

## Getting Started

The parish community of the Risen Savior congratulates you on your engagement! Wedding Masses and/or services are normally held for *registered* members of our parish community. If you are not registered with Risen Savior we invite you to contact your parish (either where you are registered or whose boundaries you live within) to discuss your wedding options.

We recognize that Christian couples establish and celebrate an eternal and indissoluble bond between themselves in the presence of the Church through the Rite of Marriage. Catholics celebrate weddings not just as private rites and ceremonies, but as an act of worship, a prayer of the Church community addressed to God by those present. It is indeed a celebration of a sacrament – a serious, yet, joyous encounter with God.

## A Celebration of the Church

As a sacramental encounter between God, you, and the assembled Church, the very nature of the wedding demands appropriate choices of music, readings, movement, and decorations which are consistent with the deeply religious nature of the occasion. Everything that goes into the Marriage Rite should always be from the point of view that this is first and foremost prayer.

In preparation for your wedding you will be required to attend a series of meetings and pre-marriage mentoring. At the first meeting, you will have the opportunity to get to know one of the members of the clergy who will explain some of what the church teaches about marriage, get to know each of you, and help you decide on some of the preliminary steps leading up to your marriage. Catholics should bring a current copy (issued within 6 months) of their baptismal certificate to this initial meeting. Baptismal certificates are available through the parish in which you were baptized.

Subsequent meetings will be with the clergy or another pastoral minister. They will work with you on completing the necessary paperwork, gaining the proper permissions as necessary, and will guide you through the PREPARE/ENRICH pre-marriage inventory.

Couples will be contacted by the parish wedding coordinator to discuss the details of your ceremony.

## Down to Basics!

Before you begin, here are a few basic “housekeeping notes.” Please feel free to discuss them during your first meeting with the clergy.

## Place and Time for the Marriage Ceremony

Nuptial Masses are not celebrated on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

Friday evening weddings are held after 6:00 p.m.

Saturday afternoon weddings are either 1:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.

Rehearsals are either Thursday at 7:00 p.m. or Friday at 6:00 p.m. and are scheduled on a first-come basis.

All fees are to be paid in advance of the wedding.

Unless other arrangements are made, flowers and other decorations related to the wedding must be removed immediately following the ceremony.

## Use of Church and Parish Facilities

The Church of the Risen Savior opens wide the doors for you, your family and your friends on this important day in your life. Please remember that proper decorum is expected of everyone while on Church property. Food, beverages, and gum are not permitted in the Chapel. No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the premises. It is your responsibility to clean up the areas that you use prior to, during and after your wedding ceremony. Please assign these tasks to members of your wedding party or your family. We apologize, but the parish cannot be responsible for articles left from your wedding.

## The Wedding Party

It is important to remember that you two are the most important people at your wedding. Together you bestow the Sacrament of Marriage on each other, in the presence of God, the Church's minister (priest or deacon), and the assembly. This sacrament is so important that the ceremony itself takes place only in a church and most often within a Mass.

Please give serious consideration to the following recommendations:

**Attendants** – You are required to have only two official witnesses, usually the best man and maid/matron of honor. There are no restrictions on adults serving in this position. Adults from other faith traditions may serve as such. Because of our small altar area we would like you to consider limiting your wedding party to a maximum of eight people in addition to yourselves. Remember that flower girls and ring bearers should be old enough to understand their role and get down the aisle unassisted.

**Readers** – You will need one or two people to read the selections from Scripture you choose to have read at your wedding. Ideally, your readers will serve as Lectors in their own parishes. This is not a place for the inexperienced. The priest or deacon who presides at your wedding will proclaim the Gospel reading.

**Altar Servers** – While not necessary, altar servers can certainly assist at the Nuptial Mass and make it more of a solemn celebration. If you have family members who are servers in their parishes, they are welcome to serve. Only those who serve in this capacity at their own parish should assist in this capacity.

**Gift Bearers** – A special time in the liturgy is when the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar to be prepared for the celebration of the Eucharist. You may select a couple to bring up the bread and wine. The honor should go to a family member, godparent, or special friend.

**Photographers, Videographers, etc.** – The sounds and sights of your wedding can be preserved today by modern technology. An experienced professional photographer knows exactly which shots are needed and more than likely has done weddings in our parish before. You will be given a copy of our Photography Policy. Your photographer must sign and return an agreement at least one month prior to your wedding. Portraits may be photographed following your wedding in the church, but must be completed within **30** minutes.

## The Church and the Service

**Flowers** – No flowers may be placed on the altar table itself. Remember that flowers will have to be removed from the church immediately following the ceremony.

**Pew Decorations** – Flowers and bows may be fixed to the pews using holders designed for this purpose (discuss this with your florist). Under no circumstances will glue, tape, or other adhesives be permitted.

**Church Decorations** – The Church will be decorated according to the norms for the liturgical season in which your wedding falls. Under no circumstances will you be permitted to “take down” or remove decorations that are in place for the liturgical season. It should not be necessary to add decorations other than flowers to the Church.

**Music/Musicians** – Good liturgy requires good music. Your wedding will be much more memorable if you plan for music to be played. The music is not entertainment but is there to provide a more prayerful atmosphere to your wedding. If you need assistance in planning your wedding music, a list of parish musicians is provided. Recorded music (CDs or Tapes) is not recommended.

**Safety** – The use of rice, birdseed, and/or flower petals inside or outside of the church is not permitted. “Bubbles” may be used outside of the building.

We discourage the release of doves or other birds following the ceremony. Please give serious consideration to not using an aisle runner: since our aisle is carpeted, heels can poke through the runner which can prove to be dangerous.

**The Rehearsal** – The rehearsal is usually held on an evening during the week prior to the wedding. As we often have more than one wedding on a Saturday, rehearsals cannot always be scheduled on Friday. Rehearsal times and dates are available on a first come, first served basis. It is your responsibility to set a rehearsal time with the wedding coordinator.

You will be given one hour for your rehearsal. Please ask all the members of the wedding party to be on time! We will start without those who are late, and we will end promptly. Only the wedding party, parents, readers, musicians, and ushers should be at the rehearsal.

**Fees** – A \$200\* donation is expected from couples being married at Risen Savior. The Church does incur expenses in providing space for your wedding, as well as the Presider and wedding coordinator's time. This donation is to be made prior to the wedding. Your wedding will not be placed on the calendar until you have paid at least \$50 towards the total and a current copy of your baptismal certificate(s). The stipend for the musicians and choirs is to be discussed when making arrangements with them. Their fee is not part of the stipend paid to the church.

**The Marriage License** – Marriages which take place in the Catholic Church in New Mexico must fulfill the requirements of the civil laws of this state. At present there is only one requirement: a valid civil marriage license. The license is effective for an indefinite period of time. The marriage license may be delivered to the parish office at any time leading up to ceremony or given to the wedding coordinator the night of the rehearsal. *If you do not have a marriage license the day of your wedding there will be no ceremony.*

**The Receiving Line** – It is the desire of Risen Savior Catholic Community that the receiving line be held at the site of the wedding reception, not in the foyer of the church. This allows the wedding party to come directly back into the church to take the formal wedding photographs.

**Unity Candle** – The "Unity Candle" is not part of the Roman Catholic Rite of Marriage and is not usually used here at Risen Savior. The whole Rite of Marriage is about unity.

*As you begin your journey to your wedding day, you have the prayers and support of our parish family. In the meantime we are here to help you so that your wedding and marriage maybe a truly blessed event.*

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q. Do you have to be a member of Risen Savior to be married there?**

R. Canon Law requires Catholics be married in their parish by their pastor. If you are not a member of Risen Savior we encourage you to contact the parish where you are registered or whose boundaries you live within.

**Q. I see that Risen Savior charges a fee to be married there. Is that standard?**

R. Most parishes assess a fee for the services provided. The fee of \$200.00 is nominal when compared to other expenses associated with weddings.

**Q. My fiancé isn't Catholic. Can we be married in the church?**

R. Yes. The minister preparing you for matrimony will discuss the options available to you.

**Q. I'm not Catholic, will I have to convert to Catholicism to be married in the church?**

R. No. We do not encourage conversion for the sake of getting married. However, that said if you would like to explore Catholic Christianity we would be most happy to discuss it with you.

**Q. Neither my fiancé nor I are Catholic, but we like your Church. Can we be married at Risen Savior?**

R. No. At least one of you must be a registered Roman Catholic to be married at Risen Savior.

**Q. I'm Catholic and was married previously. But, I wasn't married in the Church. Is this going to present a problem?**

R. Catholics are called to be married within the Church or with permission of the Church to marry elsewhere. If you did not have the Church's permission to marry in another venue, please contact one of our clergy to discuss the matter further.

**Q. I'm not Catholic and was married previously. But, I wasn't married in the Church. Is this going to present a problem?**

R. The Church views all marriages as valid until proven otherwise. The Church believes that marriage is a life-long union entered into by a man and a women. Before you would be free to marry in the Church it will be necessary to have your previous marriage annulled. No wedding date can be set until this has happened. Please contact one of our clergy to discuss this further.

**Q. My fiancé and I have been living together for some time now. Can we be married in the Church?**

R. It is our belief that God is calling you to repair your relationship with Him and with the Christian community by receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. Cohabitation is a serious issue in our society and can lead couples to sin. Is it possible to change your living arrangements as you are preparing for marriage? Of course, Catholics are expected to go to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. In addition, we would ask that you consider keeping the ceremony as simple as possible.

**Q. My fiancé and I have a child together already. Can we be married at Risen Savior?**

R. Yes, you may. To avoid scandal, we ask that you keep the ceremony as simple as possible.

**Q. I've been planning my wedding for years and want a large, elaborate affair. How large can my wedding be at Risen Savior?**

R. Risen Savior seats almost 1,000 people. As the Sacrament of Matrimony is an event in the life of the Church (the mystical body of Christ) we encourage you to invite your family and friends. However, if by elaborate you mean you desire a large number of bridesmaids, groomsmen and like, please refer to our policy above. Because of the size of our altar area, wedding parties are limited to four people on each side, plus the bride and the groom. Feel free to discuss this with the minister preparing you for marriage.

*\*There is a \$30.00 fee for the PREPARE/ENRICH program due at the time you take the inventory that is not included in this fee.*