marriage paperwork process.
4. Couple meets with the Coordinator after booking the Church and the Rehearsal
5. Couple attends our in-house marriage prep course (six consecutive weeks with trained prep couples). Begin your marriage preparation at least 4 months before your wedding date
6. Couple attends or completes an online Natural Family Planning course through www.ccli.org
7. Couple contacts music director to arrange music for wedding
8. Bride, Groom, Lector and anyone processing down the aisle attend the rehearsal
9. Couple may meet again with priest to go over their consent and vows

Mass Times:

Weddings may be arranged on Saturdays with a two-hour time frame:

10am-12:00pm—Mass starting at 10:30am

12:00-2:00pm—Mass starting at 12:30pm

2:00-4:00pm—Mass starting at 2:30pm

This is to give you a half hour before the ceremony to decorate the church and (up to) a half hour after to take pictures. You are encouraged to consider other days or evenings for your wedding as Saturdays can become very busy.

Pictures:

Flash photographs may be taken before and after the ceremony, but under no circumstances during the ceremony itself. The photographer must remain stationary during the liturgy and at no time can they approach the steps to the sanctuary. They may take pictures from the side pew area or the back of the Church after the Mass begins.

Video:

Video recording is permitted on condition that it does not interfere with guest seating and that videographer remains unobtrusive, does not enter the sanctuary area of the Church, and remains stationary during the liturgy. The use of a tri-pod is encouraged.

Candles:

If candles, in addition to our regular altar candles will be used, you must provide plastic to keep wax off the tile

Confetti:

To ensure the safety of our guests, St. Joseph's does not allow confetti, rice, birdseed, or any other substance to be thrown on the Church sidewalks or grounds.

Rehearsal:

Wedding rehearsals and ceremonies start at scheduled times. The rehearsal is conducted by your MFC. For good order and uniformity, the direction of the representative must be followed. Please remember that there are limited facilities for dressing or changing. The dress code also applies to the rehearsal.

Hall Rental:

Our Parish Hall is available for rent for wedding receptions. You may ask for a tour. You will be required to obtain the necessary Hall Rental Agreement from the Parish Office as soon as the Priest schedules a wedding date. There is a separate fee for the hall use. The hall is only available when not in use by the Parish.

Church Donations:

The Church never charges for the celebration of a sacrament. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of Marriage or Convalidation, you can have a simple 15 minute ceremony for an administration donation of \$50.

For **active Parishioners** (confirmed by the Front Office), the use of the church and for the services of those involved the donation is **\$900 which includes the Cantor, Organist/Piano and the Coordinator**. For all others, the fee is **\$1250**. Considering the work and services of the Priest, Marriage Formation Coordinator, as well as the use of the Church building, we believe an appropriate payment should be proportionate to the total cost of your wedding. Payment to the Church of 10% of your reception cost, or the minimum of \$900/\$1250 is required. Couples also provide someone to do the readings (lector) and have the choice of providing at least 1 Altar Server or using one from the Parish (each parish altar server comes on their own time and receives a \$20 gift from the couple). ***** Please speak to your MFC for important changes to Bridal Party and Processions *****

To schedule St. Joseph's Church for the wedding we ask for a \$100 non-refundable deposit. The balance of the fees (payable in installments) are due within 60 days and are refundable (less proration for time spent) only if the wedding is cancelled more than 30 days before the wedding.

The parish will also have you sign a form to acknowledge that you understand the policies and details of your wedding preparation.

The donation for the celebrant priest is not included. Please consider giving him one after the ceremony or bring to the rehearsal and give your Priests' gift to the Coordinator.

What to Bring to the Rehearsal:

1. Marriage License
 2. Name & address of Best Man (or whoever will sign the Marriage License)
 3. Name & address of Maid of Honor (or whoever will sign the Marriage License)
 4. Readings you have chosen for your Mass from the "Your Love Story" book and the practicing Catholic who will lector needs to attend the rehearsal
 5. Altar Server(s) donation if using Parish Server(s) in envelopes
 6. Gift for the Priest in an envelope
 7. Wedding Programs if you will be handing them out (please have your coordinator review before printing)
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Dear Bride and Groom,

We are here to help you prepare for your Sacramental Marriage. Please initial so we know that you received and are aware of the following details:

- ___begin Wedding Prep and Natural Family Planning at least 4 months before wedding date
- ___turn in newly issued baptism certificates
- ___contact Music Director
- ___pick scripture readings, choose lector(s), decide on Altar Server
- ___finish forms in Front Office
- ___send picture of dress choice for Bride and Attendants.
if modesty option is needed, what you have decided. Here are a few ideas...and your Coordinator can assist you in your final decision. The parish also has white shawls available.

Groom's Signature _____
Date _____

Bride's Signature _____
Date _____

(rev Jan 2021)

