

## GUIDELINES FOR YOUR MARRIAGE IN OUR CHURCH

A wedding in the Church can be made a celebration if all those involved pay attention to certain guidelines.

### I. BEFORE THE WEDDING:

It is advisable to come and meet up with any of the priests of the parish even before planning the wedding date in order to consider options of the dates so as not to choose dates that may clash with parish programmes or the Lenten season. It will also give you an opportunity to discuss with the priest about the necessary requirements of documents and procedures. Please do not seek advice from anyone other than the priests of the parish.

### II. THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE (MPC)

The Marriage Preparation Course (MPC) is mandatory in the Archdiocese of Bombay. The list of dates is displayed on the notice board, is also available with the priest, and can also be accessed on the website ([www.snehalaya.in](http://www.snehalaya.in)). Try and complete the MPC according to the dates convenient to you but not later than three months before the wedding. It is advisable that the MPC is done together, but in case one of the parties is employed outside Mumbai and cannot be present or the same, then it is the responsibility of the other party to complete the same in Mumbai. If the party employed outside Mumbai has access to the MPC in the diocese of employment it is recommended that it be completed there. The certificates of the MPC have to be shown to the priest while the pre-nuptial papers are being filled.

### III. CERTIFICATES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS to be kept ready

- a. Baptism Certificate dated within six months of your proposed marriage
- b. Certificate of attendance of the Marriage Preparation Course
- c. Postal address of both the parties.

### IV. PROCEDURE

## **A. The parish of the bride-to-be initiates and monitors the entire Pre-nuptial process. So**

1. The bride-to-be carries the above documents together with the boy's baptism certificate to the priest of her church. This must be done at least three months prior to the date of the marriage.
2. She fills up the Pre-nuptial enquiry (PNE) form with the priest who attaches her certificate to the same and files it.
3. The priest then hands over a letter addressed to the Parish Priest of the boy's parish with his baptism certificate stating her intention to marry the said boy and requesting him to fill the boy's PNE.
4. The boy's PNE duly filled and his baptism certificate attached has to be brought back to the priest of the girl's parish for filing.
5. The priest of the girl's parish sets the date for BANNNS to be read in the respective parishes and the letter for the publication of Banns has to be collected from the priest and given to priest of the boy's parish for publication on two consecutive Sundays.
6. After the Banns have been published, the groom-to-be collects his results of Banns and gives them to the priest of the bride-to-be's parish for filing. This completes the procedure of your marriage.

## **B. MIXED MARRIAGE or DISPARITY OF CULT**

In the case of a mixed marriage or a disparity of cult (marriage with Hindu/Muslim), the couple has to meet the priest to be briefed on the procedure. The MPC has to be completed and the PNE is filled in the parish of the Catholic party. The documents required from the Catholic party are the same as above. The non-Catholic party will have to furnish a copy of the proof of birth as well as an affidavit stating intention to marry the Catholic party in the Church (format provided).

The Catholic party has to sign the promises stipulated by Church law in the presence of the non-Catholic party while filling the PNE.

***Please Note: The Church does not permit a second religious rite of marriage in another place of worship or any religious ceremony since these have certain repercussions on the Catholic party. (Canon Law No. 1127)***

## **V. MASS TIMINGS**

On weekdays in the morning **10.30 am** and in the evening **4.00 pm**.

On Sundays in the evening **5.15 pm** scheduled Mass.

## VI. THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE YOUR WEDDING MASS

1. The priest (*of the parish*) who has prepared your marriage papers (and who usually is also the priest who will celebrate your nuptials, unless you would like to contact someone else) must be contacted in advance in order to discuss the liturgy.
2. If your nuptials are on a weekday you are permitted to have your own lector who should be advised to be appropriately dressed for the responsibility. For the choirs you may contact any of the parish choirs. The choirs have been instructed about the hymns to be sung. Kindly do not recommend any songs not befitting the liturgy.
3. If your nuptials are on a Sunday, then the liturgy of the Sunday takes precedence and the lectors of the parish appointed for the mass will proclaim the Word of God. You may have a choice of choirs from the available parish choirs but ensure that the choir otherwise appointed to sing for that Mass is informed, lest there be a clash on the appointed day. Since the liturgy of the Sunday gets precedence, kindly do not recommend any wedding hymns to the choir.
4. We do not permit the printing of booklets with the prayers and the readings. These have no place in the liturgy.
5. If you wish to have your own priest, then a letter from him stating his consent to celebrate your nuptials has to be presented before the wedding so that the Parish Priest and Assistant Parish Priest can give him the necessary delegation. If your wedding is on a scheduled Mass on Sunday, your guest priest will be permitted only to celebrate your nuptials.
6. If there is more than one couple for the wedding mass, the couples are requested to meet the priest of the parish well in advance to discuss the coordination of lectors, readings, seating arrangements, choir, celebrant, etc.
7. About six pews are reserved for the close family members of the couple. If you are decorating the same please avoid using sticking tape.
8. Please do not light fireworks in the Church compound or playground. Not only is it dangerous, it also leaves a lot of litter. It is best to avoid fireworks.
9. When planning your wedding gown and the dresses of the bridesmaids and others, please ensure that these are proper for a Church and a time of prayer.
10. For flower arrangements you may contact the Sister-in-charge (Sr. Assunta) of altar décor. Avoid converting the sanctuary into a garden or a florist shop!

## VII. ON THE WEDDING DAY

PLEASE SEE THAT YOU ARE IN TIME FOR YOUR WEDDING (at least 15 minutes before the mass)

***Remember: The bride and the groom are the ministers of the rite, therefore the entire focus is meant to be on them.***

1. **At the Entrance of the Church:** When the Mass is about to begin all the members of the family should already be seated inside the Church. Only the bridal couple, the best man and the bridesmaid should be waiting for the celebrant to come and welcome them. Ideally the members of the family should be in the pews standing to welcome the couple into the Church as the entrance hymn is sung.

2. **The Readings and Prayers of the Faithful** (for an unscheduled Mass) if they are being proclaimed by members of the family or friends of the couple should be properly rehearsed. Kindly ensure that those proclaiming the Word are appropriately and decently attired!

3. **The nuptial ceremony** is conducted after the Gospel and homily. However in the case of **Disparity of Cult**, the nuptials are held before the Thanksgiving Mass. A **witness** from either side chosen in advance is required and is expected to stand beside the couple as the ceremony progresses. It is advised that the rings be kept in the groom's pocket or with the best man. If the page boy is given the responsibility of the ring cushion, then he should be guided to bring the same forward.

4. **The nuptial vows** are best recited by heart and with the couple facing each other. It makes the ceremony very meaningful. Of course there will be nervousness. In that case keep the cue card close to you. The format of the nuptial vows is provided later in these guidelines.

5. The procedure of offering gifts like flowers and fruits, bible and rosary with commentaries to explain the same is discouraged. If the couple would like to give something for the Church or the poor it can be done placed at the foot of the altar before the Mass. Kindly consult the priest about the objects of use for the Church or the poor. In case the couple would like to have a new Bible and rosaries to enhance their prayer life as a family then these may be placed on the altar so that the celebrant blesses the same and hands them over.

6. After the Our Father, the Church reserves a special nuptial blessing over the couple.

7. Communion will be given in the form of both species. During communion use the time to pray for each other, for your marriage and for your families.

8. There is no need of a Thanksgiving Prayer after communion because the Eucharist is itself the highest prayer of thanksgiving.
9. After the final blessing, the celebrant leads the couple along with their witnesses to the entrance of the Church to sign the registers. The families follow. Please remember the sanctuary is a sacred place and not a studio for posing for photographs. Also you are encouraged to maintain the sanctity and decorum of the Church when you are gathered near the entrance of the Church and respect those who have come to Church to pray and prepare for the next Mass.

### **GUIDELINES FOR VIDEO-SHOOTING & PHOTOGRAPHY** *(Please discuss this with your photographer/videographer)*

The photographers/videographers should be properly instructed that the Mass is a religious ceremony and under no circumstances should they hinder the proceedings with their movement or instructions. Video-shooting (with the focus lights) may be done only at these points:

1. During the entrance of the couple into the Church
2. During the reading
3. During the marriage rite
4. The nuptial blessing
5. For the sign of peace
6. For communion (of the couple only) not of the people
7. Final Blessing
8. While the couple leaves the Church
9. Signing of the marriage register.

Your cameraman should be instructed about the above, and also the following:

1. Do not take photographs of the priest at Mass, nor the congregation, nor the choir. One photograph (not the video) can be taken of the lectors.
2. Cameramen should not be moving about the Church. They should not be standing when not required, but should sit on the side pews. If they are standing they block the view of the congregation, and distract the people and the priest.
3. No arrangement of studio equipment like big lights, umbrellas, etc is permitted inside the Church.
4. Cameramen should not go on the altar platform. They can go on the first step for the shooting of points 3, 4 & 5 above.

5. Cameramen should be on the ground side of the Church only – not on the choir side.

6. No photography/ video-shooting is permitted on the altar platform after Mass. Please remember the sanctuary is a sacred place and not a studio for posing for photographs. Also you are encouraged to maintain the sanctity and decorum of the Church when you are gathered near the entrance of the Church and respect those who have come to Church to pray and prepare for the next Mass. (The sacristan has been instructed to switch off the current, if and when the above norms are not being followed) In short, the bride, groom, family members, friends and cameramen are requested to cooperate in order to preserve the prayerful atmosphere of the Church and the Sacraments.

***God Bless! May the special memory of your nuptial service last you a lifetime.***

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