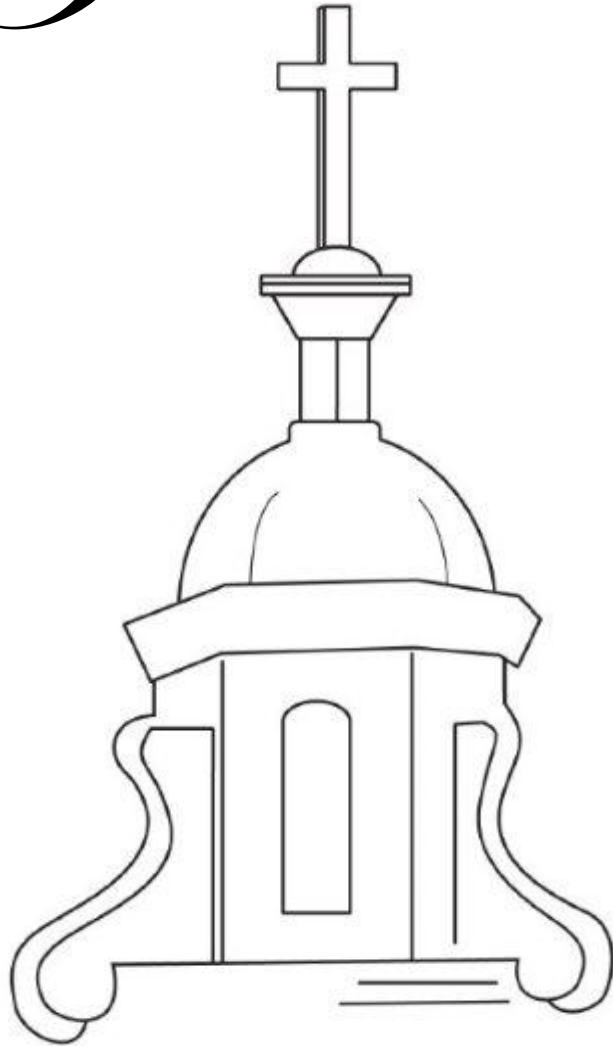


Marriage Guidelines



St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church
200 N. University Drive, Plantation, FL 33324

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

A wedding day is one of the most important days in a person's life; and a lot of time and effort goes into the details and planning of this special occasion. St. Gregory's Catholic Church is happy to provide the sacrament of marriage for its registered parishioners. These guidelines will assist a couple preparing for marriage with information that is necessary in planning a church wedding. Above all, remember that the Church is helping to spiritually prepare you not just for your wedding day, but most importantly for your marriage.

Please read the following information carefully as it will provide you with many answers that you may have as you prepare for your wedding.

It will be the responsibility of the couple for whom we are preparing the necessary marriage documentation to see that all required paperwork is completed for the wedding ceremony to take place. You should contact the Wedding Coordinator frequently until the paperwork is completed. Please note that at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, the Wedding Coordinator plans this sacred day solely with the Bride and the Groom and it is their responsibility to complete all forms, documents, "paperwork", and payments.

FORMS AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION

• BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE:

A recent baptismal certificate (**issued six months prior to the wedding date**) is required for all Catholics or non-Catholic baptized individuals intending to be married, regardless of age. The original certificate is not acceptable because it may not have necessary notations on the reverse side. A recent certificate can be obtained by contacting the original church of baptism. When contacting the church, give your name, date of birth, father's name and mother's maiden name to help them locate your baptismal record.

• FREEDOM TO MARRY:

If either of you have been married before, even if only in Civil Court, you must discuss this with the Wedding Coordinator, and she will assist you in preparing the necessary paperwork so that you are able to enter into a Catholic marriage. This may take time, and it may come with an extra fee. Be prepared.

The following is a list of forms and procedures necessary for marriage preparation.

Usually, they are completed or given to you by the Wedding Coordinator, Priest or Deacon.

- "A" Form:** The Bride and Groom are required to sign 1 each in the presence of the Wedding Coordinator, a Priest or a Deacon indicating his/her freedom to marry.
- "B" Form:** Witnesses must sign 2 each for Bride and Groom, usually the parents or someone who has known you most of your life. Again, this form is to establish your freedom to marry. It may be witnessed by a Priest, a Deacon or by a Notary Public.

• **FOCCUS / CATHOLIC COUPLE CHECKUP (online) or FULLY ENGAGED (online):**

(Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study) This is an important and required part of the marriage preparation process. FOCCUS is a self-diagnostic inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It is not a test nor meant as a predictor of success or failure in marriage. Rather it is an important tool to help couples name and work through issues before marriage. This inventory provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. The results of the inventory point to issues or areas that may need to be addressed. This tool requires 2 or 3 meetings with a qualified couple from St. Gregory's Marriage Preparation Ministry. (If you choose to go in person) The first meeting includes completing the FOCCUS instrument – a 110 question compatibility inventory. The second consists of a review and discussion of the topics contained in the instrument. You will be contacted by a Facilitating Couple. Please respond immediately and keep your appointment with the couple. They are parish volunteers who generously take time to assist you to experience this program and to be of service to you.

• **PRE-CANA / GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE / ENGAGED ENCOUNTER**

This is part of the Archdiocesan requirement for marriage preparation. It is scheduled for a day and a half and consists of a series of presentations on topics helpful to building successful marriage relationships such as Communication, Spirituality, the Sacrament of Marriage, Finances, Parenting, etc. A Certificate of Completion is given at the end of the day. Please provide a copy of the certificate to the Wedding Coordinator preparing your marriage file. The certificate also entitles you to the reduced fee for the Marriage License Application (see sheet from County Courts). St. Gregory's is pleased to offer a Pre-Cana (God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage) twice a year here on the parish grounds. Please register as soon as possible for this Pre Cana. The retreat is \$250.00 and includes meals, books and fun activities. If for some reason you are unable to attend one of our dates, you may attend an Archdiocesan sponsored Engaged Encounter/Pre-Cana. Application forms and fees for these Archdiocesan programs and dates are available online at www.miamiarch.org/familylife.

• **ONLINE MARRIAGE PREPARATION:** (For couples that will be married OUTSIDE of St. Gregory's church)...The Archdiocese of Miami also accepts Marriage Preparation to be completed online. This is an alternative to doing FOCCUS and PRE-CANA in person. Please visit <http://catholicmarriageprepclass.com/> (for English) <http://preparacionmartrimonialcatolica.com> (for Spanish).

GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

This section contains guidelines and general information about planning your wedding ceremony.

SETTING THE TIME:

- Weddings can be scheduled Monday through Friday, but no later than 6:00 P.M.
- Saturday weddings are held at 10:00 A.M., 12:00 P.M., or 2:00 P.M.
- For a Saturday 12: Noon wedding, the entire bridal party must exit the church no later than 1:20 P.M.
- Likewise for the last 2:00 P.M. wedding, all must exit the church no later than 3:20 P.M.
- Please follow this schedule as a courtesy to other groups and to the volunteer sacristans who need adequate time to prepare for the next liturgy and for the parishioners to park and enter the church for the 4:00 P.M. Vigil Mass. *Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter.*
- ***Please note: An additional expense will be incurred for any deviation to these regulations.**
- Weddings must begin and end on time.
- ***NOTE: NOVEMBER and LENT: NO 12:Noon weddings as Mass will be in progress.**

NUPTIAL MASS:

- As marriage is a very sacred event, it is appropriate that the Sacrament of Marriage is celebrated within a Mass.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: (Confession)

- If you and or members of your wedding party have not recently received the Sacrament of Reconciliation, please contact the priest celebrant so that the opportunity for the Sacrament may be provided prior to the wedding date. ***We strongly recommend the Bride and Groom receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before their wedding date.**

REHEARSAL:

- Rehearsals are generally held the **Thursday's (at 2:30 pm, and 4:20pm)** before the wedding. Please contact the parish Wedding Coordinator for the exact time and date of your rehearsal.
- All those who are *participating* in the wedding (bridal party, parents, lectors, gift bearers) should attend the wedding rehearsal. We kindly ask that you NOT invite anyone not participating in the wedding to the rehearsal because they tend to slow down the rehearsal process.
- The wedding rehearsal should take no longer than 30 minutes, and the rehearsal itself will not be repeated.

PERSONAL WEDDING PLANNER:

*****Should the couple have a personal wedding planner, those persons and their associates have NO authority or say on the Church premises, and they are NOT to interfere with either the wedding rehearsal or the wedding ceremony itself. This personal planner should be of assistance to you for the reception but have nothing at all to do with the Church or your Church wedding.**

PUNCTUALITY:

- As a courtesy to others, please ensure that you and your wedding party arrive in advance of the scheduled wedding time and for the rehearsal. (Presider, Musicians, Coordinator, Service providers may have other scheduled events directly after your ceremony). It is important that the procession begins at the appointed time of your celebration. This will enable you to complete the celebration and the picture taking within the time frame designated. Tardiness will delay your start and may result in changes in the liturgy and reduced time available to use the Church after the marriage ceremony, and may also result in a forfeit of allotted time.
- ***Please note: An additional expense will be incurred for any deviation (ie: delayed start time).**

PHOTOGRAPHER:

- A visual record of your marriage ceremony is something to be treasured during your lifetime together. A good photographer will help you preserve these memories.
- Your photographer may feel free to take pictures (still and/or video) during and after the liturgy and ceremony. It is essential that the photographer not detract from the solemnity of the occasion and remain as unobtrusive as possible. The photographer is not allowed to stop anyone walking in the entrance procession or the recessional. All photography should be done with the natural flow of this sacred ceremony. **During the ceremony, the photographer, (or his equipment) is not to step onto the marble of the sanctuary, or in the space of the presider as it is considered sacred ground. He is not to cross directly behind the couple, this is considered close proximity and within sacred ground.**

- Please remind your photographer that the church is a place of sacred worship and is not to be used as if it were a secular studio. Hence, while group photographs after the ceremony are allowed, photographs of various poses not connected with the church marriage ceremony are therefore much more suitably taken at the reception site.
 - The photographer will have 15 minutes to take pictures of the wedding party (inside the sanctuary) after the ceremony has concluded provided that the ceremony started on time.
- *Note: Your photographer must not linger inside the church for photos after the wedding. This may result in an additional expense as it will be considered a deviation of policy.*

MARRIAGE LICENSE (Civil Law):

- It is not possible to be married in the State of Florida without a Florida State Marriage License. It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain the license. Please see the information sheet from the Broward County Clerk of Circuit and County Courts. This sheet is included at the end of this Guidelines Booklet.
- *The couple will need to present the full and completed marriage license application to the Wedding Coordinator at the wedding rehearsal or the week prior to complete the file.*
- During or after the marriage ceremony, the maid of honor and best man will sign the Marriage License with the Wedding Coordinator. The priest and/or deacon who witnessed the marriage will also sign the document before it is recorded. It is the responsibility of the parish to forward the marriage license to the relevant authorities for the marriage to be registered. The couple will receive a Marriage Certificate from the church.

CHURCH DÉCOR:

**Note: It is customary at St. Gregory's Catholic Church for the seasonal décor to change with the liturgical calendar. Please keep this in mind when booking your wedding. If you have concerns, discuss them with the Wedding Coordinator.*

FLOWERS:

- If flowers are desired you may contact a florist of your choice. Please make arrangements with the florist to have flowers delivered to the church one hour prior to the ceremony. It is your prerogative to leave or remove your altar flower arrangements after the ceremony. Be certain to let the Wedding Coordinator know your choice. *It is the florist's responsibility to set up and break down their decorations.* If the florist will remove the altar arrangements, this is to be done directly after the ceremony. Church decorations that are already in place cannot be altered in any way.
- Two pedestals for flower arrangements are typically available for you in the church (depending on the liturgical season). Pew bows may be used, but should be secured with non-abrasive devices, for example, nothing sticky – such as tape. Ribbon, rubber bands, pipe cleaners are permitted.

AISLE RUNNERS and SWAGS:

- Aisle runners are **NOT** permitted in the church aisle. Nothing, such as swagged tulle, should block the movement of your guests in or out of any pews. They are potential tripping hazards.

THROWING OF OBJECTS:

- When it comes to rice, confetti, candy, flower petals, bubbles, or bird seed, we ask you to please **NOT** throw anything in or out of the church. Three to four thousand people use the church entrance weekly

and unfortunately there have been accidents and liability suits associated with this hazardous practice. Please be sure to inform all your guests of this regulation.

FLOWER GIRLS & RING BEARERS:

- Flower girls and ring bearers may be part of your wedding. Please arrange that flower girls **do not** drop or throw petals or flowers – real or fake. Ring bearers should have only token rings attached to the pillow.

DEPOSIT and SECURITY

- **\$250.00 Deposit** is asked from the couple to ensure that all the guidelines stated above for the wedding ceremony are adhered to. This deposit will hold your wedding date, along with both the Bride's (to be) and Groom's (to be) **RECENT** (CURRENTLY DATED within 6 months of your wedding date) Baptismal Papers. ***No date is even 'penciled in' or 'reserved' unless the \$250.00 is paid.*** This \$250.00 will count toward your total donation.
- **\$250.00 Security Deposit** is requested of the couple to cover any 'additional fees' that may incur due to any deviation of time. This security deposit will be returned to the couple via U.S. Mail after the ceremony *only if* there was no deviation of time. *(15 minutes late IS a deviation of time and you will not receive a refund of security).*

CHURCH OFFERING:

- It is customary to make a monetary offering to the church on the occasion of a wedding. A donation of **\$1800.00** is offered to the church for a wedding. This is to underwrite the cost of Documentation Processing, Wedding Coordinator, Sacristan, Set-up, Clean-up, Air Conditioning, Maintenance, Filing Fees, and general parish support. It also includes the Musical Services of an Organist/Pianist and a Cantor for the Wedding Mass. Additional musicians (violin, trumpet, harp etc.) are an *additional* expense.
- ***Wedding dates near holidays, IF approved, (Thanksgiving Weekend / Dec. 17, 2016 – Jan. 7, 2017. Dec. 16, 2017 – Jan. 6, 2018) will be subject to additional fee considering the difficulty in securing staff aound these times. (consult Wedding Coordinator).*** *There are NO weddings on Holy Days, Including Holy week of Easter.
- The donation may be made in installments, but must be paid in its entirety no later than two months before the wedding date. If the donation is unpaid, your chosen wedding date may be lost.
- For *Renewal of Vows*, or *Convalidation of Marriage* the donation offering is usually \$1500. (consult Wedding Coordinator).
- ***Additional Expenses:*** *An additional charge will incur for a 15 minute deviation of time in the start of your wedding, or if your party has not vacated the church in time for the next event or Mass. Please Be On Time! We ask that you be extremely considerate to those who are servicing your wedding as they may have other appointments or employment obligations to attend to directly after your wedding. If you are late, your security deposit will not be refunded.*
- **Altar Servers** – it is the responsibility of the couple to give a small gratuity to the requested Altar Servers assigned if the couple requests them in advance.
- **Gratuities-** while it is not necessary, should you feel you would like to give a small gratuity to those servicing your wedding you may do so and it would be humbly appreciated.

FOR WEDDINGS OUT OF TOWN, OUT OF STATE OR OUT OF COUNTRY:

- It is the full responsibility of the couple for whom we are preparing the necessary marriage documentation to see that they are completed. You should contact the Wedding Coordinator frequently until all the necessary paperwork is completed.
- It is necessary to provide the name, address of the church and phone number in which the ceremony will take place, the pastor's name, and the name of the Diocese where the church is located. This is necessary in order that the papers may be forwarded upon completion to the proper church authorities. A donation of \$580.00 underwrites the documentation preparation and processing.

MUSIC:

- Our parish organist/pianist, **Dr. Irena Kofman**, is responsible for helping you plan the music for your wedding. Please go to see her any Sunday after the 12 noon Mass. At 1pm, approach her at her piano! She will gladly go over music with you! **Call her at 954-796-0567 or Email her at ikofman@fau.edu** regarding your musical needs at least TWO months before your wedding date. Let her know if you'd like a male or female vocalist for your wedding day and she will assign one for you. If you have a specific cantor in mind, let Dr. Kofman know!

LITURGY:

- The Wedding Coordinator will provide you with suggested and appropriate readings from the Old and New Testament for you to choose for your ceremony. You may select one from the Old, and one from the New Testament, along with the Prayer of the Faithful *if* you would like to have that read as well. You may have readers of your choice (friends or family) read for you. You may also ask friends or family members to carry the offertory gifts up to the altar, if you wish. All of these details should be discussed with your Wedding Coordinator.

AFTER THE WEDDING:

- A certificate of your marriage will be given to you or mailed to you shortly after your marriage.
- After you have begun your married life together, please consider becoming active in one the Marriage Ministries! Or any of our many parish activities, groups, and ministries. We look forward to having you become a vital part of our faith family. Please refer to our bulletin or parish website to learn more about our many ministries.
- Please be sure to provide the parish with the address where you will reside after the ceremony. If you will reside in our parish and are currently registered (either with your family or individually), be sure to call the rectory at 954-473-6261, and ask that your registration be put in your married name. Otherwise, we may not easily locate you in our records.

May the Lord Jesus, who was a guest at the wedding in Cana, be with you and guide you in the important months ahead, and may He be an ever welcome guest in your home long after your wedding day is over.

Broward County Courthouse
201 S.E. 6th Street, Room 270 | Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
Telephone: (954) 831-6525 Ext. 7842
Business Hours: 8:00am- 4:30pm (Monday - Friday)

Residents of the State of Florida have the option of attending a premarital course from a registered provider, or waiting 3 days for the marriage license to become effective. A directory of the premarital course providers is available at all court locations to browse through (the Marriage License Office does not offer this course). Non-Florida Residents are exempt of any waiting period.

Visit our online Premarital Course Provider Search to locate a registered premarital course provider near you. (See clerk for certificate requirements.)

- Both parties (bride & groom) age 18 and over *must* apply in person, at the same time.
- There are two (2) forms of identification that may be required.
 1. The first form of identification required is a valid photo identification issued by the federal or state government. The photo identification must have the correct legal name, date of birth and signature of the applicant.
The following valid proofs of photo identifications are accepted:
 - Driver's License (U.S. State or Government)
 - Passport
 - U.S. Military identification
 - State Identification Card (U.S. State or Government)
 - Alien Registration Card
 2. A second form of identification is required if the applicant has been issued a U.S. Social Security number. In accordance with Florida State Statute, any person who has been issued a Social Security number shall provide that number. Any person who is not a citizen of the U.S. may provide either a Social Security number or an Alien Registration number, if one has been issued. If neither has been issued, another form of ID may be required.
- There are no blood tests required.
- You do not need to be a resident of this county or the State of Florida to obtain a Marriage license. Marriage licenses are for use within the State for sixty-60 days from the date of issue.
- The "Family Law Handbook" should be read prior to obtaining the Marriage License. The "Family Law Handbook" is available for viewing in the Clerk of Courts Marriage and One-Stop-Divisions or on the Internet at www.flclerks.com.
- If either applicant has been previously married, the *exact date* of the last divorce, death, or annulment must be provided.

Applicants who are 16 or 17 years of age: In addition to the above listed requirements, the following documents must be presented when one or both of the applicants are within this age bracket:

Any applicant under the age of eighteen (18) must have the consent of both parents or guardian. If custody of such minor has been granted to one parent, original proof must be provided. You may obtain consent forms from this office.

If one parent is deceased, a certified copy of the death certificate is required. Proof of age and parents identity is required. This may be done with a certified copy of the person's birth certificate. If the parent's names do not match, additional proof may be required.

Applicants under 16 years of age: Clerk will explain procedures.

In order to speed up the process, please fill our online pre-application, print it and bring it with you to one of the Broward County offices for the application process to be completed.