

Requirements & Application for Holy Matrimony



Icon of "The Wedding at Cana"

ST. MICHAEL'S BY-THE-SEA

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Carlsbad, California

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INTRODUCTION

The decision to enter into the bond of marriage is such an important one, that we at St. Michael's-by-the-Sea are very serious about our priestly and canonical responsibilities for preparing couples for and presiding at a marriage. Preparing for marriage is not primarily about the wedding day or the attractiveness of the church building. It is about being equipped to be a lifelong witness to the Faith as expressed in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The following quote from the Marriage Rite in *The Book of Common Prayer* summarizes the nature of marriage.

The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Therefore, to be married at St. Michael's, each couple must meet the basic requirements established by the Canons (rules) of the Church, the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, and conform to the practices of this parish as set forth in the following pages.

We hope that understanding these requirements will assist you with your application and preparation process. If and when the requirements are met and your marriage application is approved, you will be given another information booklet, *Preparation for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage*, listing the regulations for the wedding ceremony itself, such as flowers, music, licenses, photography, etc.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

USE OF THE CHURCH FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

Because the Sacrament of Marriage is part of the celebration of the corporate life in Christ, use of the facilities for a wedding is reserved only for those who intend to live their married lives with the help and guidance of God in Christian community. St. Michael's old historic chapel, church building, parish hall, and grounds exist to support the sacred celebrations of this community of faith and are only available to those who fulfill the requirements for marriage. Only clergy authorized by the Rector of this parish are allowed to officiate at weddings.

APPLICATIONS

Applications must be received in the church office at least six months in advance of the proposed wedding date in order for counseling sessions and other arrangements to be scheduled. This advance notice requirement is a vital one, particularly if one or both persons do not live in the area, or if permission from the Bishop is required.

PRE-MARITAL LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Christian Marriage presupposes maintaining the moral standards expected of those who follow the Lord Jesus. Even though society condones the practice of premarital sex and living together before marriage, the Church still holds that a sexual relationship is the outward and visible sign of the "two becoming one flesh" and is acceptable only in the context of marriage between a man and a woman. Likewise, only the Covenant of Marriage itself is a sign of a lifelong commitment. Therefore, any sexual relationship, or the appearance of such, outside of marriage, is a misrepresentation of the Church's belief concerning marriage and commitment to Christ. Therefore, any couple living together must agree to separate living arrangements until the wedding day.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

The Declaration of Intention (See back of Application Form) must be signed and turned in with the application. The Declaration clearly states, in the words of the marriage ceremony from *The Book of Common Prayer*, the teaching of the Church on the Sacrament of Marriage. Both persons must understand and be in agreement with this statement.

SCHEDULING THE WEDDING

Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, during Holy Week, Easter Day, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. During the Season of Lent, weddings may be scheduled only under special circumstances, and then by permission from the Bishop.

CLERGY REQUIREMENTS OFF CAMPUS

The Sacrament of Marriage is a service of worship of the Church; therefore, all marriages at St. Michael's will be held in the church building or chapel. These consecrated buildings represent the household of God gathered before the altar of God in worship. The clergy may also officiate at weddings in other church or military chapel facilities with the proper authorization.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The only liturgical rite of marriage authorized at St. Michael's is from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

Pre-marital counseling with the Parish Pastoral Counselor is required (unless other arrangements are agreed upon). The fee for counseling is \$200, due at the beginning of the counseling.

FEES FOR USE OF THE CHURCH OR CHAPEL

Members (financial support for at least six months) - \$200

Non-members - \$600

REQUIREMENTS – No Previous Marriages

1. At least one of the couple must be a baptized, practicing Christian.
2. Premarital counseling is obligatory. Because the marriage relationship is so important, the Church insists upon adequate counseling before the ceremony takes place as follows:
 - a) In the first meeting, the Priest reviews the marriage application and finds out more about the couple and their decision to get married. If the application is acceptable, the couple will take a Premarital Inventory (PMI), a series of questions to be answered separately by the couple. The inventory measures marriage readiness and provides a guideline for identifying needed areas of counseling.
 - b) In the second and subsequent sessions (3 -4 average), the couple will meet with the Parish Pastoral Counselor to discuss the results of the PMI.
 - c) When approval for marriage is given, upon the recommendation of both Priest and Pastoral Counselor, the couple will be given the *Preparation for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* booklet.
 - d) A final session with the Priest will cover the theological meaning of marriage, and discuss the "practical" details of the wedding ceremony as outlined in the *Preparation for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* booklet. The proposed wedding date will then be confirmed.

Note: **Do not send out invitations before final approval!**

REQUIREMENTS - Persons Divorced Once

1. Marriage is intended by God to be a lifelong union. It is possible, however, for those who have been divorced to be married again in the Episcopal Church.
2. The following conditions set forth in the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of San Diego must be met:
 - a) A time of one year from the date of the filing for petition of divorce or six months after the date of the final divorce or annulment decree will have elapsed.
 - b) One or both persons seeking remarriage must have an ongoing pastoral relationship with the Priest.
 - c) One of the persons must be a participating and supporting member of the Church.
 - d) One of the persons must be a baptized member of the Episcopal Church.
 - e) Obligations to the former spouse and/or children have been or are being fulfilled responsibly.
 - f) The new partner will not have been responsible for the break up of the previous marriage.
 - g) The Priest must seek permission from the Bishop for the marriage to take place. Certified copies of the final divorce or annulment decrees must accompany the application to the Bishop.
3. All of the General Requirements and Requirements for No Previous Marriages must be met.

REQUIREMENTS-Persons Divorced Twice

1. Only under special circumstances will the Bishop give permission for persons to have a third marriage in the Episcopal Church. The following conditions set forth in the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of San Diego must be met:
 - a) At least three years will have passed since those twice divorced have lived with their previous spouse, and at least two years will have passed since their divorce settlement has been finalized.
 - b) Both persons seeking remarriage must have an ongoing pastoral relationship with the Priest.
 - c) Both persons must be participating and supporting church members.
 - d) Those twice divorced will have had at least four counseling sessions with a licensed marriage counselor since their last divorce.
 - e) The couple must write a personal letter of petition to the Bishop reflecting on their previous relationships and indicating their intention to maintain a lifelong union within the context of a Christian community.
2. All of the General Requirements and Requirements for No Previous Marriages must be met.

THE BLESSING OF CIVIL MARRIAGES

Persons who do not meet the requirements for marriage may be counseled to be married in a civil ceremony. Those divorced once may request permission to have their marriage blessed after one year of marriage, and those twice divorced, after two years of marriage providing both persons have an ongoing pastoral relationship with the Priest, are regular in attendance, and are participating and supporting members of the Church.

Application for Holy Matrimony

Date _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

How long have you known each other? _____

Have you been a financially supporting member of St. Michael's for at least six months?

Yes _____ No _____

Proposed date of ceremony _____ Time _____

Priest to officiate _____

We, the undersigned, understand the requirements outlined in the Requirements and Application for Holy Marriage booklet. We also understand that this is only an application for marriage at St. Michael's and that approval is at the discretion of the Rector or his Assistant.

Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Please complete the following pages
and mail or fax application to:

St. Michael's by-the-Sea
P. O. Box 127
Carlsbad, CA 92008
Fax: 760.729.0737

GROOM'S INFORMATION

Groom's Full Name _____
(please print)

Address _____

Telephone (Work) _____ (Home) _____

Age _____ Birth Date _____

City of Birth _____ State _____

Occupation _____

Never married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Baptized? Yes _____ No _____ In what denomination? _____

Confirmed? Yes _____ No _____ In what denomination? _____

What Church do you attend? _____

Father's Full Name _____

Mother's First and Maiden Name _____

BRIDE'S INFORMATION

Bride's Full Name _____
(please print)

Address _____

Telephone (Work) _____ (Home) _____

Age _____ Birth Date _____

City of Birth _____ State _____

Occupation _____

Never married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Baptized? Yes _____ No _____ In what denomination? _____

Confirmed? Yes _____ No _____ In what denomination? _____

What Church do you attend? _____

Father's Full Name _____

Mother's First and Maiden Name _____

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

We, _____ and _____, desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

We believe that marriage is for the purpose of mutual fellowship, encouragement, and understanding; for the procreation (if it may be) of children, and their physical and spiritual nurture; and for the safeguarding and benefit of society.

And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

Bride

Groom _____

Date _____

O gracious and everliving God, you have created us male and female in your image: Look mercifully upon this man and this woman who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.