



**St. Thomas the Apostle Roman Catholic Church**

3774 Jackson St. Riverside, Ca. 92503

<https://www.stthomasriverside.com/>

Email: [stthomastheapostle.riv@sbdioocese.org](mailto:stthomastheapostle.riv@sbdioocese.org)

Parish Office Fax Number: (951)354-7402

Parish Office Phone Number: (951)689-1131

**HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**1: Setting the day of the wedding**

1. Couples need to contact the wedding coordinator at least six months in advance of the date on which they hope to celebrate the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony.
2. Coordinator will list the documentation needed (mention bellow) for the couple to gather together before the first interview with wedding coordinator.
3. Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays from 10:00 am through 2:00 pm or Friday afternoon (wedding are not held during Lent Season)
4. Coordinator will set up an appointment to meet the couple and review provided list of documentation.

**2: Interview Parish Wedding Coordinators the first time**

- St. Thomas the Apostle has its own Parish Wedding Coordinators who will assure all documentation is completed before meeting with Pastor/Delegate.
- Coordinator will also coordinate the wedding liturgical ceremony. In the event the couples have their own "event coordinator", they shall not interfere with the liturgical coordination. The reception at venue is consider separate from the wedding celebration therefore the Coordinator will determine and consider their suggestions only if appropriate to apply during the Liturgical Ceremony.

1. On the first meeting with the coordinator couples are to present the following documents:
  - a. A recent copy of the Baptismal Certificate, one issued within the last six months,
  - b. A letter of permission from the Pastor of their parish they are registered is required if not registered in St. Thomas the Apostle.
  - c. Additional documentation may be required by the Church or the Diocese Tribunal (depending on individual circumstances).
2. If the first set of documents is presented, the day of ceremony could be set and mark in the general calendar after a non-refundable deposit of \$250.00 is received, if not a tentative date will mark until the deposit is received. Then the day will be officially schedule.
3. Coordinator will go over the fees for the weddings with the couple explaining how the \$680.00 fee will be distributed. (brake down fees sheet attached, fees does not includes the music in the ceremony.)
4. If couple desire to have music on their ceremony, St. Thomas Wedding Liturgical Ceremony music fee is \$300.00 (\$150.00 pianist and \$150.00 cantor).
5. Coordinator will provide the couple with the following forms:

HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES

- a. Two affidavits to establish freedom to marry forms, one for each, to verify that none of the parties have been married before. This forms need to be filled out by one of the parents in front of the Priest/Delegate or in front of a Public Notary.
- b. Prenuptial Examination Form for couple to fill only the first page. The remaining pages will be filled by the Priest/Delegate on the day of the interview with the couple.
6. Coordinator will explain of other documents needed such as:
  - a. Certificate of Catholic Engaged Encounter (Pre-Cana or other course accepted by the Diocese of San Bernardino).
  - b. Marriage License (should be obtained no more than 90 days prior to the day of the wedding).
  - c. Foccus test and review of results with Priest or Delegate.
  - d. Additional documents if necessary depending on individual circumstances: annulment letters, divorcer certificate, Letter of Pastor if from different Parish.

**3: Meeting with Pastor/Delegate the first time with in the third month of request**

1. Pastor/Delegate will review documents mention above provided by wedding coordinator
2. After interviewing the couples the Priest/Delegate will determine if the couple can get marry or other requirements need to be completed.
3. At Pastor/Delegate consideration, the Pre Examination interview and questioner can be performed, if not, a new appointment needs to be schedule for the questioner to be filled out by Priest or Delegate.
4. Ordinarily our pastor will reside at the wedding. If a couple may have a priest friend or priest relative whom they want to invite to preside at the wedding, the couple should mention this to the Pastor/Delegate interviewing at this time.

**4: Meeting with Parish Liturgical Wedding Coordinators the second time within the fourth month of request**

- On this meeting coordinator will go over the following:
  1. Review all documents one more time and assure all are completed.
  2. Will give the couple a copy of the reading options and explain how to choose the readings and prayer for the wedding ceremony. Couple should complete the form from at the end of the handout and submit at least 60 days before the wedding day for the set-up of binder for presider and readers.
  3. St. Thomas Rules on the use of flowers, photographer, videographers, dress code, and any other guideline that may apply during the time of celebration.
  4. Engaged couples are ask to set appointment with chosen choir director regarding the selection of appropriate music for their wedding. A contact number will be provided to the couple.
  5. The dress code for weddings ceremonies at St. Thomas the Apostle will be explained to the couple; modesty dressing is encouraged, we ask that there be no strapless or backless dresses as well as continuous front cuts for bride and bride maids. Other dress codes will be discussed.
  6. The focus test can be done on this meeting, otherwise couples need to schedule a new meeting to complete the Foccus test, (takes 60 to 90 minutes to complete).
  7. Coordinator will enter Foccus answers into the system and print out the results.
  8. A copy of the Foccus results will be placed in the couple's folder.
  9. A day and time for the rehearsal will be discuss and set,

HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES

**5: Preparation of wedding binders for presider and Readers**

1. After receiving the form from couples on the readings and prayers of their choice, the wedding coordinator will place a copy on the reader binder of the following:
  - a. First reading from old testament
  - b. Responsorial Psalm (if preferred not to be song)
  - c. Second reading from new testament
  - d. Gospel reading
  - e. Prayer of the faithful.
2. The wedding coordinator also will place a copy on the Presider's binder of the following:
  - a. Introductory greeting for The Order of Celebrating Matrimony within Mass
  - b. Collect prayer
  - c. First reading from old testament
  - d. Responsorial Psalm (if not to be song, otherwise the Cantor will choose it)
  - e. Second reading from new testament
  - f. Gospel reading
  - g. Questions of intent.
  - h. Consent (wedding vows).
  - i. Blessing and exchange of Rings prayer.
  - j. Blessing of Arras prayer (if any).
  - k. Blessing and Placing of Lazo prayer (if any).
  - l. General Intercessions (prayer of the faithful).
  - m. Eucharistic Prayer
  - n. Nuptial Blessing prayer.
  - o. Prayer after Communion.
  - p. Solemn Blessing.
3. Coordinator will place this copy in the Pastor's inbox in the office for review and approval.
4. Both binders are to be ready two weeks prior to the wedding day.

**6: Meeting with Pastor/Delegate the second time**

1. Pastor/Delegate will go over the paperwork one more time and confirm all have been filled properly.
2. Pastor/Delegate will complete the Affidavit to establish freedom to marry forms. The presence of the Mother, Father or nearest sibling is required to complete this document. Otherwise the witnesses can schedule a mutually agreeable time for them to complete the form.
3. Pastor/Delegate will go over the Foccus result with the couple and assist with questions and/or advice according to situations of results.

**7: Sacrament of Reconciliation**

1. The couple should make plans to receive the Holy Sacrament of Reconciliation on week prior to their wedding date. They can have reconciliation during the regular church schedule, or consider other option that better fit their personal/work schedule. **NOTE: Confession is a requirement to prepare the couple spiritually in receiving the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony.**

HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES

**8: Wedding Rehearsal**

1. The couple and their entourage should attend the rehearsal which will be schedule to occur during the week prior to their wedding.
2. The rehearsal will starts promptly and should take no more than 1 hour.
3. Everyone on the entourage is expected to attend and arrive on time to the rehearsal to prevent extended time.
4. After rehearsal the coordinator will assure the wedding binder is placed in the Priest mail box.

**9: On the Wedding Day**

1. Everyone on the entourage should arrive no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the Holy Mass.
2. Any last minute changes should be brought out to the Liturgical coordinator to accommodate the ceremony flow. But strongly recommend to keep original plan to avoid last minute changes.
3. All previously discussed rules will apply; dress code, flowers, photography, videography,
4. Coordinator is to make announcement to the guests that no flash photography is to be used during the ceremony to prevent disturbance to the presider.
5. Photographers are asked to speak with wedding coordinator for instructions as to where they can stand for pictures during the ceremony. NO PICTUREs are to be taken during consecration.
6. Flash photography is not allowed during the ceremony.
7. Videotaping is allowed, the wedding coordinator will give very specific instructions regarding recording and places to stand during the ceremony. Failure to follow instruction will result in the videographer being asked to stop taping.
8. At the end of the ceremony a reasonable time will be allowed for pictures. If the newly wedded want to take picture with presider, this should be brought out to wedding coordinator before the ceremony to be able to notify presider, the availability of the presider will be taken in consideration for picture taken.

**NOTE: if the Bride & Groom are present, and no wedding entourage has arrive, the Presider has the discretion to start the Holy Mass at its scheduled time.**

**10: Post Wedding Ceremony**

1. Immediately after ceremony ends, the witnesses should be taken to the sacristy to sign the marriage license in the presence of the presider if this has not been done previously.
2. The Presider will sign the Marriage license and the Marriage certificate at the end of the ceremony.
3. The coordinator will mark the formal Church Marriage License with the Parish seal.
4. The Certificate and a copy of the license can be picked up by someone (the witnesses) on the same day or can be picked up at a later time at the parish office.
5. The couple's official recorded marriage license should be mailed by the coordinator in the original envelope provided to the County Recorder's Office within the week of the couple's wedding date.
6. The couple will have to request the original license certificate to the County Recorder's Office after three weeks of the wedding date. The parish office will not handle the original license obtaining process, this need to be done though the couple's side.

HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES

**REMINDERS**

**Marriage preparations**

1. Couples need to contact the wedding coordinator at least six months in advance of the date on which they hope to celebrate the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony.
2. Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays from 10:00 am through 2:00 pm or Friday afternoon (weddings are not held during Lent Season)
3. Coordinator will also coordinate the wedding liturgical ceremony. In the event the couple have their own "event coordinator", she/he will not interfere with the liturgical coordination.

**Marriage Fees**

1. Deposit of \$250.00 is non-refundable. Balance of funds paid over and above the deposit is refundable if cancellation is made 60 day prior to the wedding date. Refunds for cancellation within 60 days of the wedding date are to be discussed with the Pastor.
2. Music fee is not part of the wedding fees. Music fees are \$300.00 dols. (\$150.00 pianist and \$150.00 Cantor).
3. A \$200.00 fee is required for marriage preparation assistance on couple documents if marriage is taking place elsewhere outside St. Thomas Parish. Payment is made at the start of processing and is non-refundable.
4. Financial issue should NOT be a reason for not having a Catholic marriage. As always, the church should always be of assistance for those who have a verified and real need for financial consideration. The Pastor will determine on this case.

**Documentation**

1. On the first meeting with the coordinator couples are to present the following documents:
  - a. A recent copy of the Baptismal Certificate, one issued within the last six months,
  - b. A letter of permission from the Pastor of the parish you are registered is required if you are not registered in St. Thomas the Apostle.
  - c. Additional documents may be required by the Church or the Diocese Tribunal (depending on individual circumstances).
2. All forms need to be filled and approved with the rest of the required documents by Pastor/Delegate three months prior to the ceremony.
3. Marriage license is only good for 90 day in Riverside County therefore license should be obtained within the last 60 days prior to the wedding date.
4. If the couple is already civilly married a copy of your marriage certificate must be submitted to Parish/Coordinator two months before the convalidation date.

**Presider Priest/Deacon**

1. Ordinarily, our pastor will reside at the wedding. If a couple may have a priest or deacon friend or priest/deacon relative whom they want to invite to preside at the wedding, the couple should mention this to the Pastor/Delegate interviewing at that time.
2. If the couple intends to invite another priest/deacon the permission of the Pastor is required.
3. Unless otherwise there are valid reasons, the Resident priest is always presumed as the celebrant and the invited priest can be the homilist and officiant of the Marriage Rite.
4. Valid reason for allowing other priest to celebrate may include, but not limited to, the following:

HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY  
GENERAL GUIDELINES

- a. Invited priest has close blood relation to one of the couple
- b. The celebrant is a prelate
- c. The residing priest is not available

### **Music**

1. Engaged couples are ask to set appointment with Director of Music Ministry regarding the selection of appropriate music and musicians for their wedding. A contact number will be provided to the couple.
2. If the couple wants an outside musician they must be familiar with Catholic Liturgical Services music and they must get the approval of our Music Ministry Director.

### **Photography and Videotaping**

1. The couples are encouraged to have this special day recorded. We ask that the prudent judgement be given and the following directions observed:
  - a. The wedding coordinator will give very specific instructions regarding recording and places to stand. Failure to follow the instructions will result in the videographer being ask to stop recording and wait outside the premises.
  - b. The use of drones is not permitted inside the church, for outside need permission.
  - c. No flash photography or external lighting is allowed during the ceremony.
  - d. If a picture with presider is planned, notification to the coordinator should be made prior to ceremony to notify the celebrant, if the celebrant accepts this should be the first picture taken.

### **Flowers**

1. Wedding Coordinator will discuss with couple about:
  - a. Floral arrangements size and height
  - b. Placements of arrangements
  - c. The use of aisle runner is NOT allowed
  - d. For safety reasons, the throwing of flower petals, rice, confetti, birdseed, or any other item before, during and after the ceremony is NOT allowed.
  - e. Any floral arrangement utilized for the ceremony must be left behind unless otherwise discuss with wedding coordinator.
  - f. If remains of flowers are left on the floor after the party leaves the church a cleaning fee may be applied.

### **Dress code**

1. Modesty dressing is encouraged, as dress code for weddings ceremonies at St. Thomas the Apostle. We ask that there be no strapless or backless dresses as well as continuous front cuts for bride and bride maids. Other dress codes will be discussed.

### **Alcohol usage**

1. If the use of alcohol is detected on any of the wedding participants, especially the bride or groom the wedding could be postponed. We ask you to share this with your wedding party as well.

### **Bride waiting room**

1. This room will available for the Bride and her ladies companions if requested.
2. The room needs to be cleared of any personal belonging immediately after the ending of ceremony photo taking time. Any items left behind may be tossed out without notification.
3. A cleaning fee may apply if room is left on unclean conditions.