

SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

10330 Hilcroft St.

Houston, Texas 77096-4795

713.729.0221 FAX 713.729.3294

www.stmhouston.org



and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh.'

Mk 10:8



Wedding Guidelines

And

Preparation Information

Welcome !

It is with great joy that the Catholic community of Saint Thomas More welcomes you at the beginning of your preparation for the sacrament of Matrimony. This sacrament, as all sacraments, is a visible sign of God's love for us. You are to be a living example of how we the Church should love God and how God loves us, the Church. (Eph. 5:31)



A Marriage is established by the conjugal covenant, that is, the irrevocable consent of both spouses, by which they freely give themselves to each other and accept each other. Moreover, this singular union of a man and a woman requires, and the good of the children demands, the complete fidelity of the spouses and the indissoluble unity of the bond.¹

These guidelines have been developed after much prayer and study. It

is our hope that these guidelines will help you experience your sacrament more fully and provide you with the needed education and information for this special event.

May God who has begun the good work in you, bring it to fulfillment.

The Priests and Deacons of Saint Thomas More

1. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Guadium et spes*, no. 48.



GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHER

Photographers are expected to “touch base” with the priest, deacon or wedding director at the Church before the wedding ceremony.

Pictures can be taken in the Main church area **45 minutes before the ceremony begins**. Pictures may also be taken outside, in the Cry Room, or in the Narthex.

Flash pictures may **NOT** be taken during the ceremony, with the exception of the processional and recessional.

Non-flash pictures are permitted during the service as long as the photographer remains out of view of the congregation. The photographer is not permitted in the sanctuary or closer than the first unoccupied pew during the ceremony.

When pictures are taken after the ceremony, the photographer is **limited to 20 minutes**. There are often weddings and other activities after your ceremony and timing is important.

Please remember that the Church is **NOT** a studio, but rather a sacred place that requires adherence to the decorum of a place of worship. Umbrellas, additional light fixtures, etc. are not permitted. Pictures that are not in harmony with the sacredness of the Church may not be taken. For example, at no time may your photographer stand on the pews.

When videotaping a ceremony, a camera, without additional lights, is permitted in the sanctuary. The videographer must remain stationary. You may not attach a microphone to any of the furnishings in the sanctuary.

Please give a copy of this page to your photographer.



Notes



THE PREPARATION PROGRAM

PRENUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW: Is a straightforward set of questions that helps the church establish your freedom to marry, your intent, and faith readiness, among other things.

FOCCUS®: Saint Thomas More uses the FOCCUS® questionnaire to begin the preparation program. The FOCCUS® Inventory is designed to help engaged couples appreciate their unique relationship, learn more about themselves, and discuss topics important to their lifelong marriage.

SPONSOR COUPLE PROGRAM: To prepare engaged couples for the joys, challenges and commitment of Catholic marriage. This consists of a series of meetings (five) between you and a trained married couple. Dialogue topics include such matters as your roles and expectations in marriage, sources of conflict, values, and marital intimacy, all of which are confidential.

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKEND: Engaged Encounter fulfills the Catholic marriage preparation requirement in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for a primary program but is usually a part of a larger process of marriage preparation. You will receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the program. Cameron Retreat Center can only accommodate 32 couples per retreat so we encourage early registration. Retreats usually close 3-4 months in advance. A similar program is offered in Spanish.

<http://www.familylifeministryhouston.org/programs-for-engaged-couples.html>

TO REGISTER ON-LINE. PROGRAM FEE IS \$225

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP) The Catholic Church supports the methods of Natural Family Planning (NFP) because they respect God's design for married love.

NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of the child. By respecting the love-giving and life-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.



OFFERINGS: There is no charge for a wedding at Saint Thomas More Church. However, we do ask for a **deposit and donation** for the church's maintenance costs, candles, marriage preparation materials and books, air-conditioning, clean-up, etc.

DEPOSIT FOR CHURCH (NOT REFUNDABLE).....	\$100
MEMBER OF ST. THOMAS MORE	\$500
*Membership is defined as registered, contributing, attending and active in the church.	
FOCCUS-PRE-MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE.....	\$100
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.....	\$150
WEDDING DIRECTOR.....	\$125
ORGANIST FEE.....	\$200
CANTOR.....	\$200

PHONE NUMBERS

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Mary Endres.....	(713) 980-3111
ORGANIST: Dr. Jian Guang Shi.....	(713) 988-9829
CHURCH OFFICE:	
Monday–Friday 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM.....	(713) 729-0221
WEDDING DIRECTOR: Margaux Blackwell.....	(713) 776-3736
MARRIAGE LICENSE BUREAUS: Downtown.....	(713) 755-6405
Richmond, TX.....	(281) 342-3411
SW Courthouse Annex, 6000 Chimney Rock.....	(713) 660-7902



GUIDELINES FOR FLOWERS AND CANDLES

FLOWERS AND CANDLES: Flowers and candles can enhance your wedding ceremony. Saint Thomas More encourages you to plan carefully any additions to the decorations already present in the Church.

Flowers may be placed in the Sanctuary or to decorate aisle pews. No decoration is to be used which would obstruct the clear view of the worship symbols used in the Sanctuary. It is important to remember that ANY LITURGICAL DECORATIONS ALREADY IN PLACE TAKE PRECEDENCE AND MAY NOT BE MOVED.

Decorations of pews must **NOT BE ATTACHED BY TAPE OF ANY KIND**, or by screws, staples, glue, clamps, etc. We recommend the use of rubber bands, ribbons or plastic floral clips. Please see that pew decorations are removed after the ceremony.

Potted plants must have waterproof pot covers or be provided with saucers. Please do not use "asparagus" type fern that shed and necessitate vacuuming.

All floral arrangements are to be natural. Artificial arrangements, while beautiful, are not appropriate for liturgical use. The wedding director will help the florist in the arrangement of the decorations.

IT IS NOT PERMITTED TO THROW anything in the Church, or anywhere on Church grounds. This includes FLOWER PETALS, RICE, CONFETTI, BIRDSEED, ETC.

The parish can provide two candelabra and plant stands. A clear plastic drop cloth must be placed under the candelabra. Your florist will provide this. Please make arrangements with your groomsmen or bridesmaids to light the candelabra approximately 10-15 minutes before the ceremony.

Candelabra, rental items and pew decorations **MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE SANCTUARY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE WEDDING.** We can have several weddings on weekends in addition to other Church functions. It is important and considerate to clean up after your ceremony.

Please give a copy of this page to your florist.



Marriage Preparation Checklist

INSTRUCTIONS

- ◇ Register for a Natural Family Planning Class
- ◇ Register for FOCCUS
- ◇ Engage Encounter Weekend
- ◇ Sponsor Couples

DOCUMENTATION

- ◇ Recent Catholic baptismal certificate, (if this certificate does not contain information about First Holy Communion and Confirmation, we will need separate certificates that those sacraments were received.) for non-Catholic proof of baptism
- ◇ Prenuptial Questionnaire/Interview, including convalidations
- ◇ Affidavits of Freedom to Marry
- ◇ Permission / Dispensations
- ◇ Civil Marriage License
- ◇ A Declaration of Nullity Previous Marriage (death certificate and/or decree of nullity/dissolution)

Place of Wedding _____

Date of Wedding _____ Time _____

Date of Rehearsal _____ Time _____

* Please note that certain dates may not be available due to the liturgical season (e.g. Holy Saturday)



MUSIC: The Church is a sacred place and hence, we must be attentive to the principles of sacred space and atmosphere. .

As soon as a date for the wedding has been scheduled, contact the Director of Music Mary Endres at mary@stmhouston.org or 713.980.3111. Full details of musical policy will be provided by Ms. Endres.

WEDDING DIRECTOR: Contact Margaux Blackwell at 713.776.3736. It is required that St. Thomas More wedding director be at each wedding. She will assist you in understanding the requirements established by our parish. The wedding director will contact the bride and groom three to four weeks before the wedding to discuss certain details of the wedding. She will attend and help the celebrant facilitate the rehearsal and the wedding itself.

Wedding planners hired by the families will always follow the instructions from the parish wedding director.

WORSHIP AID: You may choose to have a worship aid. This program enables everyone to follow the order of your wedding service. In this program you may note songs, psalms, readings, and wedding participants.

REHEARSAL: The Wedding Director sets up date and time for rehearsal and does a walk through of everything that will happen at the wedding. At the wedding rehearsal, the visiting clergy must follow the wedding director's instructions.

Final paperwork, such as the civil marriage license and offerings/fees should be put in labeled envelopes and given to your clergy or Saint Thomas More's Wedding Director for distribution for the appropriate people.

The rehearsal is a good time to make an appointment with a priest to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation if you are Catholic if you have not done so already.



WEDDING DAY

Three Forms of Celebrating Matrimony

1. Within Mass	2. Without Mass	3. Between a Catholic and a Catechumen or a Non-Christian
<i>Introductory Rites</i>	<i>Introductory Rites</i>	<i>Rite of Reception</i>
Welcome	Welcome	Procession
Procession	Procession	Collect
Gloria	Collect	
<i>Liturgy of the Word</i>	<i>Liturgy of the Word</i>	<i>Liturgy of the Word</i>
Old Testament	Old Testament	One or two readings *at least one must explicitly speak of marriage
Responsorial Psalm	Responsorial Psalm	
New Testament	New Testament	Homily
Gospel	Gospel	
Homily	Homily	
<i>Celebration of Matrimony</i>	<i>Celebration of Matrimony</i>	<i>Celebration of Matrimony</i>
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Question before Consent	Question before Consent	Question before Consent
Consent	Consent	Consent
Reception of Consent	Reception of Consent	Reception of Consent
Blessing and Giving of Rings (and Arras)	Blessing and Giving of Rings (and Arras)	Blessing and Giving of Rings (and Arras)
Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful	Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful	Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful
	[Lord's Prayer]	[Lord's Prayer]
	[Blessing and Placing of the Lazo or Veil]	[Blessing and Placing of the Lazo or Veil]
	Nuptial Blessing	Nuptial Blessing
<i>Liturgy of the Eucharist</i>		
Preparation of the Altar	[Holy Communion]	
Eucharistic Prayer	Lord's Prayer	
Lord's Prayer	Sign of Peace	
[Blessing and Placing of the Lazo or Veil]	Communion	
Nuptial Blessing		
Sign of Peace		
Communion		
Prayer after communion		
<i>Conclusion of the Celebration</i>	<i>Conclusion of the Celebration</i>	<i>Conclusion of the Celebration</i>
Solemn Blessing	Blessing	Blessing
Recessional	Recessional	Recessional



SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Saint Thomas More Church is a place of worship. Please inform all participants in the wedding and those present for the rehearsal that they are to show respect for God's house by their attitude, behavior and dress. Remind all present that there is Perpetual Adoration in the Day Chapel.

NO ALCOHOL SHOULD BE CONSUMED BY THE BRIDE, GROOM OR WEDDING PARTY PRIOR TO THE CEREMONY

THERE IS TO BE NO FOOD, ALCOHOL, BEVERAGES OR SMOKING IN ANY PORTION OF THE CHURCH. NO FIREARMS OR WEAPON ALLOWED ON THIS PROPERTY

VISITING PRIEST OR DEACON:

- ◇ If officiating at a marriage of a Catholic who is not a parishioner, secure permission from Catholic proper pastor.
- ◇ If officiating at a marriage outside your assigned parish, secure delegation from that pastor or local ordinary
- ◇ If the visiting priest or deacon is responsible for the marriage preparation he must present the completed **FORM IV ENVELOPE** with all documents to Saint Thomas More Church at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: The Lord's Prayer is the proper prayer of the total assembly. The Our Father can be recited rather than sung. Under no circumstance is the Our Father to be sung by a soloist during the ceremony, although it is permissible before the ceremony.

COMMUNION: We understand that people of various faiths may attend your wedding. If you are having a Mass, please inform your non-Catholic attendants to simply bow their heads and keep their hands folded during the distribution of the Eucharist so the priest will know they are not to receive communion. We ask that you include a statement such as the following in your worship folder:

"We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us 'that they may all be one' (Jn 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion."

(U.S. Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Liturgy)

