

Church of the Visitation

655 Sunnydale Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134-2884

Tel: (415) 494-5517 * Fax: (415) 494-5513

www.visitacionchurch.org

WEDDING GUIDELINES

We appreciate that you are considering Church of the Visitation as the place for your Catholic Marriage. In order to be married at our parish, either the bride or the groom must be Roman Catholic. A parish priest from Visitation must determine both parties to be free to marry.

Please complete the Wedding Reservation Form and submit to the Parish Office. We will contact you to confirm receipt of the completed form. It is an Archdiocesan policy that you must book your wedding at least six (6) months in advance. Below is the basic information with regards to wedding policies and costs. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

WHO CAN GET MARRIED AT CHURCH OF THE VISITACION?

You qualify as an “in parish” couple if you:

- Live within the parish boundaries, or
- Have been registered and active within the parish for at least six months, or
- Have a connection to Visitation — i.e. attended Our Lady of the Visitation School or received any sacrament at Church of the Visitation (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation)

If you do not meet one of the qualifications above, then you are considered an “outside of the parish” couple. If registered at another parish, written permission must be obtained from that parish.

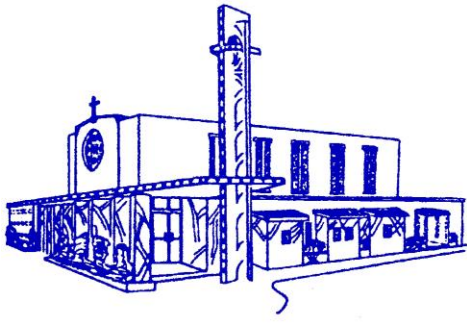
POLICIES:

After your reservation is received, a priest will contact you to set an initial interview. Once a couple has met with the priest and they have together determined that the Sacrament of Matrimony is to be celebrated at Church of the Visitation, the priest will then confirm with the couple the date and time for the ceremony. Necessary paperwork will be done at subsequent meetings. Required Documents: Form A, Form B, Baptismal Certificates, Marriage License, etc.

The couple are required to do the FOCCUS assessment and the interpretation of the results, the planning of the wedding liturgy and the rehearsal evening. The couple are also required to attend a diocesan marriage preparation program (information will be provided). Further detailed information concerning flowers, decoration, photography, etc., will be provided after the initial interview with the priest and once the date of the marriage is secured.

COSTS:

While there is no cost for the Sacrament of Matrimony itself, contributions are required to cover the use and maintenance of the parish as well as the preparation time required for a Catholic marriage. The basic fee for a wedding at Church of the Visitation is \$500 for active parishioners and \$750 for all others. This contribution, in addition to covering the use of the church, covers a number of



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meetings between the couple and the priest, the witness interviews with the priest, and the preparation of all the required canonical papers. Note that this fee does not cover any Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, or other fees associated with preparation programs outside the parish.

In order to secure the wedding date, which must be approved by the pastor, a minimum deposit of \$200 is due upon confirmation. This deposit is non-refundable. The remaining balance is due a month before the wedding. The deposit must be made at the parish office. Please be sure to reference your names and the wedding date with the payment.

CONVALIDATION:

If you are already married by a civil authority, your marriage will be considered a Convalidation (blessed by the Catholic Church). Convalidation is not simply a “blessing” of an existing union. It requires that a new, free act of consent be made. Paperwork and preparation will be required just like a normal wedding ceremony. A waiting period of one (1) year from the date of the civil marriage is required for the Convalidation to be approved.

If married civilly two years or less, attend a parish or diocesan marriage preparation program; if previously married, discuss with the priest or his delegate options for specialized preparation. If married more than two years it is highly recommended that you attend a marriage enrichment weekend or event.

PRIOR MARRIAGE:

In the simplest terms, if a Catholic wishes to marry in the Church when there has been a previous marriage for either party, the partner in the earlier union must have died or the Church must have issued a declaration of nullity (frequently called an annulment) of the previous marriage.

The Catholic Church views all true marriages with respect. It presumes that they are valid. Thus, it considers the marriage of two Protestant, Jewish or even non-believing persons, any of whom marry according to their own tradition, to be binding in the eyes of God. Consequently, a tribunal process is required to establish that an essential ingredient in the relationship was missing from the start of the previous marriage.

For Catholics with a prior marriage outside the Church, the declaration of nullity is based on what is called a “lack of canonical form.” For Catholics with a prior “valid” marriage, the tribunal process is termed a “formal case.” Catholics should consult with their pastor if a declaration of nullity is needed.