Civil and Church Requirements for Marriage

Canon Law (which is the law of the Catholic Church) is complex regarding marriage. Each couple wishing to marry will review their particular situation with a member of the parish staff to determine their freedom to marry. In general, however, to be married in the Catholic Church, the following must be true:

- At least one member of the couple must be a baptized Catholic person.
- If either or both members of the couple have been previously married, every previous marriage on the part of either party (regardless of whether that occurred within or without the church) must be resolved by 1) a declaration of nullity (an annulment) 2) exception due to lack of form or 3) death of the former spouse. This is also true for non-Catholic persons. If any prior marriages have already been declared null, the declarations of nullity must be provided. If there is any question regarding the freedom to marry in the church, please meet with the pastor as soon as possible.
- **No wedding date may be set at any parish until all former marriages have been resolved.**
- The wedding ordinarily takes place in the parish of one or both of the parties.
- A Catholic person must provide a copy of his or her baptismal certificate issued within the last six months. A baptized, non-Catholic must provide a copy of his or her baptismal certificate (regardless of the date of issue) or a letter from the church of baptism testifying to the baptism.
- Additional documents may be required and/or additional paperwork necessary. If so, that will be explained to you at the time of your meeting with a member of the pastoral staff.

In the State of Michigan a valid marriage license, which is arranged through the county clerk, is required for marriage. Once issued, a license is valid for 30 days; there is a three-day waiting period between the day of application and the day it can be picked up. It is the responsibility of the couple to make arrangements for the license and to deliver it to the parish office at least 2 days before the wedding.

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