

# Wedding Preparation for Parishioners Getting Married at Another Church



## **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**

Mailing Address:	518 N Marion St., Tampa, FL 33602
Physical Address:	509 N Florida Ave, Tampa, FL 33602
Wedding Coordinator:	Jennifer Williams
Telephone:	813-229-1595    ext. 220
E-mail Address:	<a href="mailto:JWilliams@sacredheartfla.org">JWilliams@sacredheartfla.org</a>

## Engaged Couple Blessing

*A BLESSING TO BE USED BY THOSE PREPARING THE COUPLE FOR MARRIAGE,  
BY THE FAMILY OR FAMILIES OR IN ANOTHER TYPE OF PRIVATE PRAYER SERVICE.*

Let us pray.

Loving God,

You have blessed us as your people  
and have called us to serve you in love.

Listen to our prayers for *(insert her name)* and *(insert his name)*  
and bless them as they prepare for marriage.

Keep them holy and pure in their lives,  
deepen their spirit of prayer and love,  
and lead them in perfect joy.

Guard them from evil and guide them in your light,  
so that they may enter their marriage in your love  
and serve you faithfully at all times.

Bless their parents, families and friends  
as they help *(insert her name)* and *(insert his name)*  
by their prayer and example as they prepare to marry.

May almighty God bless you, *(insert her name)* and *(insert his name)*.

May God grant you love and happiness,  
peace and joy,  
and strength in trials,  
all the days of your life together.

May you remain always in God's love.

We ask this in Christ's name and in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
forever and ever. Amen.

*This blessing is an adaptation of a prayer found in A Book of Blessings by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

*Engaged Couple Blessings was written by Jennifer Christ for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. For further information or permission for use please contact Lydia LoCoco (LoCocoL@Archmil.org), 414.769.3300.*

*Used with permission.*

Dear Couple,

On behalf of the Sacred Heart community, including the Franciscan Friars and staff, congratulations on your upcoming wedding celebration! This document is a guide to help you with your wedding preparation.

Pope Francis, a Jesuit with a Franciscan heart, in 2013 stated:

*“May the church be the place of God’s mercy and love, where everyone can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel. And in order to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged, the church must have open doors so that all might enter. And we must go out of those doors and proclaim the Gospel.”*

We are a Catholic faith community that seeks to live the Gospel through the celebration of Franciscan Spirituality in the context of our 21st century life. We welcome you to join us as we seek to deepen our experience of God’s love.

In order to ensure that you are aware of and have approved all preparations and changes, all arrangements are to be made by you, the bride and groom, personally. The staff and clergy will only deal with the couple in planning your wedding. It is important that those individuals making an adult commitment also handle the details of their wedding personally.

This document offers some helpful information for your wedding preparation with a priest / deacon here at Sacred Heart Parish.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of my staff if we can be of further assistance.

Peace and all good,

Father Michael P. Jones, OFM  
Pastor

# STEP 1

## Introduction To Your Marriage Preparation

Contact the Sacred Heart Wedding Coordinator, Jennifer Williams at (813) 229-1595 ext. 220  
or e-mail at [jwilliams@sacredheartfla.org](mailto:jwilliams@sacredheartfla.org)  
Office Hours are between 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Couples need to contact the parish office at least six months in advance of the scheduled wedding date. The deadline for completion of all paperwork is one to three months before the wedding, depending on where the actual location of the wedding will take place. (See Page 6)

### Are you free to marry?

If one of you was previously married – whether in a Catholic or non-Catholic wedding, civil or non-civil – we can't begin planning your wedding until your previous marriage has been annulled and documentation has been provided. Learn more about annulments at the Diocese of St Petersburg by clicking on the link.

[www.dosp.org/tribunal/annulments/](http://www.dosp.org/tribunal/annulments/)

### Are you a parishioner?

If you would like to be active in the life and ministry of Sacred Heart Parish, you are very welcome to register here. <https://sacredheartfla.org/about-us/register-with-us/>

You would have to be active and involved in the life and ministry of the Sacred Heart Parish for one year before requesting a wedding date or wedding preparation. Your participation in parish life is measured by Time, Talent, and Treasure. It is your way of connecting to the parish. It is relational. It is not just a waiting period. If however you live within the parish boundaries, the Parish is canonically and pastorally responsible to you.

#### What it means to be an Active Parishioner at Sacred Heart

- An **active parishioner** is a person who attends Mass regularly at Sacred Heart Church. Parents who want a Catholic Faith Formation and Education for their children will see to it that their family attends Mass faithfully and participates in parish activities.
- An **active parishioner** gives of themselves by donating **Time** and **Talent** to the ministries of the parish and/or to the volunteer organizations that support the parish. We are to share in the responsibilities that keep our parish alive in a vibrant way through our ministries.
- An **active parishioner** is a good financial **steward** of the church. As a parishioner, it is important to understand that giving financially to support the parish is a vital and key component to active parishioner status.
- An **active parishioner** is registered in the parish for one year before making a request for marriage.

Catholics who are not parishioners of Sacred Heart will need to meet with their individual parishes to plan their marriage preparation.

### Wedding Preparation Fee

The fee of \$300 is applicable when the actual wedding is being held at another Catholic Church. The fee is due before the marriage preparation process begins.

Submit [Form 201 - Sacred Heart Parish Wedding Preparation Only Agreement](#) with your payment.

## STEP 2

### Meet with Your Priest/Deacon to Begin Marriage Preparation

#### Marriage Preparations

- 1) Jennifer Williams, the Wedding Coordinator, will send you, the couple, a link to complete the online Preliminary Assessment of Readiness for Marriage (FOCCUS Survey) - (Should be done within the first month)
- 2) Sign up for Journey to Matrimony (Diocese of St Petersburg)
  - Journey to Matrimony is a twelve-hour, one-day program intended for couples when the bride and groom are both marrying for the first time. The program is usually offered the third Saturday of most months. This comprehensive experience uses various presentation methods with the goal of enriching and enhancing the remainder of the couple's engagement. It is our hope that Journey to Matrimony will provide a firm foundation on which couples like you can build a future as you prepare to enter the Sacrament of Marriage and spend a lifetime together. For more information click on the link. <https://www.dosp.org/marriage-and-family/journey-to-matrimony/>
- 3) Meet with the clergy member who will be doing the paperwork.
  - The priest/deacon will fill out the Prenuptial Questionnaire with the Bride & Groom.
  - The priest/deacon will do paperwork for any Dispensation/Permission that is required for the marriage.
- 4) Paperwork needed from the couple.
  - **Baptismal Certificates** - For a Catholic we need a recent copy of your baptismal record within six months of the wedding. You will need to contact the parish where you were baptized to request it. For a baptized Christian (non-Catholic) any copy of your baptismal record will do.
  - **Form B or Witness Affidavit of Free Status**: Two-forms are completed for both the Bride and the Groom by family members who have known them since at least the age of 16. It confirms that you are not currently married to another and that you plan to follow the teachings of Christ regarding the sacrament of marriage. If the witness resides outside the Diocese of Petersburg, the witness can complete the form in pen and mail to the priest or deacon facilitating your marriage preparation.
  - **Certificate of Completed Marriage Preparation** (Journey to Matrimony)
  - **Permission Letter**: This is a letter from the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish granting permission for the individual or couple to get married in another parish. If one of parties is Catholic and is not a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church then he/she will need a Letter of Permission from the parish. Sacred Heart Parish will automatically provide this letter for parishioners. It will be send along with the other paperwork. Non-parishioners would have to contact their parish and ask for a permission letter.
  - **Decree of Nullity** if applicable: If the bride or groom has a Decree of Nullity from a Catholic Church Diocesan Tribunal, a copy of the Decree plus a copy of the previous marriage license must be included in the marriage file.
  - **Additional Paperwork**: Any additional paperwork for an out-of-country wedding such as copy of passports and or other documentation is the responsibility of the couple to provide.
- 5) The priest/deacon will discuss the Preliminary Assessment of Readiness for Marriage (FOCCUS Survey) with the couple.



### Do Catholics Have to be Confirmed Before Getting Married?

Confirmation prior to your marriage is not strictly required but is strongly recommended. Here is what Church law says:

*Canon 1065 §1. Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience.*

*§2. To receive the sacrament of marriage fruitfully, spouses are urged especially to approach the sacraments of penance and of the most Holy Eucharist.*

Although canon law does not absolutely require that a Catholic be confirmed in order to get married, it is very likely that some pastors and dioceses do. It is up to the couple to check with the parish and diocese where the wedding will be celebrated for their policies. This is especially true in other countries.

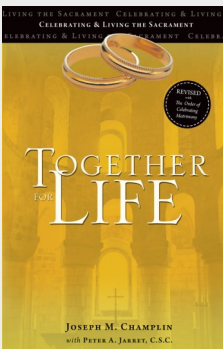
### Complete and Collect All Preparation and Documents one to three months in advance.

Since you are getting married at another Church, possibly in another Diocese, we will need to send your completed Marriage Packet to the parish where the wedding will take place or to the Diocese of St Petersburg for the Bishop's approval. The process is outlined below.

1. **Parish within the Diocese of St. Petersburg** -The parish will send your completed Marriage Packet to the parish in the Diocese where the wedding will take place.  
*The deadline is one month before the wedding.*
2. **Parish outside the Diocese of St Petersburg (within the USA)** - The parish will need to send your completed Marriage Packet to the Diocese of St Petersburg for the Bishop's approval. The diocese will then send the file to the diocese where the marriage will take place. That diocese would then send it to the parish where the marriage will take place.  
*The deadline is two months before the wedding.*
3. **Parish outside the Diocese of St Petersburg (outside the USA)** - The parish will need to send your completed Marriage Packet to the Diocese of St Petersburg for the Bishop's approval. The policy of the Office of the Tribunal of the Diocese of St Petersburg is that once the Tribunal has issued permission and returned the file to the parish, it is the couple's responsibility to see that it reaches its proper destination in the foreign country.  
*The deadline is three months before the wedding.*

Meet with the priest/deacon who is officiating the wedding to discuss the wedding rite.

Check with the church you are getting married at for their wedding policies.



**Together for Life** has been the most trusted source for wedding planning in the Catholic Church for more than forty-five years. The 2016 edition contains all the necessary texts from The Order of Celebrating Matrimony. Each reading choice is accompanied by a reflection written by lay married theologians or pastoral leaders who are committed to the sacramental life of the Church.

Together for Life includes all of the information, prayers, blessings, and readings needed to plan a wedding that will be held within Mass, without Mass, or between a Catholic and a catechumen or non-Christian. FAQs address questions couples may have about traditions such as readings, music, and witnesses.

The material in Together for Life is supported by [TogetherforLifeOnline.com](http://TogetherforLifeOnline.com). The site includes an online selection form, Catholic wedding planning resources, and articles providing enrichment to both married and engaged couples

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church**

518 N Marion St / Tampa, FL 33602

(813) 229-1595 ext. 220 / [jwilliams@sacredheartfla.org](mailto:jwilliams@sacredheartfla.org)

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom		Bride
	Full Name	
	Religion	
	Home Address	
	City / State / Zip	
	Cell Number	
	E-mail	
	Parish Name	
	Parish City	

**Where will the wedding take place?**

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Diocese: \_\_\_\_\_

The Bishop's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the person who will receive the paperwork: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Who will be officiating at the Wedding?**

Priest/Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

His Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand and agree to follow all of the wedding policies and deadlines at Sacred Heart Church, Tampa, FL. In addition I agree to pay the Wedding Preparation Only fee in the amount of \$300.

Signature of the Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Form M203

## Permission for Groom and / or Bride to Marry at Another Parish

### Sacred Heart Catholic Church

518 N Marion St / Tampa, FL 33602

(813) 229-1595 ext. 220 / [JWilliams@sacredheartfla.org](mailto:JWilliams@sacredheartfla.org)

Groom		Bride
	Full Name	
	Religion	
	Home Address	
	City / State / Zip	
	Cell Number	
	E-mail	
	Parish Name	
	Parish City	

To Whom It May Concern,

[Name of the Groom] and / or [Name of Bride] are parishioner(s) of Sacred Heart Church in Tampa, FL. They have satisfactorily completed the marriage preparation as required by our Diocese of St Peterburg.

They have my permission to marry outside the parish at:

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Diocese of \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

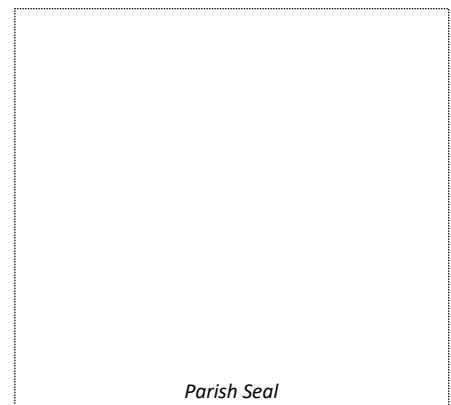
Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Officiant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Fr Michael P Jones, OFM  
Sacred Heart Church  
Pastor

Date







**FORM B**

v: I-2020

**Tribunal**  
**Diocese of St. Petersburg**  
P. O. Box 40200  
St. Petersburg, FL 33743 0200  
727 341 6858  
Fax: 727 374 0206  
[tribunal@dosp.org](mailto:tribunal@dosp.org)

**PRIEST/ DEACON ARRANGING FOR MARRIAGE**

Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Church \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Marriage (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_

**Chancery visum:**

Two witnesses are to be used for each party.

**Witness (PLEASE PRINT):**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer all questions fully.**

Testimony of witness to prove the freedom to marry of \_\_\_\_\_

Name of ☐ Bride OR ☐ Groom (Please list / check only one)

1. Are you related to the party mentioned above? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

(a) If so, how are you related? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) If you are not related, how long have you known him/her? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS FULLY**

Has the party named above gone through a marriage ceremony, even civilly? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

**A civil marriage being validated should also be indicated**

How many times? \_\_\_\_\_ With whom? (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Where? (1) \_\_\_\_\_ When? (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Before Whom? (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Where? (2) \_\_\_\_\_ When? (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Before Whom? (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Have these marriages been declared null by the Church? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

Please Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the party named intend to enter a permanent marriage, lasting until death? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

4. (If under 19) Do both the father and mother (guardian) of this person approve of this marriage? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

If not, please state their objections on a separate sheet of paper and include.

5. Is any person or circumstance forcing the groom or bride to marry against his or her will? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

If so, explain \_\_\_\_\_

6. As far as you know, are there any conditions of any kind being attached to this marriage by either of the parties to the marriage? ☐ Yes / ☐ No If so, state them: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Has this person ever been baptized, sprinkled or christened? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

If so, how do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of church and approximate date: \_\_\_\_\_

8. In your opinion, is there any reason why these parties should not get married? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

If so, please state reasons on back.

Church/Notary

Seal

**Sign Here**

Signature of Witness\*

**Sign Here**

Signature of Priest, Deacon, Parish Minister, or Notary\*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**\*THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED BY THE WITNESS IN THE PRESENCE OF A PRIEST/DEACON OR A NOTARY PUBLIC**  
**(DIGITAL SIGNATURE NOT ACCEPTED)**