

**The Celebration
of the
Sacrament of Marriage**

Important Information

Parish Office	925.254.2426
Pastor	Msgr. Ted Kraus x 304 kraus_ted@yahoo.com
Sacramental Coordinator	Tony Millette x310 tmillette@smparish.org

FEES

Church	\$500.-
Cantor/Soloist	\$200.-
Accompanist	\$200.-
Wedding Facilitator	\$100.-
Presider	Donation

Directions to the Church of Santa Maria

The Church of Santa Maria is located at

40 Santa Maria Way in Orinda, CA

The phone number is (925) 254.2426 x 301

BART: From the Orinda Bart Station:
walk south on Camino Pablo to Santa Maria Way
west on Santa Maria Way and follow signs

Driving:

- **From Oakland:** Highway 24 east to Orinda Exit; left on Camino Pablo; first stop light turn right on Santa Maria Way; 100 yards up the hill turn left — you will still be on Santa Maria Way
- **From Walnut Creek:** Highway 24 west to Orinda Village Exit; first stop light turn right on Santa Maria Way; 100 yards up hill turn left — you will still be on Santa Maria Way

Dear Engaged Couple,

Welcome to the Church of Santa Maria, Orinda, California. This is our communal place for worship and prayer, our home and gathering place as a parish family. We welcome you, your family and friends as guests to our home.

The joining of two lives in married love is a profound experience of God's presence made visible among us. It is a sacred time, a transforming moment, when you pledge to one another the gift of yourself and become one together what your love truly implies. In our Catholic tradition we refer to these moments as sacramental celebrations. It is, therefore, our honor and desire to be with you as you prepare for this significant celebration in your life journey.

This booklet offers various resources to respond to frequently asked questions and to assist you in your marriage arrangements, especially those which will take place in our parish community. While the time preceding your wedding may be hectic, we see this time primarily as a unique opportunity to consciously prepare yourself to celebrate together the *Sacrament of Marriage*. It is a time to explore and express your hopes and dreams for one another, to prayerfully incorporate the gift of faith in your lives together. In the days and weeks ahead, therefore, we invite you to make this preparation a spiritually enriching gift to and for one another. Please feel free to call us with your questions and concerns. In this way, we are available to help celebrate your wedding in peace, joy, and readiness for the married life that lies before you.

Finally, we extend to you our best wishes and promise of prayer at this special grace-filled time of preparation for your marriage.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Theodore W. Kraus
Pastor

Tony Millette
Director of Liturgy, Music and Sacraments

Table of Contents

Getting Married in the Catholic Church	p.3
1.Necessary Documents	p.3 & 4
2.Marriage Preparation Sessions	p.5
3.Residents of another Diocese	p.5
Getting Married at the Church of Santa Maria	p.6
1.Setting the Date and Time	p.6
2.Facilities	p.6
3.Decorum	p.7
4.Wedding Rehearsal	p.7
Your Wedding as Worship	p.8
1.What Kind of Ceremony is Appropriate?	p.8 & 9
2.Who are the Ministers?	P.9 & 10
3.Incorporating Diversity and Participation	p.10
Music for your Wedding	p.11
Flowers and Decorations	p.12
Photo and Video Guidelines	p.13
Marriage Preparation Checklist	p.14 & 15
Directions	p.16
Phone Numbers and Stipends	p.17

2 MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

1. Finalize the details of the wedding liturgy.
2. Be sure all documentation in completed and filed at Santa Maria.
3. Ask persons with the necessary skills and training to be liturgical ministers—ministers of the word and communion.
4. Get a unity candle (and tapers) if you plane to use one at the wedding.

1 MONTH OR MORE BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

1. Get the worship aid (program) prepared, reviewed by the sacramental coordinator and then printed.
2. Discuss parish guidelines with photographers, videographer and florist.

1 WEEK BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

1. Remind the wedding party and family to be on time for the rehearsal.

BRING TO THE REHEARSAL

1. The marriage license
2. The unity candle if you plan to use one
3. Offering envelopes for the presider, cantor, accompanist, wedding facilitator and any other others who will receive a gift or stipend.
4. Wedding worship aid (program)

Marriage Preparation Checklist

6 MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

1. Arrange for an interview with the deacon to start the necessary documentation.
2. Get baptismal records from the parish of baptism for bride and groom.
3. Set a wedding date with the church and confirm where you will do your marriage preparation.
4. Sign up for the Engaged Encounter Process or parish marriage preparation program.

5 MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

1. Make an appointment with your local parish or Santa Maria to complete Form A.
2. Ask a close friend or relative to complete Form B.

3 MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

1. Meet with the sacramental coordinator to discuss options for the wedding liturgy.
2. Review and select the scriptures, prayer and music for the wedding liturgy.

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

We are happy to have you celebrate your wedding liturgy at the Church of Santa Maria. While the wedding liturgy will touch you, your family and friends in an especially intimate way, it also pertains to the local parish and to the larger Church as well. When you exchange your vows, you offer a visible sign of God's presence and love to the parish in which your wedding is celebrated. You create a new family within that community. At the same time, the Church, and in particular the local parish, promise to be there for you in times of joy and in times of need. You are making a commitment to each other and to the Church. In turn, the Church is making a commitment to you.

The guidelines which follow have been established to reflect this commitment. As a liturgy of the parish, your wedding will be influenced and shaped by the parish's regular patterns of worship, especially its celebration of Sunday liturgy. Please look upon these guidelines as an expression of the Church's desire to celebrate your wedding as an integral and welcome part of the parish's worship life.

1. Necessary Documents

Marriage celebrates the unbreakable commitment between a man and a woman who are free to make this mature decision in a community of believers. Certain documents are required to establish your sacramental status within the Church and your freedom from previous unions. Sworn statements attest to your understanding of Christian marriage and your willingness to live within the Church's vision of marriage. Permission from the Bishop is needed when a Catholic prepares to marry someone of another faith; a dispensation is required for a Catholic to marry someone who is not baptized.

If the marriage documentation is being completed at Santa Maria and you plan on getting married at another location a \$100.- processing fee will be required from the couple.

The documentation needed for marriage are generally prepared in the local parish of the bride or groom unless other arrangements are made. If the documents are to be completed at Santa Maria—you need to contact Deacon Maurice Custodio who will assist the couple with the marriage documentation.

The marriage cannot take place without the following documents:

- **BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE** Catholics need to get a certificate from their parish of baptism issued six months prior to the wedding. For those baptized in another Christian faith, a copy of the original baptismal certificate is sufficient.
- **BRIDE & GROOM / FORM A** This form, completed in the presence of our deacon, attests to the freedom and intentions of each party to the marriage.
- **WITNESS / FORM B** These sworn statements by a parent, lifelong friend or relative, witnessed in a Catholic church, attest that the bride and groom are free to marry and that there is no known impediment to the marriage.
- **CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE** The license must be acquired in person and is good for 90 days from issuance. *A copy of the marriage license* needs to be sent to the parish office a month before the scheduled wedding. Any California County can issue a license. Contra Cost County recorder is located in Martinez, CA. The office can be reached at 925.646.2360.
- **OTHER DOCUMENTS** If either party has been married before, other documentation regarding past marriage(s) will be required.
- **LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR** This letter of permission is required only of those registered in a parish other than Santa Maria.
- **MARRIAGE PREPARATION CERTIFICATE** A copy of the certificate that the couple receives at the conclusion of their Marriage Preparation session is required.

Photo and Video Guidelines

Because a wedding is worship, not a photo session, we ask that all who work at Santa Maria, including photographers and videographers, act in a professional manner, respecting the sacredness of the ceremony and the assembly gathered in prayer. Pictures should be taken only by professional photographers. During the ceremony, picture-taking should be unobtrusive and respectful. If videotape equipment is used, it should be set up in a stationary place out of the sight lines of the assembly. Photographers may use the balcony.

Respecting the schedule of other wedding or church functions, the church can be made available for picture-taking before or after the ceremony. We recommend that photographers and videographers visit the church prior to the ceremony to become familiar with the surrounds and lighting conditions.

During the procession, photographers/videographers must be unobtrusive and not obstruct or hold up the movement of the ministers and wedding party. During the ceremony, those taking pictures may not:

- Be in the sanctuary (the altar area)
- Stand forward of the last pew of seated guests
- Stand forward of the last occupied pew in the center aisle
- Be positioned between the couple and the priest
- Stand on the pews or chairs
- Use flash or flood lights during the ceremony
- Use any theatrical spotlights already positioned in the church without prior written approval
- Videographers may not change or add to the microphone system.

The bridal couple is responsible for acquainting the photographer with these guidelines. Before the wedding, please remind family members and friends to refrain from taking photos during the ceremony. Questions or concerns can be directed to our sacramental coordinator at (925) 254.2426 x310 several days prior to the wedding ceremony. Please do not wait until the day of the ceremony.

Flowers and Decorations

Weddings are a time of festivity and hospitality. The colors and symbols used in the worship environment reflect the rich meaning of this day. The couple are the primary symbol of God's faithful, unconditional love. Whatever is added by way of decoration is intended to highlight without overwhelming the meaning of this celebration.

Santa Maria's worship space incorporates the colors and symbols of the liturgical season which remain in place for all our services. Early in the planning process, we can discuss the general décor of the church at the time of your wedding, as well as creative options and guidelines for the worship environment of your celebration. Always we seek to create an atmosphere of welcome and inclusiveness, to embody appropriateness, simplicity and elegance as befits worship. Because Advent and Lent have a somber color and feel and the use of flowers are restricted, we don't recommend wedding celebrations during these seasons.

Please call your florist early in your planning, and let us know who will be doing your flowers and what you are considering. We ask that sanctuary flowers be taken with you after the ceremony.

The seating capacity of the church is 400. The center aisle has a total of twenty three (23) pews on each side. Pew decorations must be secured by the use of ribbon or cushioned hooks only - no tape, tacks, or rough hooks, and must be removed immediately after the ceremony. They may not impede entrance to or exit from the pew by the center aisle. For reasons of safety and liturgical appropriateness, aisle runners and toiles which blocks the entrance to pews, are not permitted.

The church has a tall brass unity candle stand that accommodates side tapers with 7/8" fitted base and a center pillar and no more than 3" diameter. The stand can be decorated with flowers.

Aisle candles and additional candles in the sanctuary are not permitted.

Flowers are not permitted to be placed in any of the fountains located on church grounds.

For reasons of safety, cleanup, and the environment: rice, confetti, birdseed, or flower petals may not be thrown nor balloons released on church property.

2. Marriage Preparation Sessions

Engaged couples are required to participate in an approved marriage preparation program. These programs provide a valuable opportunity to focus on various aspects of married life. Couples must attend together. These programs fill quickly, so you are encouraged to sign up immediately after setting the date for the wedding. For further information, call:

Family Life Office of the Diocese of Oakland
925.680.8510

3. Residents of other Dioceses

Couples planning to be married here who reside in another diocese are asked to complete the marriage preparation process by their home diocese. The required documentation is the same across all dioceses.

Getting Married at the Church of Santa Maria

1. Setting the Date and Time

At Santa Maria, weddings are scheduled on Saturday at 10:00a, 12:00Noon and 2:30p. Weddings are not celebrated on Sunday. During Lent and on certain solemn feasts the Church does discourage the celebration of weddings. These matters and their possible impact on your wedding can be discussed when scheduling the date of your ceremony.

A deposit of \$500.– secures the date for your wedding. This fee covers the use of the worship space. It does not include our cantor, accompanist and wedding facilitator. Their fees are separate and listed in the back of this handbook. A full refund of your deposit will be issued if your wedding is cancelled at least six months before the date of the scheduled wedding. If your wedding is cancelled within six months of the date of the wedding, a refund of \$250.– will be issued.

2. Facilities

Dressing We have a private space for the bride and attendants to wait prior to the wedding, but we do not have space for dressing. Restrooms are limited and are located in the parish hall.

Parking There are four parking lots on church property for your guests.

Music for Your Wedding

Marriage is celebrated in the context of worship; in fact it might be said that marriage is an act of worship. Music makes a wedding celebration special and expressive; it serves to create an atmosphere of prayer, to express and support the profound mystery of two human beings uniting their lives, and to reflect and strengthen the faith of those assembled. Well-chosen music can help your guests feel included and connected to one another and can enable them to join in song, to affirm the power of the love your wedding celebrates.

With all this in mind, in preparing for your celebration, we take great care in the choice of appropriate music. We have a wide repertoire of religious and classical works from which to select music for your wedding - music that reflects the styles and usage of Roman Catholic worship, both traditional and modern. Our sacramental coordinator will provide you with a list of our repertoire. Popular love songs, ballads, and tunes drawn from plays, operas and movies - some of which are popularly associated with weddings - are, for a variety of reasons, considered unsuitable for use in the liturgy; but might well be played at the reception. Church documents on music in the liturgy provide the guidance for the selection and the placement of particular musical pieces. Taped or pre-recorded music is not used in Catholic worship.

We encourage you to join us for Sunday worship before your wedding to experience the sound and style of music at Santa Maria.

The services of our accompanist, who plays the organ and piano, and our cantor come with your agreement to use our church for your ceremony. The stipends are in addition to the fee for the use of the space. If additional rehearsals or consultations with our accompanist are required, an additional stipend will be charged. Guest accompanists and cantors must be first approved by our Sacramental Coordinator. If they are approved, our accompanist and cantor will be paid their usual stipend.

Ministers of the Word. Two or three readings from the Bible and a sung Psalm are used in the Liturgy of the Word. Friends or family members who are asked to read the Scriptures, whether Catholic or not, should be believers who are able to proclaim God's word effectively and reverently. Copies of the readings will be provided for them in advance, and they should be present at the rehearsal to practice and become accustomed to our sound system.

Ministers of Communion. A wedding celebrated during a Mass will need ministers of communion to help distribute communion. Both the bread and the cup are offered to those receiving communion. The number of ministers needed will depend upon how many in the assembly are likely to share in communion. Some couples might wish to consider serving, with appropriate preparation, as eucharistic ministers for their guests.

Other Ministers. You might ask family members and friends to carry a processional cross, candles, and the Book of the gospels used in the Liturgy of the Word. Ring bearers and flower girls are not ministers, and their services are not required for the celebration of marriage. Before asking children to fill these roles, please consider their age and maturity. Will their involvement add to or detract from the joyful solemnity of the celebration?

3. Incorporating Diversity & Participation

Symbols drawn from the cultural heritage of the bridal couple can enhance the richness of the celebration. Likewise, if ministers or members of other faith traditions are present for the ceremony, appropriate adaptations can be made to make the ceremony inclusive and expressive of different religious traditions. Our sacramental coordinator serves as the liturgist for weddings celebrated at Santa Maria, working with couples to plan the details of the ceremony.

In preparing the ceremony with the sacramental coordinator, look for ways to encourage your guests to actively participate in prayer and song. For example, much of the musical repertoire used in contemporary worship is widely familiar to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Preparing a program or worship aid for your guests can help everyone present feel welcome and at ease. Please fax a copy of the program to the sacramental coordinator at 925.254.2468 before it is sent to the printer.

3. Decorum

We ask that you and your guests honor the sacredness of the church building and grounds; please speak quietly; bring no food, gum or drinks into the church; do not run; do not stand on pews even while taking pictures.

Alcohol and drugs are **NOT PERMITTED** on church property. If the bride or groom is intoxicated on the day of the wedding, the marriage ceremony will not be celebrated.

4. Rehearsal for your Wedding

The rehearsal allows those involved in the wedding to become familiar with the ceremony, the environment of the worship space and the roles they will assume in the liturgy. Please let them know that it is important that they be at the rehearsal and on time. Ministers of the Word and Ministers of Communion should be present, although with advance notice, our sacramental coordinator can meet with them ahead of time if this is necessary. It is not customary for musicians to be at the rehearsal.

Rehearsals are scheduled for the Friday before the wedding at 4p, 5p and 6p only. **For your convenience, rehearsals will be completed within 45 minutes.** Please remind members of the wedding party to allow ample time for traffic when coming to the rehearsal.

Bring the marriage license, certificate and envelope to the rehearsal. If you want a copy of the license, follow the directions included with the marriage license. Bring the unity candle if one is to be used, as well as any additional stipends, envelopes, programs, etc. you may have prepared for the presider, extra musicians, etc. These can be set aside so that you will not need to worry about these things on your wedding day.

Your Wedding As Worship

In the Catholic tradition, a wedding is first and foremost a gathering for worship. For a man and a woman, the giving of themselves and their entire lives to one another is a profound act of faith—in God and in each other. The songs, the prayers, the readings from Scripture, the blessings, the exchange of vows and rings—all are chosen to give expression to that faith. That is why we encourage the couples to spend time and careful thought in the selection of these aspects of their wedding rite from the treasury of possibilities the Church offers for their use.

A very old saying in the Church states, “The way we pray is the way we believe.” So the way we celebrate the rite of marriage at Santa Maria reflects our faith and beliefs as Catholic Christians. It also reflects the Church’s norms for the renewed rite of marriage since Vatican II. We ask those who wish to celebrate their wedding here to observe our liturgical style based on those norms. These are described in the following pages, so please read them carefully. Couples give us wonderful feedback about the beauty and meaningfulness of the ceremonies they experience here using the new rite, even when the ceremony is somewhat different from what they’ve seen at other churches.

1. *What Kind of Ceremony Is Appropriate?*

The Catholic Church provides for two types of wedding ceremonies:

(1) marriage within the Eucharist (Nuptial Mass) and

(2) a simple rite consisting of a Liturgy of the Word with readings from the Scriptures and the exchange of vows. Both are powerful expressions of the meaning of marriage. When two Catholics marry, the Church encourages them to celebrate their union with the Eucharist that expresses their oneness in and with the Body of Christ. They may also use the simple rite if they wish. When a Catholic and a non-Catholic marry, the simple ceremony is more appropriate. While a Mass is permissible, it tends to highlight differences rather than unity when both bride and groom cannot receive the Eucharist. As you meet with our sacramental coordinator to prepare your wedding liturgy, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- What is our relationship to Sunday Eucharist? Are we faithful to the Church’s worship or have we been away from the community’s prayer? Do we desire to grow in committed faith for the future?
- If we are of mixed beliefs, how do we each feel about the ceremony and what it expresses? Are we sensitive to each other’s needs and feelings in this choice? How can we best express our oneness?
- Who will be our guests? Is the celebration of the Eucharist the best way to help them to be with us, to be comfortable, to pray with us and to participate in our wedding?

2. **Who Are The Ministers?**

The Bride and Groom as Ministers. The sacrament of marriage is unique in that the bride and groom are ministers of the sacrament to one another. Their love gathers the assembly, their words in the presence of the priest and the assembled Church create the bond that joins them forever in Christ. In that sense they themselves preside at or host their wedding.

What does this mean in practice at Santa Maria?

- The new rite calls for a gathering rite similar to that of our Sunday Eucharistic celebration, though more elaborate. The procession can be configured in various ways, but it should include the ministers, the priest, the bride and groom, their parents and witnesses (groomsmen and bridesmaids).
- The procession should express the mutuality of bride and groom as ministers of the sacrament, not focus solely on the bride. Because the procession is a unified whole, in this parish we encourage the use of a single musical selection to accompany the entire procession.
- The bride and groom are seated in the sanctuary facing the assembly as befits their role in the ceremony; their vows are spoken facing each other in clear view of the assembly.

The Presider. Ordinarily a priest assigned to Santa Maria presides at weddings celebrated here. If you wish to have a visiting priest or deacon preside, you will need to discuss this with our sacramental coordinator who will communicate with him about our parish procedures and about the civil and ecclesial delegation that may be needed. Visiting presiders will be asked to observe parish customs regarding the celebration of the rite. Delegation is given with this understanding.