

Marriage Celebration

Lord,

We want to live in peace
with you and each other.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church
501 Fair Oaks Avenue,
Post Office Box 860
Arroyo Grande, Ca 93421
Telephone 805.489-2680 fax 805.489-1316

Groom: _____

Bride: _____

Priest: _____ (805.489.2680)

Date of Wedding: _____

*God is Love;
let us love one another as
He has loved us.*



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(805) 489-2680

Dear Engaged Couple:

Congratulations! The happiness of your new love is beautiful and contagious. In its freshness and strength, it speaks loudly about how much you care for each other. Your faces radiate joy and enthusiasm for life. We, your Christian Catholic Community, realize that you are one of our most important resources. We need you and what you have to offer. Your love shines on us like the Son, and we want to help you keep it glowing. You are a true sign of hope in our Parish Community.

What a wonderful time in your lives! You have decided to commit yourselves to each other publicly in a ritual ceremony that is as old as the human race. By special invitation, you will surround yourselves with those you love the most, and mark that day by celebrating in a way you will remember the rest of your lives. It will be a wonderful party! And it should be. Jesus celebrated for days at the wedding feast of Cana. He did this to teach us not only the importance of marriage, but also the priority of love in our lives. We want to encourage you in your decision, support you in your future, and help you celebrate life and love for the rest of your lives.

Our responsibility here at St. Patrick's is to do our best to help you prepare, not just for your wedding day, but a lifetime of love together. The necessity of adequate preparation for this most important decision in life hardly has to be emphasized. In a world where careers are only begun after years of study, our society seems to presume that people are ready for marriage just because they are old enough. We disagree, and statistics on the number of failed marriages support our reasoning. So, as beautiful and attractive as your engaged love is now, it is also a fragile and tender bud. Helping you make that flower reach full bloom and all your happy dreams come true is what we at St. Patrick's would like to see happen.

We congratulate you, your love for each other, and your willingness to make this commitment. Your Pastoral Staff are most happy that you wish to begin your married life at St. Patrick's Church and we are honored to share in your wedding ceremony. We pledge to you to do all we can to make your wedding day all that you have dreamed or hoped it would be.

Sincerely in Christ's Love,

St. Patrick's Pastoral Staff

The special event marking the beginning of your married life is your wedding.

You have found each other; and now you are ready to marry each other. Therefore, this wedding ceremony should be marked with words, gestures, and music that are meaningful for you.

However, your marriage also belongs to Christ and the Church. When you come to the Church to be married, you are asking the Church (the community of the faithful) to accept you and allow you to share in its vocation and the Sacrament of Marriage. The Church welcomes you and rejoices that another couple wants to mature in faith by living the Sacrament of Marriage. The community of the Church will support you with their prayers for the rest of your life! It is this combination, you and the community, that makes marriage in the Church so different and so holy.

With this understanding, please read on about the **three steps** in preparing for your married life and for the formal celebration of your wedding day.

STEP #1

SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS WITH THE PRIEST PREPARING YOUR WEDDING

You will want to begin this preparation by meeting at St. Patrick's Church, at least six months before you plan on being married, with Fr. Kenneth Brown or Fr. Fredy Calvario.

Beginning your preparation that far in advance will ensure that this program will be a benefit, rather than a burden to both of you. **Weddings are generally scheduled on Saturdays in the church or chapel at 12:00 pm or 2:00 pm.**

To reserve your Wedding Day the church donation is \$350.00

Couples are free to give a monetary gift to the celebrant in the form of cash or check made out to him personally. If you would like a priest from outside the parish, you are asked to pay his fees. (\$50.00 to \$100.00 is appropriate)

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR OUR CHURCH RECORDS

- ◆ **Certificate of Baptism** Please be sure the document is dated within the last six months. Contact the church where you were baptized in order to obtain a new certificate if your present copy of the document is more than six months old.
- ◆ **Certificate of First Holy Communion and Confirmation**
- ◆ **Marriage License** It is your responsibility to give the marriage license to the priest two weeks prior to the wedding.
- ◆ **Dispensation** If you need any dispensations the fee will be explained by the priest doing the preparation.

◆ **Declaration of Nullity** If either one of you has been married before, speak with a priest, **before six months**, regarding the possibility of needing a Declaration of Nullity (Annulment). The priest will explain if this process applies to you, what to do to begin this process, and the fees that may be required. There are no civil effects to declaration of nullity in the Church in the United States. It does not affect in any manner the legitimacy of children, property rights, inheritance rights, names, etc. It is a declaration from the Catholic Church that a particular union, presumably begun in good faith and thought by all to be a valid marriage, was in fact an invalid union as the Church defines marriage. **No wedding date will be set until this declaration is finalized.**

STEP #2

PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING

Schedule several appointments to take and review the **FOCCUS** Questionnaire. FOCCUS (Facilitate Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) is an inventory designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship.

This program is administered by **Terri Bledsoe, L. C. S. W.** You may contact her at the parish office (**805.489.2680 extension #15**) to schedule these appointments. There is a cost of \$175.00 for parishioners. Additional fees may apply to non-parishioners.

As part of your marriage preparation, the Diocese asks you to take part in a weekend retreat for engaged couples that is designed to deepen, develop and enrich your lives together. If you are unable to attend a weekend retreat, day workshops are available.

STEP #3

THE CEREMONY

The parish Wedding Coordinator, **Kathy Sugishita**, will assist you in organizing the many details pertaining to your wedding at St. Patrick's Church. Please call Kathy (**805.489.2680 extension #18**) no later than three months before the ceremony to discuss the following:

Rehearsal

Please arrange day and time to meet with the Wedding Coordinator.

Flowers

Flowers are your responsibility. We ask that you consider leaving a bouquet in the church as an expression of thanks to God on your special day.

Aisle runner

This is not provided by the church. You can obtain them from your florist. We ask that you do not tape or tack bows to the pews. Your florist can show you how to attach bows in a way that will not damage the furniture.

Candles

Usually couples like to choose their own unity candle. These are not provided by the church.

Decorating

Decorations are usually done just prior to the wedding. Due to the fact that other events may be scheduled prior to your wedding please arrange a time with the Coordinator to come in and decorate the church.

Pictures / Videos

Photographers and video tapers need to be asked to remain in one place during the ceremony. Too much movement distracts from the ceremony. Please avoid the use of flash bulbs or extra lighting. You are welcome to pose for pictures after the ceremony, but please limit the time to twenty minutes, so that others may use the church for other events taking place or prayer. We do have several lovely places on our grounds that would offer some possibilities for photographers such as the grotto and patio area.

Confetti

Rice, bird seed, or confetti are not allowed inside or outside the church.

Music

The parish has a musician and cantor who would be willing to play at weddings for a mutually agreed upon fee. If you are interested in their services, please speak to the Marriage Coordinator. If you have arranged for your own musicians, please speak to the Marriage Coordinator, give her their name and telephone number so that she can arrange a time for instructions on using the music equipment and provide keys to the instruments.

Dressing rooms

A reminder that there are no designated dressing or preparation rooms available without prior arrangements. Please ask for the availability of Meeting Room #3 for use as a dressing room at the time your wedding date is booked. Depending on the schedule of weddings for that day that room may not be available. Meeting Room #3 must be left tidy and clean when you leave.

Clean up

We request that you please ask a family member or your florist to remove all flower boxes, bows, etc, immediately after the wedding and to return everything to their original locations as there will be another event that evening.

AND FINALLY, MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALWAYS!

We here at St. Patrick's Parish wish you a beautiful wedding ceremony, a loving and Christ-centered marriage and hope to see your new family become an active part of our parish community!