

Holy Matrimony

“God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them... That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two become one body” Matt. 19:4-5

The sacrament of Holy Matrimony ceremony itself is customarily celebrated at St. Thomas More on Saturdays prior to 2:00 pm. The couple must complete all marriage preparation requirements and have provided the parish with all necessary documents, as determined by St. Thomas More marriage prep policy/procedures, if the couple are being prepared at St. Thomas More, or as determined by the pastor of the parish where they are being prepared, if their preparation is being conducted outside of St. Thomas More. The preparation and documents should begin **at least 6 months prior** to the date of the wedding and be completed and submitted no later than **Two weeks** prior to the date of the wedding.

Scheduling is secured in a couple of ways: To ensure there are no scheduling conflicts, reserving the date and time must be coordinated with the Administrative Assistant or Facility Manager no less than **60 days** prior to the wedding date. To ensure the celebrant (priest, deacon, or bishop) is available to preside over the celebration on the requested date, it is the couple's responsibility to check with them prior to setting the date.

The Marriage Preparation Process consist of meeting with the St. Thomas More Marriage Coordinator (providing there is one) to initiate the filling out of necessary documents. If there is no marriage coordinator, the pastor or other designated member of the staff will initiate the filling out of the forms with the couple. The couple will be assigned a mentor couple and will meet with their mentor couple for a pre-determined number of hours (frequency, duration and location will be collaborated by both parties). If age appropriate, the couple is required to attend and complete a Natural Planning Class. They are also required to schedule a meeting with the pastor, or the celebrant of the wedding, no later than **One week** prior to the wedding date.

Flowers and decorations for the church (or parish hall is used), photographers, and liturgical musicians, and any fees associated with the same, are the sole responsibility of the couple. St. Thomas More will provide some musician recommendations. The couple may request Altar Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or Lectors, be from among their family members or friends; only those who are trained and/or commissioned will be permitted to participate in those ministries. To ensure all liturgical/ritual requirements

are being met, the couple must coordinate all decisions associated with the areas above with the St. Thomas More Marriage Coordinator or pastor.

If either one of the couple has a previous marriage that has not been annulled by the Catholic Church, the annulment process must be **initiated immediately**. The couple must meet with the pastor to initiate the process, and the pastor will assist the couple with the annulment process. No other marriage preparations will ensue until the annulment process has been completed and approved. If there was a previous marriage by either party, and an annulment has already been approved; copies of official documentation is required.