

Please understand that all of the details in the guidelines are intended as a means to assure that your wedding celebration will be a truly religious experience.

PRELIMINARY:

1. A couple wishing to marry is expected to make an appointment with a parish priest at least six (6) months in advance.
2. At this time you should discuss your proposed wedding date, religious backgrounds, or any other questions you may have.
3. Arrangements must have been made with your parish priest to complete the Pre-Nuptial Inquiry, obtaining all dispensations if needed; Baptismal certificates issued within the last six (6) months—not copies—are presented at this time. Participation in a prescribed *Engaged Encounter* Program through the Victoria Diocese or any other approved diocesan program.
4. You are entering into a holy Sacrament, and as with all Sacraments, proper preparation must be undertaken. In addition to the *Engaged Encounter* weekend the couple will meet with the priest two to three times. Visit [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org) to locate the local Engaged Encounter calendar and application form for download. **Catholics should arrange with the priest for a time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) before celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.**

WEDDINGS SCHEDULED: Weddings are normally scheduled on a Saturday. Weddings are never scheduled on Holy Days or on major civil holidays. **Weddings scheduled during the Lenten season must keep in mind the penitential nature of the liturgical season.** Weddings are not permitted on Good Friday, Holy Saturday or All Souls Day due to liturgical law—nor are any weddings permitted on the first Saturday of August due to our Parish Picnic weekend. Weddings are permitted during the Christmas season, but as the Church has already been decorated, no alterations may be made to the sanctuary décor.

CONFIRMATION OF DATE: In order that the wedding date be confirmed and entered into the appointment book, you must speak to the pastor, complete the Pre-Nuptial Inquiry and see that the Engaged Encounter is done.

MIXED MARRIAGE [CATHOLIC & NONCATHOLIC]: When one of the engaged (either bride or groom) is not Catholic it is recommended that the wedding rite take place outside of Mass. This basically includes the opening, the Liturgy of the Word, the Marriage Rite, Lord's Prayer and final blessing. This is out of respect to the non-Catholic and the fact that it is assumed that many of the attendants at the wedding will not be of the Catholic faith. It is difficult to celebrate a ritual of unity with Mass and then one of the newly married is not able to receive the Eucharist—nor is that one's family able to be included in Holy Communion. This is something to be seriously discussed by the couple and consider its impact when one of the engaged is not of the Catholic faith.

STIPEND: Couples are asked to remember that electricity and air conditioning are consumed almost the whole day of the wedding so as to accommodate decorators, florists, photographers, etc. Please consider an adequate stipend to the church to cover this cost.

REHEARSAL: The rehearsal normally takes place the evening before the wedding day between 6 P.M. and 7:30 P.M. Speak with the Parish Secretary concerning the rehearsal.

CIVIL LICENSE: A Marriage License issued by the State of Texas must be obtained. The license must be obtained no earlier than ninety (90) days and no later than three (3) days prior to the wedding date.

CHURCH DOCUMENTS: All required church documents must be in the office at least two weeks prior to your celebration. The documents are your Pre-Nuptial Inquiry along with any dispensations/permissions (if needed) and the certificate from your Engaged Encounter.

"HOUSE OF GOD": It is imperative that an atmosphere of prayer be maintained before and following the wedding celebration. Boisterous conduct is out of place; so are food/drink and the use of any tobacco products. The more that you leave the doors open, the warmer it will be in church. Please keep all doors closed before, during and after the ceremony.

CLERGY: Assisting priests and deacons are welcome to assist. If they are from outside the Diocese of Victoria, they will need to provide the proper documentation. If it is a wedding celebration within Mass, the Priest Presider is the one to receive consent—a deacon may not receive marital consent when Mass is celebrated as it is the proper function of the priest who is the presider.

WEDDING PARTY: Although small children are cute, they often do not cooperate and are most often a distraction, taking away from the sacredness and solemnity of the Sacrament. Coordinating the processional...the couple must be responsible for coordinating/organizing the grandparents, parents and bridal party so that the wedding starts on time and everyone goes down the aisle at the right time and to the right music. The designated coordinator must attend the rehearsal.

PHOTOS, VIDEO, FLOWERS, ETC.: Photos and video cameras are welcome; however, photographers and videographers are allowed in the sanctuary in one location only—near the Altar Servers sacristy door. Please be sure you communicate this information to your photographer and/or videographer. The Order for Celebrating Matrimony does not provide for the use of a unity candle, so if desiring to utilize one, plan on doing so at the reception—but not in the Church. [The Order does provide for the use of the lasso/veil and arras]. Please use clips or ribbon and be careful not to damage the pews or church furnishings when attaching flowers, etc. rice, flower petals, confetti, bird seed, etc. are **PROHIBITED** for safety and maintenance reasons. Remove all floral arrangements, photography equipment, clothing, etc. from the church immediately following the celebration.

**SANCTUARY FLOWERS:** Tasteful decoration of the Church may be done the day of the wedding (artificial flowers are discouraged); however, if a funeral takes place the morning of the wedding, the decorating may not begin until after it is concluded. If you are planning to leave arrangements in the Church for the weekend Masses please notify the office in advance during the wedding planning.

**DRESSING ROOM:** Wedding parties may use the Meeting Room of the Parish Family Center for dressing prior to the ceremony. Simply check with the parish office to secure its availability as soon as possible.

**MUSICIANS, ALTAR SERVERS, EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION, LECTORS:** These arrangements are the responsibility of the couple and should be made well in advance. Lectors should be chosen from among those who have experience in proclaiming the Sacred Scriptures at Mass. **Extraordinary Ministers (if needed) must be from among those appointed by the Diocese of Victoria for ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Yoakum.** Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are appointed and designated for service in only their own parish – not diocesan-wide.

**A WEDDING REGISTRY BOOK FOR GUESTS IS NOT ALLOWED TO BE USED IN THE CHURCH.**

**MUSIC:** Not all music is suitable for the Nuptial Rite. Only **religious music** may be used during the wedding. All music selections **MUST BE APPROVED** by the pastor prior to the wedding.

**ALCOHOL:** No alcohol whatsoever may be consumed on the day of the wedding prior to the ceremony. Neither should alcohol be consumed prior to the rehearsal. At no time is alcohol ever allowed anywhere on church property. Weddings **will be cancelled** should alcohol be discovered on church property.

**CHURCH CLEAN-UP:** Someone from the wedding party should be assigned the responsibility of cleaning up the church after the ceremony. Programs, flower boxes, tissues, etc. should be picked up off the floor, removed from pews, or be disposed of from the foyer of the church.

**ANIMALS:** No animals of any kind (except for dogs specifically trained to assist the disabled)

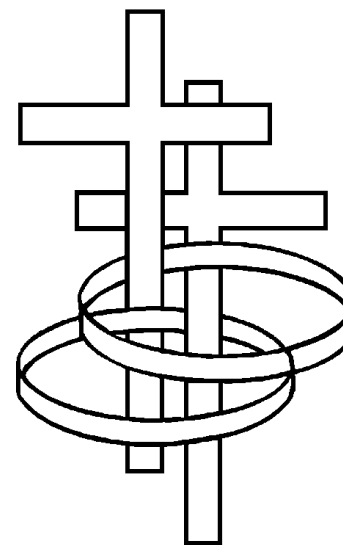
**ST. ANN CHURCH:** There are times when couples call to inquire about marriage at St. Ann in Hochheim. Some have no connection at all there other than it fits the idea of a country church perched on a hilltop and is "quaint." In order to marry at St. Ann one must be a parishioner or children of parishioners. As "touching" as a country church wedding venue may be, it poses extra challenges regarding opening, closing, securing, cooling/heating, etc. Therefore, weddings there are limited to the small community the little Church actually serves.

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# St. Joseph Catholic Church

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## *Guidelines for the Celebration of Marriage*



*"They are no longer two, therefore, but one body.  
So then, what God has united, man must not divide."*

Matthew 19:6

*Revised as of October 5, 2016*