



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

St. Patrick's Church
501 Fair Oaks Avenue
Post Office Box 860
Arroyo Grande, Ca 93421
(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. Our 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

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

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. To minimize last minute stress, we ask that all required documents, including the signed Wedding Agreement Form on page 7, marriage preparation and fees, be completed and turned into the parish office at least **THREE MONTHS** prior to the wedding date, unless arrangements are made in advance.

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| <i>STEP #1</i> | <i>SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS WITH THE PRIEST PREPARING YOUR WEDDING</i> |
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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 the Pastor or the Parochial Vicar. 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.

The church donation to reserve your Wedding Day is \$350.00 for St. Patrick's parishioners.

Couples who are not St. Patrick's parishioners are asked to donate \$500.00 because of the additional work required. It is also customary that the couple bring their own priest to officiate at the ceremony.

If you would like to engage a priest from outside our parish, you are asked to pay his fees. —————>

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.

♦ **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 process will be explained by the priest during the preparation.

Declaration of Nullity If either one of you has been married before, speak with the priest, **at least six months before the ceremony**, regarding the possibility of needing a Declaration of Nullity (Annulment). The priest will explain if this process applies to you.

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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 \$185.00 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. Couples can go online to schedule their retreat weekend at **www.engagedencounter.org**. If you are unable to attend a weekend retreat, day workshops could be available. →

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| <i>STEP #3</i> | <i>THE CEREMONY</i> |
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Rehearsal

The rehearsal is generally scheduled on the Thursday or Friday before the wedding.

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 Parish Office to come in and decorate the church.

Pictures / Videos

Photographers and videographers 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 fee; let us know if you are interested in their services. If you have arranged for your own musicians, please have them come to the rehearsal so they can become familiar with our sound system.

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. St. Patrick's Parish is not responsible for items left behind.

Wedding Agreement Form

Please sign, date, and return with deposit to reserve your wedding date.

Having read the guidelines for the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Patrick's Church, Arroyo Grande, we acknowledge and adhere to the guidelines contained therein without exception.

This is NOT a legal contract. It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to confirm their wedding date with St. Patrick's parish office before making any commitment with caterers or reception venues.

It is the couple's obligation to ensure that marriage preparation is completed and all paperwork, deposits and fees are received no less than THREE MONTHS prior to the ceremony. If the necessary paperwork and offering balance is not received three months prior to the ceremony, or other arrangements are not made in advance, St. Patrick's reserves the right to cancel your reservation.

Date of Wedding: _____ Time: _____

Full name of Bride: (print) _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Current Parish: _____

Check all that apply:

I am a Baptized Catholic

I am not baptized in the Christian faith

I am baptized in another Christian Church

I have been married previously

Signature of Bride: _____ Date: _____

Full name of Groom: (print) _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Current Parish: _____

Check all that apply:

I am a Baptized Catholic

I am not baptized in the Christian faith

I am baptized in another Christian Church

I have been married previously

Signature of Groom: _____ Date: _____

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

***MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALWAYS!***