

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

1. Begin this procedure at least **one year or six months** prior to the date of your planned wedding.
2. If the bride and groom (or one of them) do not belong to our Diocese, they may begin the Marriage process in our diocese or in the diocese where they belong. If they start it in their diocese, they must finish it there, and here they only have to present **the permission** called **NIHIL OBSTAT** (Document of the Bishop that authorizes to celebrate the marriage in another Diocese that is not his). If they decide to do the procedure with our Diocese, they must fulfill all the requirements that follow.
3. **The first step is to have a personal interview with the Pastor or a priest of our parish.** This interview must be attended by both the groom and the bridegroom. They must set up this appointment with the Parish Secretary during the office schedule. The couple must come prepared to share with the Priest the “history” of their lives and “why” they want to get married in the catholic Church. Along that interview the Pastor will explain to them the process of the paperwork and discuss the date of the wedding.
4. If the bride and groom are parishioners of our parish **they must be registered**, if they are not, they must register immediately at the Parish Office.
5. **Attend the Parish Pre-marriage Preparation.** (4 days of preparation and it is MANDATORY). You will be given a certificate which you must keep and present with all documentation to the Parish Office.
6. **Attend Diocesan pre-marriage preparation** (3 sessions and it is MANDATORY). To register please go to our Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend website at diocesefwsb.org/pre-marriage-preparation. You must keep and attach the original certificate you will be receiving to all documentation. If you have questions, consult the parish secretary. **At the discretion of the Pastor the couple could be dispensed of taking the marriage preparation (This takes place usually when the couple has been lived together for many years but practicing the catholic faith)**
7. Original and updated **Baptismal Certificate** for each of the bride and groom, and please note that it will NOT be returned and will be kept on file at the parish.
8. If not yet civilly married: **Civil Marriage License**. This license can be requested at the courthouse or at the following link: <https://www.in.gov/courts/services/marriage-license/>

9. If you are civilly married: **Original Civil Marriage Certificate.**
10. If you were previously civilly married to another person (s): **Original Certificate of Divorce(s)** of those previous civil marriages.
11. If you were previously married by the Church and obtained the Nullity of marriage: **Original letter or certificate of the Nullity** or nullities of marriage from the corresponding ecclesiastical court.
12. **An original and valid (not expired) identification** of each of the bride and groom.
13. **A witness 16 years of age or older.** There must be one witness for each bride and groom. The witness must have sufficient knowledge of the party on whose behalf he/she is testifying. **They can be relatives of the groom and bridegroom.**
14. The parish secretary will give to each witness a form canonically called **Affidavit**, which is an affidavit of marital freedom on behalf of the one who is to testify. This form must be filled out personally **in the presence of a priest or deacon solemnly (no precisely priests of our parish) swearing to tell the truth in what he will answer.** Once this form is completed with the appropriate signatures and the seal of the parish where it was done, it should be brought to the parish office as soon as possible with a **valid ID of the witnesses** to which a photocopy will be made for filing.
15. If the bride and groom are not parishioners of our parish or live in another state: they must bring **written permission from their Pastor** authorizing our pastor to celebrate the wedding.
16. **When all documentation is complete, bring it to the Parish office** and hand it personally to the secretary. The secretary will give all the documentation to the priest for a detailed review (This can take 15-20 days).
17. Once the priest has carefully verified that everything is in order, **the Parish secretary will contact the couple to notify them of the date and time of an appointment with the priest to officially complete the Marriage File.**
18. On the day of that interview with priest, he will talk with the couple about all the **details of the Wedding Celebration** as well as clarify any questions they may have.
19. **The date of the rehearsal must be determined by the celebrant of the Wedding in coordination with the Rehearsal assistant and the couple. The priest might not be present at the rehearsal, in that case the Rehearsal Assistant will lead it.**

20. **All original documents will be returned in a timely manner by the secretary of the Parish.**
The parish keeps only copies of all documentation with the exception of the Marriage Registration form which is to be kept in the parish archives.
21. When it is a **mixed Marriage** (Catholic with a non-Catholic) the priest will explain to the couple how to proceed.
22. For confession, the bride and groom should come to the **regular parish confession schedule** one week prior to the Wedding. Be punctual as there are usually many people in line for confession.
23. In separate envelopes, sealed and clearly labeled, prepare the following stipends. Although our Parish does not have a specific fee, be generous to the extent that you can:
- Parish** (Give it personally to the Parish secretary).
 - Priest** (Give it personally to the priest on the day of the Wedding).
 - Choir** (Ask directly to the choir if they charge a specific fee and give it personally to the choir)
 - Rehearsal Assistant** (Give it personally to the Rehearsal Assistant the day of the Rehearsal)
24. On the day of the wedding everyone is asked to be **EXTREMELY PUNCTUAL.**
25. **DECORATION of the Church:** If you wish to decorate the church you must notify the parish secretary and it must be the day before the wedding and between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. No other time or day is permitted.
26. **No rice or other grains are to be thrown at the bride and groom after the wedding.** Artificial petals of flowers are allowed to be thrown, but the bride and groom or their families are responsible for cleaning the floor right after the Mass.
27. Taking pictures is allowed after the Ceremony, but it should not last more than 30 minutes because the Church needs to prepare for the weekend Parish Masses.
28. If have any questions, you may **consult the parish secretary.**