

MARRIAGE/WEDDING GUIDELINES HOLY COMFORTER PARISH

INTRODUCTION

Marriage in the Catholic Church is a vocation and a Sacrament. It is a covenant, a formal binding agreement, and a solemn promise that involves God, the couple, and the community of the Church. It is, therefore, a sacred and serious way of life. Through it, husband and wife are united to each other in a life-giving union of love, fidelity and mutual self-sacrifice. The Church has an abiding interest in each member of the Catholic Community. This concern is expressed by her priests who help with the preparation for marriage. The Pastor and leaders of Holy Comforter Parish also wish to give all assistance possible to ensure maximum convenience in preparation for the marriage and wedding of its parishioners. The following regulations serve both to promote the welfare and happiness of the parties entering the marriage, and to safeguard the sanctity of the Sacrament.

It is important to recognize that marriage, for baptized persons, is a **Sacrament** - an entrance of Christ into your life to strengthen your love with His own. Therefore, Catholics who would like to be married during Mass should recognize that *participation* in Mass is essential. *All* Catholics participating in the wedding, not just the bride and groom, but also attendants, parents and guests, are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation beforehand. Reception of Holy Communion should be a part of all participants' engagement in the ceremony. ***You, and any member of your wedding party that wishes to do so, may come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation any Saturday afternoon prior to your wedding date.***

UNITY CANDLE: as the unity candle is not a part of the sacrament of marriage, please save this for your reception and do not request it be part of your ceremony.

PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS

1. The Sacrament of Marriage is (generally) to be celebrated in the parish where you are registered. If you are not Holy Comforter parishioners, you will need a letter from the parish of your registration.
2. All marriage preparations begin with an interview with our Pastor/Priest, Fr. Joseph Mary Lukyamuzi and both bride and groom. The priest must be consulted in a way that allows for ample time (***at least six months***) for the fulfillment of the necessary requirements.
3. The meeting is required whether or not Fr. Joseph Mary is the celebrant.

4. The engaged couple, in addition to meetings with the officiating priest, must attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend organized by their diocese. For Diocese of Richmond Engaged Encounters, please see www.cdrcmfl.org and www.richmondvacee.org/index.htm.
5. The documents required for Marriage in the Catholic Church must be completed and submitted at least **two months** before the actual wedding date. Please consult the Richmond Diocese website or the diocese website of your home church.

SETTING A DATE

Your wedding date will be set when you complete your interview with Fr. Joseph Mary Lukyamuzi, Pastor of Holy Comforter Catholic Church. No date will be set for a wedding until the pastor is satisfied that all necessary information and requirements are understood. Weddings traditionally take place on Saturdays between 11 am and 1 pm. For any other day or time, the Pastor shall be consulted. Limitations exist due to already scheduled Parish events.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS:

- **Parking may be difficult** for your guests, as Holy Comforter Catholic Church is located in the downtown area of Charlottesville. Encourage all guests to leave extra time to find nearby parking. There is one parking space behind the church for a visiting priest/deacon.
 - To apply for reserved parking spaces on nearby streets for a fee, please contact the City of Charlottesville.
<http://www.charlottesville.org/home/showdocument?id=52504> *go to Departments H-Z, under Neighborhood Development Services/Traffic Engineering, then Traffic Related Forms, it is the Application of Temporary Parking Spot Closure.*
- Holy Comforter has a seating capacity of **250 persons, maximum**.
- **NOTE: If you are not a resident of Charlottesville** and cannot be present in Charlottesville to obtain Pre Cana preparation from Holy Comforter's Pastor, you are responsible to engage in Pre Cana education with a priest near you who will be responsible to assist you in collecting and completing all the necessary documentation and submitting it to your local diocese 16 weeks before the wedding date.

FEES

The church requires a fee to offset lighting, maintenance and other costs. While the ability of the couple to pay in no way determines the services available, the church fees should be kept proportional to other wedding costs.

The church requires the involvement of our wedding coordinator at each wedding for the security of our building and of your guests. Each couple is required to meet with the Wedding Coordinator before the wedding. If the couple has engaged their own wedding coordinator, they shall work in tandem with the church wedding coordinator. There are no extra fees for this service.

Parishioners of Holy Comforter Catholic Church are those who have been registered at Holy Comforter at least six months prior to their wedding date and *are “parishioners in good standing,”* meaning they are frequently present *and* active in our weekly liturgy.

Parishioner **Deposit Fee is \$450.00** (required to HOLD date)

Non-parishioner **Deposit Fee is \$850.00** (required to HOLD date)

Other fees and stipends:

- **Music Minister Fee** (if applicable): **\$250.00** (duties include: planning music with the couple, playing organ/piano at the rehearsal and wedding and arranging for cantors when requested).
- **Altar Server Stipend** (if applicable): **\$20 per server**
- **Cantor** (if applicable): **\$50-\$80**
- **Priest Stipend:** is totally up to the generosity of each couple

Celebrant Instructions for Priests Outside of Virginia:

A couple is certainly allowed to be married by a family member or friend who is a *priest in good-standing* in their respective diocese. A letter must be sent to the Richmond Diocese from his diocese stating just that. The proposed celebrant also needs permission/authorization to marry in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He needs (1) to produce proof of his ordination and (2) a letter of good standing on his parish letterhead. Both these forms should be emailed to: duggerl@charlottesville.org. Make sure he lets them know when **he** will pick up form on **in person, weekdays, before 4:30 PM**. Her online info: **Clerk:** Hon. Llezelle Agustin Dugger

Office Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Address: 315 East High Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Email: ldugger@courts.state.va.us

Phone: (434) 970-3766