



St. Francis Xavier Church

Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

WELCOME - THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

The sacrament of Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic church. It confers special graces of the Holy Spirit upon the couple being married.

MARRIAGE - WHAT IS MARRIAGE IN THE EYES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The sacrament of Marriage is a unique sacrament in that the couple confers the sacrament to each other when they express their consent before the Church. There must be an official Church witness present, either a priest or a deacon, because the actual celebrant is the couple themselves. Matrimony is an act of public worship, a community prayer, bringing God's blessing to the couple. It is in this sacrament that a man and woman in marriage reveal the full, free, faithful and fruitful love that Jesus Christ has for each of us.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament. (CCC, 1601)

MARRIAGE - WHO CAN GET MARRIED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

There are three basic requirements for a valid Catholic wedding:

The couple must be capable of being married—that is, they must be a woman and a man who are free of any impediment that would prevent marriage.

- The couple must give their consent to be married — that is, by an act of their will they irrevocably give and accept one another in order to establish marriage (Canon 1057).
- They must follow the canonical form for marriage—that is, they must be married according to the laws of the Church so that the Church and the wider community will be certain about the validity of their marriage.

MARRIAGE – WHEN TO SET THE DATE

Couples should speak to their pastor at least twelve months in advance.

MARRIAGE - WHO CAN BE A WITNESS TO THE MARRIAGE

According to the teachings of the Catholic Church, a priest or deacon is the church's official witness to the Sacrament of Marriage. In **addition**, there are 2 other witnesses whose role is to be present to attest to **the exchange** of consent. Witnesses do not have to be baptized and they can be of different or the same gender. The only requirement is that the witnesses are over the age of sixteen.

MARRIAGE - THE FORM OF MARRIAGE

According to canon 1108, para. 1, it is the requirement for validity of marriage, that when a Catholic marries another Catholic or when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, such a marriage must be contracted in the presence of the local parish priest or deacon and in the presence of two witnesses. The wedding must be performed at the Catholic parish unless the couple receives a dispensation.

What is a dispensation?

A dispensation is a relaxation of a law in a particular case which can only be done by the Bishop. Your priest can assist you in obtaining one.

MARRYING A NON-CATHOLIC OR NON-CHRISTIAN.

A Catholic is permitted to get married to a non-Catholic or non-Christian in the Church with permission from the Church authority. To maintain the consistency across the Archdiocese of Toronto, it is a policy that no Eucharist be celebrated for marriages between a Catholic and a non-baptized person. The celebration of the Eucharist at marriages between a Catholic and a validly baptized non-Catholics is discouraged.

MARRIAGE - WHAT DO COUPLES NEED TO GET MARRIED IN THE CHURCH

Church law states that the normal place in which marriage should take place is the parish where either the bride or groom regularly worship.

Documents required:

- A current, updated copy of a Baptismal certificates from their church of Baptism. **(less than 6 months)**
- A baptized non-Catholic needs to provide a copy of their Baptism
- Forms that will be filled out on the first interview with the priest
- Marriage Preparation Course Certificate
- Civil Marriage License from City Hall (valid for only 3 months)

MARRIAGE: GETTING MARRIED IN A CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.

The procedure to get married in a Catholic Church in another country or Diocese is similar to getting married locally. Please contact your local Pastor who will prepare you for marriage and instruct you to take the Marriage Preparation Course. The Marriage documents are then 'transferred' to the Parish of marriage in the other country via the Chancery offices of the respective Dioceses involved or by being handed back to you to send to the Diocese which you will be married in, months in advance of your wedding.

MARRIAGE - WHAT IS A CONVALIDATION MARRIAGE

A convalidation is a celebration of the sacrament of Marriage after a civil marriage ceremony has taken place. If you have not been married in the Catholic church, and would like to have your marriage validated, contact the parish at stfrancisxaviermi@archtoronto.org and request an appointment with the Pastor.

What is involved in preparing for a convalidation?

A Marriage preparation course for convalidating couples. It is typically an adapted version of the preparation that engaged couples undergo. The content of the preparation will vary from couple to couple, as different couples will have different levels of experience and knowledge of the Church, the sacrament of marriage, and of each other.

What are the benefits of convalidation?

It allows couples to put themselves right with God and the Church. This should give peace of mind, joy, and the confidence that comes from doing God's will. It is a witness of their faith to their children.

Convalidation allows Catholics who had been living in invalid marriages to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church. Receiving the sacrament of reconciliation (confession) and becoming validly married prepares spouses to return to receiving Our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion.

What will the ceremony be like?

As with the marriage preparation, some of the ceremonial details will depend upon the individual couple. A convalidation is a true celebration of marriage, and so it follows the Catholic Church's Order of Celebrating Matrimony. Convalidations are typically much simpler than other weddings in terms of the other ceremonial details (number of people in attendance, clothes, music, etc.), but there must be at least two witnesses in addition to the priest or deacon.

MARRIAGE - WHAT IS AN ANNULMENT

An annulment is a declaration by a Church tribunal (a Catholic church court) that a marriage thought to be valid according to Church law actually fell short of at least one of the essential elements required for a binding union.

A declaration of nullity has no effect on the legitimacy of children who were born of the union following the wedding day since the child's mother and father were presumed to be married at the time that the child was born.

If you believe that your marriage may be invalid and would like more information, please contact the Archdiocese of Toronto at 416 934 00606 ext. 602 (spiritual affairs).

Does the Catholic Church allow separation?

The Church recognizes that some marital situations are intolerable and perhaps even detrimental to the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of persons. However, even in the situation of physical separation, the spouses do not cease to be married and are therefore not free to start dating other people, let alone enter into a new marriage, no matter how long the separation lasts (CCC 1649). This remains the case even after a civil divorce.

Can a Divorced Catholic receive Communion?

There is a widespread misconception that divorced persons cannot receive Holy Communion or forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession. This is simply not true. A divorced person who is not in a new relationship most certainly can receive Holy Communion or go to Confession. Isn't an annulment just a fancy way for the Catholic Church to recognize and accept divorce? No. Whereas a civil decree of divorce states that the marriage has been dissolved, an annulment is a declaration by the Church that the marriage bond did not come into existence in the first place, because some essential element was lacking from the parties' consent.

Helpful links:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/media/offices--ministries/sub-sites/belief/09-annulment.pdf>

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/what-are-grounds-for-annulment>

<https://www.hbgdiocese.org/tribunal/divorce-and-remarriage/12-myths-about-marriage-annulments/>

Your Checklist to get married at SFX

1 Year Prior to Wedding

- Request a first interview with priest (Form I)
- Set Wedding date and time: _____
- Photograph of Couple
- Reserve a place in a Catholic Marriage Preparation course (see back)
- Priest will inform you of any dispensations needed
- Contact Musicians (priest will provide contacts)

6 Months Prior to Wedding

- Request an updated Baptismal Certificate from the Church you were Baptized.
- Begin to look at potential Biblical Readings - to be discussed with the priest
- Contact the parish office to arrange a date and time for wedding rehearsal with one of our parish wedding coordinators: _____
- Arrange Second meeting with your priest or after completing the marriage course.

1 Month Prior to Wedding

- Suggested wedding donation to church (\$500)
- Bring in Ontario Marriage license from the City of Mississauga

Important Notes

1. Respect all liturgical norms of the Church. This is found in your copy of the Rite of Marriage.
2. Direct your Photographers to the priest on the day of the wedding. Drone cameras are not permitted inside the Church.
3. The parish wedding co-ordinator will assist you in the wedding liturgy. Kindly limit your own wedding co-ordinator to the reception and other events.
4. Scattering confetti or flower petals are not permitted anywhere on the church property.
5. Be on time; there are other weddings besides yours.
6. Consult with your priest about ethnic wedding traditions during your first interview.
7. The priests will discuss wedding questions/concerns with you, not your parents.
8. Wedding music should be exclusively Catholic religious music. Popular songs on the radio are unsuitable for your wedding; the musicians will help you make appropriate selections.
9. Kindly have bridal party dressed modestly.
10. Respect the directives of our office staff and parish wedding co-ordinator. If you need clarification, consult the priest.
11. Arrange someone to clear pews after liturgy (flowers, tissues, garbage, decorations etc.)

St. Francis Xavier Church

5650 Mavis Road, Mississauga On L5V 2N6
Tel: 905 890 5290 Fax: 905 890 0261
Email: StFrancisXavierMi@archtoronto.org
Website: stfrancisxavierchurch.blogspot.com

Document prepared by: Liz Rybka