



HOLY SPIRIT FREMONT
Sacrament of Marriage
Convalidation Guidelines



CELEBRATING YOUR SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

My Dear Couple,

Congratulations on your upcoming Sacrament of Matrimony! We rejoice with you as you embark on this beautiful and exciting journey toward getting married in the Church. Thank you for saying yes to this beautiful vocation of God's gift to you and your family.

We pray for you. Throughout this Marriage Convalidation process, may you find this booklet helpful and rewarding. Know that we are always here to help, support and accompany you. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to let us know.

The success of this program depends on your commitment and cooperation.

Again, congratulations and may God's blessings be upon you always,

Sincerely yours,

Fr. Kenneth Sales

Pastor

THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

- 1) Email the Convalidation Registration Form to the Convalidation Coordinator at info@holyspiritfremont.org or drop off at the parish office.
- 2) Schedule a meeting with (priest or deacon)
 - 3) Required documents:
 - Original Baptism Certificate issued within 6 months of Convalidation date.
 - Copy of marriage certificate.
 - If Previously Married, copy of (1) Marriage Certificate of previous marriage, (2) Decree of Divorce, (3) Decree of Nullity, if applicable.
- 4) turn in the Convalidation and retreat fees and a signed copy of the Convalidation Guidelines Agreement
- 5) Convalidation Preparation Program Certificate
- 6) Self-Testimony – Form A
- 7) Form B or Witness Interview
- 8) Sacrament of Reconciliation



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Convalidation Registration Form. The Convalidation Registration Form can be found on the parish website. Under the tab Mass and Sacraments, go to Matrimony and scroll down to Group Convalidation. You may also pick up a form at the parish office.

2. First Interview with the Wedding Celebrant (priest or deacon). This is the first step in the wedding convalidation preparation process. The wedding convalidation coordinator will schedule a meeting between each couple and the priest privately. This informational meeting will give you an overview of the requirements for marriage. You will also discuss your unique situation as it relates to marriage in the Catholic Church. *No wedding date or time can be set until after this meeting*

3. Required Documents. The following documents must be submitted within a given time frame.

Recent Baptism Certificate. Baptismal Certificate, with all notations that show subsequent sacraments received must be current and obtained from the parish you were baptized in. It must be issued within 6 months of your wedding date.

Copies of First Communion and Confirmation Certificates. These certificates can be obtained from the parish you received the sacraments.

Copy of marriage certificate. A copy of the certificate of your civil marriage is required.

If Previously Married. In cases where one or both parties were previously married, whether in a church, or in a civil ceremony, the status of that marriage must be determined before any preparation for a Catholic wedding can be completed. You need to provide copies of the Marriage Certificate of the previous marriage and a cover page of the Decree of Divorce in order to complete a petition for the declaration of nullity to the Oakland Diocese Tribunal. Additionally, if there was a previous attempt to marry in the Catholic Church that was declared null by the Ecclesiastical Courts, you must provide the original Decree of Nullity by the tribunal.

4. Financial Offerings. Our church is maintained through donations and generosity of parishioners. We request a suitable contribution to fund our mission, our evangelization and maintain parish grounds and facilities. We ask that you prayerfully consider making a donation to the church that is comparable to other expenses incurred in the celebration. Please stop by the parish office to drop off your financial offerings along with a signed copy of this booklet as indicated on the back page.



5. Certificate of Completed Convalidation Preparation Program. An in person informational meeting and retreat will be scheduled and details to be provided. The convalidation Prep coordinators will share resources that they will use for the Preparation program. Also planned is a mini retreat with talks and reflection on the readings that will be part of the Wedding Convalidation Mass. There will also be time for personal prayer and adoration. A series of eight online Marriage Convalidation preparation sessions, are scheduled during the following months via Zoom. these two-hour sessions, the facilitators will go over different themes such as, strengthening you connection, communication, conflict resolution, forgiveness, etc.

6. Form A or Self-Testimony: The law of the church requires establishing that you are free from coercion and free from impediments to marry. Form A is a formal declaration of your freedom to marry in

the presence of the priest or deacon. Statements of the bride and the groom are recorded. When the other party is not Catholic, the priest will help you obtain a dispensation from the Diocese of Oakland for the Catholic wedding. This will be completed during the retreat.

7. Form B or Witness Affidavit of Free Status. Two-forms are filled out for both the Bride and the Groom by family members who have known them since puberty. 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. This form must be completed in the presence of the Catholic priest or deacon. If the witness resides outside the Diocese of Oakland, the witness can go to their local Catholic Church and ask a priest or deacon to do the interview and fill-out the form together. Once completed, the Catholic priest/deacon will affix the Parish seal to the document and mail it to us for inclusion in your wedding convalidation file.

8. Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is very important that you go to confession before your wedding especially if you have been away from the sacramental life of the Church for a long time or if you have not been to confession for a while. Make an appointment with the priest who is celebrating your wedding or other priests in the parish. In order to receive Communion, one must be in a state of grace.



THINGS TO EXPECT: WEDDING GUIDELINES

1. *Wedding Convalidation Schedule.* Date and time of the Wedding Convalidation ceremony is to be determined. Each couple is welcome to invite family and friends to witness the celebration of their love and commitment. Please have guests arrive early, so we can begin on time. The wedding liturgy will last approximately an hour. There will be time for post celebration photography. A rehearsal will be scheduled the night before. It is extremely important that all participating members be on time for the rehearsal and the wedding mass. Tardiness will disrupt the entire schedule for all parties.

In accordance with long standing Catholic practices and Diocesan policy, weddings must take place inside a church building. Weddings are not celebrated in homes, outdoors or elsewhere.

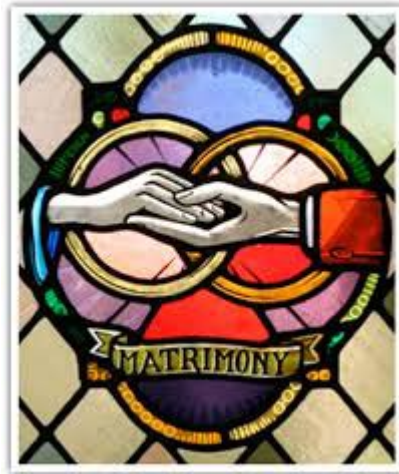
2. *Decorum.* Silence and reverence is most appreciated in the Church. Please do not bring any food, drink, or gum into the Church. Please turn off your phones prior to the Mass beginning. Men must never wear a hat or cap while women are allowed to wear something covering their heads. No one should wear sunglasses in the church unless for health reasons. The Church is a House of Prayer, please refrain from carrying conversations in the Church.
3. *Readings* We invite you to prayerfully meditate and reflect on the Scripture Readings and Responsorial Psalm chosen for the Convalidation Mass as a couple.
4. *Rehearsal Times.* The wedding coordinator schedules a rehearsal, arranges the procession into church and ensures that the wedding ceremony goes smoothly in all aspects. Rehearsals are normally on the Friday evening before the ceremony at 6:00 PM (to be confirmed closer to date).
5. *Attire.* The Wedding Convalidation ceremony is a sacred celebration which takes place in a sacred space of divine worship. Such an occasion requires a corresponding dignity and modesty of dress in all members of the wedding party. We leave it to your discretion to apply these guidelines to your choice of apparel.
6. *Alcohol and Illegal Drugs are prohibited on the Church grounds.* If anyone in the wedding party appears to be intoxicated or in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, they will be asked to leave immediately. Neither the Bride nor Groom should be inebriated, since intoxication prevents the valid exchange of wedding vows.
7. *Photography and Videography.* In order to maintain the reverent character and the solemnity of the celebration of

the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, we ask that you explain these policies to friends and family who would like to take pictures or video:

1. They may not in any way disrupt the ceremony and they ought to be discreet while the celebration is taking place. They are not allowed in the sanctuary (the area around the altar) at any time during the celebration.
 2. Flash Photography is prohibited.
 3. Photographers and videographers must dress in a manner suitable to the environment and the occasion.
8. *Prayer.* Prayer is communication with God. It should be ongoing and continuous, especially at this time for the gifts of holiness, unity and indissolubility. We strongly encourage you to find time for personal prayer and communal prayer with your spouse and family to develop the habit of going to Confession and Mass.

Prayer for Married Couples

O God, who in creating the human race
willed that man and wife should be one,
keep, we pray, in a bond of inseparable love
those who are united in the covenant of Marriage,
so that, as you make their love fruitful,
they may become, by your grace, witnesses to charity itself.
Through Christ our Lord
Amen.



CONTACTS



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HS Marriage Convalidation Coordinator/Facilitator

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Rosalin Evangelista

AGREEMENT

We have read and understand the requirements for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage within the Diocese of Oakland at Holy Spirit Catholic Church and agree to respect and abide by the guidelines for weddings as established by the parish.

Name & Signature of the Groom

Name & Signature of the Bride