

Celebrating the Rite of Matrimony

Our Church continues to be a beacon of hope that arises from God's blessings as we tread on these unprecedented and extraordinary times. Our God certainly blesses and regenerates our faith community with couples who desire to celebrate the Rite of Matrimony. Our God has already blessed the couple with the ability to love others, and to have led them to one another. This time has provided us opportunities to realize and recognize those which are most basic and important. Certainly, we must be thankful to God, that we are able to pray this Sacrament, with special care and consideration for safety and wellbeing of all.

In drafting this policy, taken into consideration is the document Additional Directives on Celebrating the Sacraments and Funeral Liturgies Outdoors in Light of the Current Restrictions Due to the Rising Cases of COVID19, published by the Bishop's Office of our diocese on the 15th of July 2020. Specifically, the items considered are:

B. 3. The number of people attending the Rite of Marriage should be limited as much as possible to those who are required to be present.

B. 4. The Sacrament of Marriage should be celebrated within the Sacrifice of the Mass. Mindful of the pastoral circumstances, the pastor may choose to celebrate the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass.

At this time, the Minister (Priest or the Deacon) will be praying the Rite of Marriage Outside Mass only, at an outdoor setting, for those who have completed their Pre-Marriage Course.

In consideration of this time of the year, the start of the celebration can be as early as 7AM, and as late as 10AM. This time frame is still conducive to outdoor celebrations.

Decorations will be very minimal, but very respectful and reverent of the celebration.

While our diocese recommends that the number of people attending should be limited as much as possible to those required to be present (minister, couple, 2 witnesses), we are able to welcome a gathering to as many as 40 people, including the Minister of the Sacrament and a Sacristan. Those who can attend need to be healthy. Please provide a list (names and contact numbers) of those attending a week before the celebration. This list will also be used to check in visitors at the celebration itself.

All the people who will be present will be required to wear face mask and be socially distant from one another.

There will be no singing during the celebration, and no invited choir nor mariachi.

There will be no Entrance Procession, and no Recessional.

The Minister stands in front, and the couple will be standing facing the Minister. The 2 witnesses need to be able to see the Rite from where they will be standing as they will be signing the Marriage License.

There can be a First Reading and a Responsorial with one Lector only. The readings can be chosen by the couple. The Gospel reading and the intercessions will be proclaimed and read by the Minister.

The Blessing and Exchange of Rings is a part of the Celebration. The other cultural aspects of the celebration (arras, veil, lazo, and other religious objects, and even flowers to the Virgin of Guadalupe) cannot be parts of the celebration at this time.

Being able to receive the blessing of God in the union of two persons during this time is by itself a tremendous blessing already. The Parish highly recommends NOT having any kind of reception after the celebration. This will mitigate the spread of the virus and will keep all the people safe and protected. If receptions are desired, it is highly recommended that it be scheduled at a later date when the pandemic becomes more controlled.