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Wedding Guidelines



St. Elizabeth Seton Roman Catholic Church
Everyone is welcome . . . where we're alive in the Spirit

5260 28th Avenue SW
Naples, FL, 34116
Phone: 239-455-3900
Fax: 239-455-6895



Our parish community rejoices with you as you plan your wedding. We will try to make your wedding day as meaningful and beautiful as possible.

It sometimes happens that people can become a little distant from the Church during early adulthood. If this has happened to you, we hope that planning your Marriage in the Church will help you get back in touch with the roots of your faith.

If you have been away for a while, please come home. Talk to the priest planning your wedding. You will find him understanding and compassionate and ready to help you return to the Sacraments of your Church. We want to help you feel at home again in the Church and rediscover the richness and the beauty of belonging to a faith community. We need your presence and participation now so that we will be a home for you as well as for your children and grandchildren many generations into the future.

If you have been close to the Sacraments all your life, we rejoice with you.

Setting the date and time

We ask that you contact us at least SIX months before your wedding date. This gives us the opportunity to plan with love and care. Six months also provides the necessary time for all diocesan requirements to be fulfilled.

Weddings are given three (3) hour time blocks to ensure that the wedding party is not rushed, avoiding any compromise to the solemnity of the Sacrament.

Planning with the Priest

All plans relating to your Church wedding must be made with a priest. Please call for an appointment when you are ready to begin the planning process.

In most cases, the priest you first speak with will be the priest who will take care of the paperwork and celebrate your wedding. Please communicate with that priest only. Dealing directly with the "contact priest" will minimize any miscommunication.

When the Celebrant is a Visiting Priest

We always welcome priest/deacon friends or relatives whom you invite to celebrate your wedding.

Any priest or deacon outside of the Diocese of Venice who is asked to witness and celebrate the Sacrament must receive permission from the Diocese of Venice to do so. The standard protocol is that the Bishop of the priest/deacon (if the priest is an order priest, his Abbot) write a letter that the officiate is in good standing with his diocese/order. This letter then is sent with any/all necessary paperwork to the

Diocese of Venice. Once again, this is a regulation which cannot and will not be overlooked. Thus, it is imperative that the couple and the preparation priest be fastidious and timely with the required material.

Requirements

If the bride is from another parish, she will need a letter of permission from the Pastor of her parish to be married at St. Elizabeth Seton Roman Catholic Church by one of our priests.

Marriage Preparation Forms: The following are required by the Diocese of Venice, FL and generally by all dioceses in the U.S. Your priest who journeys with and prepares you for the Sacrament will provide you both with the material and directions in filling out the forms.

1. *Baptismal Certificates:* If you were not baptized at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, you will have to contact your parish of Baptism for a NEW copy of your Baptismal Certificates. Baptismal Certificates cannot be older than 6 months from the date of your wedding. Additionally, Confirmation Certificates and Eucharistic Certificates are needed if they are not recorded on your Baptismal Certificate.

2. *Letters of Freedom to Marry:* Our Diocese requires that we obtain two signed statements from family members or close friends of the bride and groom stating that they have had no prior marriages. The priest will give you special forms (Form B) for these statements.

Florida State License to Marry: Every Marriage license is issued by a county court judge or clerk of the circuit court under his/her hand and seal. Marriage licenses are issued by counties, and you can apply for your license at any county office.

<http://www.collierclerk.com/recording/marriage-licenses>

You can get married in any county in Florida, regardless of where you obtained your marriage license. To obtain a marriage license you will need:

- Identification: a picture ID such as a driver's license, state ID card, or valid passport; both parties will also have to provide their Social Security numbers but do not need to provide their Social Security Cards.
- Fees: Marriage license fees can be reduced if you complete a licensed Florida pre-marital course.
- Marriage licenses are valid for 60 days after issuance. You must perform the ceremony of Marriage before this 60 days has expired. Blood Tests are not required. There is a 3-day waiting period after issuance of the license before you can get married, unless you have completed the Florida pre-marital course. Pre-Cana is accepted.
- *Important: The couple will receive a certificate after each workshop they attend. The certificates need to be given to the priest preparing you for Marriage. The priest will then give you a **Certificate of Completion** (this is different from the workshop certificates) that can be given to the County Clerk's Office.*

Marriage Preparation:

During your meeting with the priest, you will be given a Premarital Inventory. The results will provide the couple with a deeper insight into their relationship and their compatibility in key areas such as communication, family values, sexuality, finances, and religion.

In the Diocese of Venice, each engaged couple must attend two workshops to help prepare them for the Sacrament of Matrimony. It does not matter the order in which these workshops are taken, just that the couple attends them. A calendar for upcoming workshops and instructions for registering can be found at the Diocese of Venice website under “Evangelization.” The link is below:

<http://dioceseofvenice.org/offices/evangelization/marriage-preparation/>

1. **Life Skills Workshop**: Couples will learn about the skills that are essential for a successful Marriage – communications, finances, conflict resolution, etc. Also, couples will be given the opportunity to dialogue honestly and openly about their future lives together. If either person in the couple has previously been married, the Life Skills workshop is to be replaced with the **To Trust Again** workshop, which deals more specifically with these situations.

2. **Sacramentality Workshop**: As a Sacrament in the Catholic Church, Marriage means that a couple fully embraces the Catholic understanding of the commitment to a love that is free, total, faithful, and open to children. At the Sacramentality Workshop, couples will learn more about the Church’s teachings on Marriage and human sexuality and applying these teachings in their own Marriage.

Marriages with Members of Other Faiths: When a Roman Catholic marries a Christian from another Church or a non-Christian, a dispensation is required. The priest will be glad to help with the details. It is permitted to invite a minister or rabbi to give a blessing at these weddings.

Prior Marriages: In addition, if either or both parties were previously married, one of the following documents will be required. If the previous Marriage ended in the death of a spouse, the Death Certificate must be submitted to the priest. In cases of a civil divorce, a Decree of Nullity issued by the Catholic Church must be submitted. This decree is required of each previously married party, Catholic or non-Catholic, regardless of the circumstances of the previous marriage.

Celebration of the Sacrament:

As part of your preparation, you will be given a copy of *Together for Life*. This book will guide you in planning the celebration of the Rite of Marriage on your wedding day.

The priest will discuss the two forms for the celebration of the Rite of Marriage.

1. The **Wedding Ceremony** consists of the Liturgy of the Word (the first half of the Mass), and the exchange of vows, the blessing and exchange of rings, the Lord’s Prayer, the nuptial blessing, and dismissal.

2. The **Nuptial Mass** celebrates the Rite of Marriage within the context of the entire Mass. It includes all of the above elements and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.



Guidelines and Protocol for the celebration of the Sacrament

It is strongly encouraged that the Marriage Rite be incorporated in the Liturgy (the Mass). However, it is the couple's choice. Whether as a part of the Liturgy or only the Rite, all liturgical celebrations are to be executed according to the dignity, sacredness, and solemnity due to the Church's greatest prayer—the Liturgy. As a liturgical rite, the Sacrament of Marriage **MUST** be celebrated according to the guidelines which the Church sets forth to ensure the integrity of the Liturgy.

The Sacrament of Marriage is the only Sacrament in which the couple is given options for prayers, readings, the vows, and the blessings. Please carefully read and discuss between yourselves which options will assist you both in expressing your praise and worship and aspirations and hopes as you enter into this sacramental covenant of Marriage.



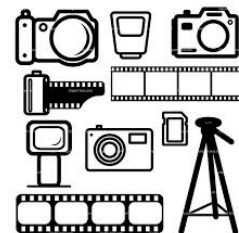
- † Absolutely no secular readings, poems, prayers, music, and songs will be permitted during the Liturgy.
- † Additionally, no gestures, clothing, props, dancing and/or any other actions that compromise the integrity and sacredness of the Sacrament and its celebration will be permitted or tolerated.
- † The priest reserves the right that any infraction of these guidelines permits him

not to participate in the celebration of the Sacrament.

- † Consequently, please be respectful of the parish's guidelines and protocols. They are established to benefit (not dictate or control) the couple's enrichment and experience of God's grace during this rite.

Music for your Wedding:

Please contact the parish Director of Music before you begin planning your wedding Mass or ceremony (239-455-3900). Sacred Music, whether sung or instrumental, reflects the solemn nature of the Sacrament being received. As such, music of a "popular" genre, and recorded music is unsuitable for use in Catholic Worship. The Director of Music will assist you in selecting music that is both beautiful and appropriate for your wedding Mass or ceremony. The Director of Music should be contacted after you have completed your initial meeting with the Priest and have begun to work on selecting the readings and prayers for your wedding.



Photographers (still and video)

Please tell your photographer/videographer to meet with the priest prior to the start of the wedding to discuss the guidelines for taking pictures during the Liturgy. The wedding party may pose for pictures after the ceremony. Because there may be another wedding or service following, we allow 20 minutes for formal photographs by your photographer.

Decorations

Only **two** floral arrangements are to be used for the Sanctuary. Arrangements are not to block the Altar or the Ambo (pulpit) from the view of the congregation. Floral pew markers or pew bows are only to be attached by pew clips or large floral pins. **NO** real flowers are to be used on the pews. The couple must arrange to have pew markers/bows removed prior to departure following the wedding. No birdseed, rice, or flower petals are to be used to send off the married couple.

Since we have Mass scheduled and the possibility of a Funeral or Memorial Mass the morning before your wedding, **decorating the Church is not to be done the night of the rehearsal without first asking if any other scheduled event is to take place.**

If you choose the option of lighting a Unity Candle, you will need to provide the center and two side candles.

Due to insurance regulations and the risk of injury, **aisle runners are not permitted** for weddings at St. Elizabeth Seton Roman Catholic Church. To prevent damage and staining of our carpet, **REAL** flowers are not to be used by the flower girl. Artificial flower petals, however, are permitted.



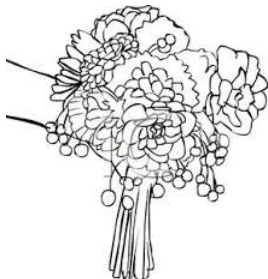
All florist boxes/vases, garment bags, programs, etc. are to be removed from the Church after the ceremony. The Church should be left exactly as it was prior to the ceremony. The parish cannot accept responsibility for the safety of any valuables left at anytime in the church.

Please ensure that modesty is observed when choosing your wedding dress, the dresses of your bridal party, and the groom and his party as well. All involved in the Marriage Rite (bride, groom, bridesmaids and groomsmen) are expected to dress according to the sacredness and solemnity of the Sacrament. If you are uncertain as to what is appropriate, please speak with the priest.

Be on time! It may be traditional for brides to be late, but this causes inconvenience to everyone—family, friends, elderly guests and other brides. Please do your best to arrive on time. Do not allow your photographer to make you late!

Remember you are not hiring a hall or a place. The Church is a sacred and holy space. At **no** time are you permitted to move or re-arrange the liturgical furnishings of the Church.

I have read and agree to all the terms and conditions stated in the Wedding Guidelines of St. Elizabeth Seton Roman Catholic Church.



Groom’s name (print) _____

Groom’s signature _____

Bride’s name (printed) _____

Bride’s signature _____