

St. John Vianney Church
Marriage Preparation and Policies
(August 2010)

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming marriage! Our parish staff believes that you deserve the best preparation and support as you plan for and celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage. The following information has been prepared to help you as you make plans to celebrate this important day in your life.

Church Requirements:

- The Diocese of Honolulu requires a *minimum* of four (4) months notice prior to the proposed wedding date. Six months or even a year is preferred. The notification time begins with your first interview with the priest or deacon assisting in the preparation for your marriage.
- Do **NOT** make any plans or reservations for the wedding (e.g. print invitations, rent a hall, hire caterers) until you have contacted a priest, a deacon, or the parish administrator to arrange for the marriage date. Do **NOT** finalize plans until you have the initial meeting with the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage. The priest or deacon will **CONFIRM** the date and time of your wedding.
- **Marriage preparation** requires several meetings with the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage. One of the main elements of your preparation is your participation in an **Engaged Encounter Weekend**. The priest or deacon may also utilize a written questionnaire called FOCCUS to help you prepare for your marriage.
- **Documents** required prior to your wedding are: 1) a baptismal certificate (for Catholics) issued within one year prior to the wedding date. Contact the church in which you were baptized to request this certificate. It **CANNOT** be a copy of the original certificate received at your baptism. Baptized members of other Christian churches may submit a copy of their original baptismal certificate; 2) completion of a Freedom to Marry form by a member of your family who has known you from at least age twelve; 3) the pre-nuptial investigation form that will be filled out by the priest or deacon during a meeting with you.
- **Additional documents** may be required depending on the situation. The priest or deacon will inform you if such documents are required.

- **Wedding Days and Times:** Weddings can take place any day of the week, although Saturday seems to be the preferred day. Evening weddings are allowed from Monday to Friday. Because of the weekend Mass schedule, Saturday evening weddings are not possible. Weddings on Sundays and holidays will be scheduled based on the availability and willingness of the priest or deacon witnessing your marriage as well as the availability of the church. Saturday weddings can be scheduled between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM (3:00 PM being the latest time to start a wedding). Evening weddings (Monday - Friday) can be scheduled to start between 4:00 and 7:30 PM.
- **Rehearsals** should be scheduled on the day before the wedding. The rehearsal date and time must be arranged with the priest or deacon witnessing your marriage. Out of respect for the church and those involved in the wedding, please plan to dress appropriately, be on time, and refrain from eating, drinking or smoking in or near the church. The priest or deacon will direct the rehearsal. All particulars of the ceremony should be decided ahead of time and discussed with the priest or deacon **BEFORE** the rehearsal.
- There is no fee for the use of the church for parishioners of St. John Vianney Parish. It is customary, however, for those celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage to give an offering to the parish. A suggested offering would be 10% of the total cost of the wedding celebration remembering that it is the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage that is the reason for the rest of the celebration (reception, flowers, limousine, food, etc.)
- For non-parishioners we ask a donation of \$750 for the use of the church. Above and beyond that, it is customary to give an offering to the parish (please see section above).

The Wedding Ceremony

- The priest or deacon who will witness your marriage will assist you in planning your wedding ceremony. You will have the choice of many different prayers, readings, and blessings. This is a time for the two of you to prayerfully choose what best expresses your faith and love of God and each other.
- You may be tempted to spend a large amount of money and have a cast of thousands involved because you think you must or because family or friends are pressuring you. We encourage you to follow some simple

rules of thumb: 1) Less is more; 2) hospitality and graciousness are more important than fussing over a lot of things; 3) spectacles are best left to the theater.

- Remember that you administer the Sacrament of Marriage to each other. It is important that you be clearly visible to the assembly gathered to celebrate with you. Therefore, you will be facing the people during the entire ceremony and will not be kneeling at any time. A wedding party that is unduly large or includes tiny, fussing children only serves as a distraction to this special time.
- Others will be a part of your wedding ceremony by filling various roles.
 - Witnesses** to your marriage (commonly referred to as the best man and maid/matron of honor) will stand beside you and assist you and, most importantly, sign the marriage license as witnesses. The two witnesses should be at least 16 years of age. Ideally, at least one witness should be a Catholic.
 - Lectors are provided by the parish.** If you have a relative or friend who is a commissioned lector in a Catholic parish, they can serve as a lector for your wedding. Please check with the priest or deacon first.
 - Bridesmaids and Ushers** are not necessary for the celebration of marriage. If you choose to have them, two of each works best for the size of our church so that the bride and groom are not overshadowed by the size of the wedding party.
 - Flower girls and ring bearers** are not necessary for the celebration of marriage. If you choose to have them, they should be at least five years old. More often than not, the flower girl and ring bearer are a distraction to the celebration.
- **Music:** The Music Director from St. John Vianney Parish must approve all music and/or musicians that are a part of your wedding ceremony. Remember, this is a religious ceremony -- there will be plenty of time for your favorite popular love ballad at the reception. Music before, during and after the wedding ceremony must be religious music, instrumental classical music, or *appropriate* Hawaiian music. If you wish to hire the Music Director from our parish, please contact him directly as soon as possible (Robert Mondoy – #845-8405). Payment for his services is by your personal arrangement with him. The parish does not supply a musician for your wedding ceremony nor does it act as an intermediary in the payment for such services.
- **Environment:** The church environment for the wedding ceremony must follow the appropriate environment of the Liturgical Year. At certain

times of the year, the church will already be supplied with generous amounts of flowers, banners, etc. (such as the Christmas and Easter Seasons). If other weddings are taking place on the same day, we will put you in contact with the other couples so that you can coordinate your flowers, etc. There are certain restrictions that apply for the use of flowers, pew decorations, etc. Please note the following:

- Aisle runners are NOT allowed at any time. They are a hazard for walking and serve no useful purpose.
- Nothing is to be taped or tacked to the pews. The parish will loan you the use of pew flower holders if you desire.
- Flowers are not to be placed on or around the altar. Please check with the priest, deacon, or parish administrator for suggested placement of flowers (for example, flowers at the church entrances may enhance the spirit of welcome and hospitality for your wedding).
- Candelabra may not be used in the church. They are messy and dangerous.
- During the Lenten season, flowers should be kept to a minimum. An alternative would be green plants.
- Rice (or anything else) must never be thrown anywhere on church property. Bubbles and balloons are inappropriate for a church function. Artificial flower petals are allowed, but someone will need to be assigned to clean them up after the ceremony.
- Clean up: Please appoint several family members or friends who will be responsible for cleaning up the church after your wedding. This is not something you yourself should have to deal with on your wedding day. The clean-up crew is responsible for removing all pew decorations, artificial flower petals, leis, flower boxes, tissues, programs, etc.

Customs

There are many “do’s” and “don’ts” which you will hear about once you announce your engagement. Your families, friends, people you work with, and professional wedding planners will tell you what you must do, should do, could do, have to do, and should not do when you plan your wedding. We would like to offer you some practical guidelines to help deal with all this “advice” and to put some “traditions” associated with weddings into perspective.

- Plan and make your wedding liturgy the primary focus of your celebration. This is the most important activity of the day!! Do not let

your wedding ceremony become obscured or seem like an event that is secondary to the reception.

- Take advice from the priest or deacon and the Music Director who will help to plan your wedding. They have experienced many weddings and know what works and what doesn't. They can also help you to see through the "fluff" and focus on what is essential. They can also warn you about expenses that can be hidden in some of the things people encourage you to do.
- Do not wait until the last minute to plan the wedding ceremony. The rehearsal is supposed to rehearse things that are already planned. It is not the time to try to put the ceremony together.
- Distinguish between what is essential and what is not. Some of the things that you are accustomed to seeing at a wedding are **NOT** part of the Church's ritual. These fall into four categories: social customs, ethnic customs, personal taste, and religious devotions.

Social Customs: Couples often feel a great deal of pressure to shape their wedding according to other people's expectations. This pressure is strongest when social customs are involved. These customs often pre-date Christianity and are not necessarily religious, nor do they reflect contemporary attitudes toward marriage. Wearing special gowns and tuxedos, having bridesmaids and ushers, flower girls and ring bearers, white aisle runners and unity candles are all examples of social customs. The practice of the father "giving away" the bride and the seating in the Church according to family affiliation comes from a time when marriage was seen as a union of families for which the bride's family was reimbursed for the loss of a daughter. It is superstition that decrees that the bride and groom should not see each other before the ceremony and that the entire wedding party must dress alike. Many of these customs and superstitions do not really mean much to anyone. Rather, they can add unneeded expense and actually distract from the fact that marriage is a celebration of a covenant of love made in the sight of God.

Ethnic Customs: Filipino couples sometimes wish to include the tradition of the veil and cord placed on the bride and groom and the exchange of coins. Given our practice of having the bride and groom stand and move from time to time during the ceremony, the veil and cord usually need to be removed almost immediately after being placed. The priest or deacon can offer a suggested place in the ceremony for this custom, if desired.

Personal Taste: Though your wedding ceremony does express your personal feelings and tastes to some extent, it is also a celebration of the universal Church and local parish that rejoices with you and supports you in this Sacrament. Special secular songs or poems, the lighting of a unity candle (which would be more appropriate at the beginning of the reception dinner), or the giving of a rose to the mothers, often crowd the ceremony with too many things and make it difficult for those present to understand exactly what they mean. Such elements might better be used at the rehearsal or at the reception.

Religious Devotions: The wedding liturgy is rich in symbol and the various scripture readings and prayers give a broad perspective on the Christian experience of marriage. Some couples may want to include religious devotions that are not part of the official ceremony, such as a bouquet of flowers for the Blessed Mother. These can be better used after the ceremony.

Photography:

Though it is understandable that this special day is one that you want to be remembered through pictures and videotape, it is imperative that the photographing or videotaping of your wedding not become more important than the celebration of the actual event. You are asked to insure that the following rules are communicated to all official photographers as well as to your family and friends who might desire to photograph your wedding.

- The photographer(s) must introduce themselves to the priest or deacon BEFORE the wedding begins and request specific instructions or limitations.
- The photographer must dress professionally and must behave in a manner befitting a church setting.
- The photographer must be as unobtrusive as possible. At no time should the photographer stand in anyone's view and prevent anyone from participating fully in the wedding, especially the bridal party. The photographer should not move around the church during moments of silence, solo singing, scripture readings, the homily, the exchange of vows, etc.
- No flash photography is allowed in the church during the wedding ceremony. Flash may be used for posed pictures before or after the ceremony.

- The photographer must not enter the sanctuary (carpeted) area of the church during the wedding ceremony.
- Videotaping must be done from a stationary video camera, not by a hand held camera with a roving photographer. Stations for videotaping are: behind the musician's area with the consent of the musician, at the side of the sanctuary opposite the piano, or at the back main door of the church. A battery-operated video camera must be used. Audio recording cannot be tied into the church sound system.
- Church furnishings may not be moved for the sake of photographs.
- Photographic equipment must never be placed on the altar or ambo (lectern).
- A proper and dignified atmosphere must be maintained during posed photo sessions before or after the wedding ceremony.

State Requirements

Before a marriage can take place in the State of Hawaii, the following must be fulfilled:

- A marriage license application must be filed with a Hawaii certified license agent. The marriage license is valid for 30 days. To procure a license, both parties must be present with a valid driver's license or photo ID. The license is issued immediately at a cost of \$60 (cash only). No blood test is required nor is it necessary that the couple be residents of the state.
- Both parties must be 18 years of age or older. If one or both parties are under 18, please call 586-4544 for requirements needed to obtain a marriage license.
- The main Hawaii Marriage License Office is in the State Health Department Building at 1250 Punchbowl St. Hours are 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding State and Federal holidays. For more information call the office at 586-4544.

(doc. "Wedding book")