



St. Maximilian Kolbe
Catholic Church

Weddings Policy

St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church

Orlando, FL

407-482-4282

407-482-4484 fax

www.avaloncatholic.org

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

“I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.

I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”

The Rite of Marriage

Congratulations

You have decided you want to share your lives together and that you wish to have God’s blessing upon your marriage. Your parish is here to help you so that you have the best possible foundation for your married life.

Contact the parish 6-9 months before your proposed wedding. We follow Canon Law and the policies of the Diocese of Orlando so that everything we do strengthens your marriage and your life in the parish.

Practicing Catholic

Your desire to be married “in the Church” means you want to live “in the Church” as a disciple of Christ. You are expected, as are all parishioners, to participate in the parish through your stewardship of your time, talent and treasure, giving as you have been given to.

To participate as a practicing Catholic, you must be registered in the parish, attend Sunday Mass weekly, use your envelopes to support the parish, and become active in a parish ministry. “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10).

Paperwork

- *Form “A”* you fill out at your first meeting with the priest.
- *Form “B”* (Freedom to Marry Witness Forms), two forms per person. Have your parents or someone who has known you since you were 18 years old to fill them out. The witness forms must be notarized or signed in the presence of a priest. The Witness Forms have to be completed before a wedding date can be set.
- *Get a new baptism certificate* (not a birth certificate). Non-Catholics do not need a baptism certificate. You can get a new certificate by calling or writing your church of baptism. It takes a couple of weeks and is free. Return the baptism certificate to the parish.
- *Register in the parish.* If you are not already registered in the parish, register with the parish. You can find the registration form and survey on the website or get one at Mass.
- *Witness Forms.* The bride and the groom each need two people to complete and have notarized a form that states that you are free to be married in the church. Your witnesses can be your parents, relatives, or anyone who has known you since age sixteen. You get the Witness Form when you meet the priest or download it from <http://avaloncatholic.googlepages.com/DioceseofOrlandoMarriagePolicy-FormB.pdf>.

Dispensation. To marry a non-Catholic, a Catholic must obtain permission from the Bishop. The permission takes about 6 weeks and there is a fee of \$15, with the check made out to the Diocese of Orlando.

Special Circumstances

- *Prior Marriage* . A couple cannot be married in the Catholic Church if one or both has a previous marriage. This applies to non-Catholics and Catholics alike. The divorced person has to petition for an annulment, which takes about a year if it is granted. Marriage preparation may not begin nor may a date for a Catholic wedding be set until the annulment is granted.
- *Convalidation of a marriage*. If you have been married outside of the Church and now wish to have your marriage blessed in the Church (convalidation), your marriage preparation may be adapted to include Marriage Encounter or other steps to best strengthen your marriage in the Church.
- *Death Certificate*. If a former spouse is deceased, please give the parish a copy of the death certificate.
- *Youthful Marriage* . When either of you are under age 19, you will be referred to a Catholic Charities counselor for an evaluation. Your parents will be interviewed by the priest.

Pregnancy. The Church seeks the best for both you and the expected child. Pregnancy of itself is not reason enough to be married or to omit the usual 6-month preparation process. Every effort is made to insure that you are truly ready for marriage. You will be referred to a Catholic Charities counselor in Orlando (407-658-1818) for a pre-marital evaluation.

Setting the Date

The wedding date may be set after you have met the priest, met twice with your FOCCUS couple and your FOCCUS inventory shows a vibrant relationship, and your file has all four Witness Forms and your baptism certificate. It usually takes about two to three months after you first contact the parish to set the wedding date.

Donation

Marriage preparation and your wedding ceremony in the church include all marriage preparation materials and the services of the FOCCUS couple, secretary, priest, musician, and use of the church for the rehearsal and wedding. Contact St. Joseph church for the musician's fee and fee for use of the church. A donation to the priest is usually \$150. A donation to the parish is usually \$150. All donations are tax deductible when the check is made out to Saint Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church. All fees are due one month before the wedding date.

FOCCUS

Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study is a self-diagnostic inventory to help you target and work through issues important to marriage like dual career marriages, lifestyle expectations, parenting, extended family, and values. Call one of the FOCCUS couples assigned to you. The first time you meet with your FOCCUS couple at their home, you fill out the FOCCUS inventory. The second meeting, usually a week later, you talk about your responses.

Pre-Cana Weekend

The Pre-Cana weekend retreat is held at San Pedro Center in Winter Park every other month. It costs \$297 per couple. It is from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. You need to have completed FOCCUS before going on the Pre Cana Weekend. You get a certificate of completion at the end of the weekend. Call the Family Life Office of the Diocese of Orlando 407-246-4865 to make a reservation.

Liturgy Preparation

After the Pre-Cana Weekend, call the priest presiding at your wedding to go over scripture readings and walk through the ceremony. He will give you a form to bring to the county clerk that will give you a discount on your marriage license. The sacrament of reconciliation (confession) is encouraged for the Catholics. Call the musician to choose the music for the wedding ceremony.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Why do we have weddings?

- Seal and strengthen your love
- Signify and share in the union between Christ and us, his Church
- Celebrate your union before God and the Church.

Everything about the wedding ceremony is to promote these three purposes. Meet the priest or deacon 3 or 4 weeks before the wedding about the following:

Wedding Church

As our parish does not have a church building, we use Saint Joseph Catholic Church. It is at 1501 North Alafaya Trail, on the southeast corner of Colonial Drive and Alafaya Trail. You must have permission from St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church before you can set a date with St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Nuptial Mass or Ceremony

When both bride and groom is Catholic, a Catholic Mass is preferred; a Catholic Mass takes about 45 minutes.

When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, a wedding outside of Mass is preferred and takes about 35 minutes.

Wedding Program

Make a wedding program. The most special weddings invite the participation of the assembly to sing and pray together. Ask for sample wedding programs.

Rehearsal

- Rehearsals are usually held Friday afternoon or evening.
- The rehearsal starts with prayer.
- Lectors practice their entire scripture reading from the pulpit during the rehearsal.

Bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.

Gathering Rite

- You have invited friends and family to your wedding. Out of hospitality to your guests, you may greet people at the entrance to the church.
- Ushers and bridesmaids seat people up front and forward close to the action. If you wish, there may be groom and bride sides.
- The cantor may briefly rehearse a piece of music with the assembly to encourage people to sing and participate.
- The cantor invites people to stand and greet those around them before the procession begins.
- The wedding party processes in this order: priest, groomsmen escorting bridesmaids, family escorting groom, family escorting bride. The alternate order of procession: priest or deacon, groom, groomsmen escorting bridesmaids, bride and father.

Select one instrumental piece for the entire procession.

Scripture

- From the selections in the *Together for Life* booklet which you received at the Pre-Cana Weekend, choose a scripture reading from the Old Testament (first reading) and New Testament (second reading) and Gospel.
- Review the readings with the priest or deacon, share with him why you chose those scripture readings.
- Select two readers who lector in their own church and are good public speakers.

A third person of your choosing may read the General Intercessions.

Rite of Marriage

Face the assembly for the exchange of rings and promises.

If a Nuptial Mass...

You may choose two people to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine during the presentation of gifts.

GUIDELINES

All Guidelines are subject to the host church

Flowers

Pew ribbons and flowers may be used provided that they are attached with protected wiring (no tape) and do not shed.

Flowers and plants may be placed by the altar and ambo, but with care not to block movement, sightlines or aisles.

Candles

If you are having a unity candle ceremony, you need to provide your own candle.

Candles or candelabras attached to pew ends are not allowed.

Rice and Confetti

Rice, confetti, bird seed and dropping of flower petals are not allowed. Bubbles outside are fine.

Aisle Runners

Aisle runners and aisle cloths are not allowed.

Dressing Rooms

Contact St. Joseph about where the bride may dress. The other bridal parties and parishioners are grateful that you leave the church and bathrooms in better condition than you found them.

Photography

Photographs and videotapes are great reminders of your wedding. However, you don't want the taking of pictures to become more important than the wedding itself.

Photographers and videographers set up in one place in the back of the church behind the sight-lines of the assembly. Before and after the ceremony, they may move about and use a flash.

“Get me to the church on time...”

Arrive on time for the rehearsal.

Plan on arriving about an hour before the wedding. Give yourselves time to relax and, in fairness to others, to start the wedding on time.

Food and Drink

The church is used by many people. Out of their consideration, no food or drink is allowed anywhere in the church building.

Music

Call the parish musician 4-6 weeks before the wedding to choose the music

At the discretion of the parish musician, other musicians and singers may be considered depending on their skill.

The music selected must reflect the meaning of the sacrament of marriage.

PHONE NUMBERS

407-482-4282 Saint Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church

407-275-0841 Saint Joseph Catholic Church

407-658-1818 Catholic Charities

407-246-4865 Pre Cana Weekend/Family Life Office