


Saint Thomas More
Catholic Church

Wedding
Information Package



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR



St. Thomas More

Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ! Congratulations on your decision to marry and to have your union consecrated to God in the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony. The clergy and staff of St. Thomas More Parish welcome your decision to celebrate your Faith as part of your marriage.

We have prepared this information and planning guide to assist you in making your marriage a wonderful, sacred and loving experience with which to begin your lives together. You have chosen to wed in the Catholic Church. Weddings, and the ceremonies surrounding them, have become very complicated, expensive and extravagant in modern secular society. It is for this reason that I encourage you to embrace simplicity, humility and modesty as you come before God in His sacred temple.

Marriage—not the shower, not the reception and not the wedding—is a profoundly religious act and a Sacrament of the Catholic Church. You are the ministers, giving yourselves to each other without reservation for life and with open hearts to receive life as your children. Priests do not marry you.

His presence is the official witness of The Church and his ministry is to lead you in your vows and to bestow the Church's nuptial blessing upon your covenant of love. In the Church and Sanctuary at the rehearsal and on the great day we must strive to maintain the distinctively religious character of your marriage.

Please read, understand and follow the St. Thomas More marriage guidelines set forth for your benefit. Be timely in all things related to the premarital preparation, especially in providing the necessary sacramental documents, and be punctual as an expression of your reverence for God and His Holy Church.

With every best wish and prayer for your joy and serenity, I remain Yours in the service of Christ,

~Father Julian P. Harris, Pastor

The Vocation to Marriage



The Catholic Faith provides us with a very beautiful description of marriage:

As you continue your preparation for marriage it is recommended that you read the Catechism of The Catholic Church paragraphs 1601-1637.

(The Church affirms the following in the Catechism) 1533: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. They ground the common vocation of all Christ's disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world. They confer the graces needed for the life according to the Spirit during this life as pilgrims on the march towards the homeland. (1212)

1534: Two other sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God. The vocation to marriage is a vocation to service. It is more specifically a call to holy service. This means that your ultimate vocation as a married couple will be to make each other saints. Marriage as a sacrament of the Church is a bond which is formed not merely by legal contract of the spouses, but by The Holy Spirit.

Just as surely as priest are called by Christ to serve the people of God in a Consecrated, dedicated live, married people are called by Christ to be the instrument through which God's love is made real for each other. The essential components of both natural and sacramental marriage are commitment to a permanent union, to lifelong fidelity, and openness to children. Within the Sacrament of Matrimony, the couple commits to help each other grow toward the fullness of life in the Lord Jesus.

The History Of St. Thomas More

The Lakeside shrine to the Blessed Mother at St. Thomas More has ironwork that was originally between side altars in St. Vincent de Paul Seminary Chapel, brickwork that was done by County Mayo's native son Rev. Msgr. William Dever and sanctuary imported from Leghorn, Italy. Like the parish, its history is built on the union of two great Catholic cultures – the Irish and the Italian/Sicilian – and two institutions – the seminary and the parish. Founding Pastor and seminary professor of homiletics Father Donald Connolly celebrated the first Sunday parish Mass for 40 families in the seminary chapel on September 24, 1972. The current Pastor, Rev. Julian P. Harris celebrates Mass for more than 5,000 families in the great church that was dedicated by then-Pastor Frank Lechiara in 1988. The first communion class had 27 children back in 1974; today more than 700 families enjoy faith formation in the new Religious Education Building, established under the pastorate of Father Francis O'Loughlin.

through it all, countless loyal parishioners have worshiped and sacrificed and volunteered everything. The history of any parish reminds all to be grateful for God's merciful hands upon the present work and to be humbled for all that we survey. All of this was carried on the shoulders of our brothers and sisters who went before and who did the heavy lifting in the lean times. The parish has grown; thank God, it has not lost its way. Christ is still the purpose and the power of the parishioners' lives. Seminarians still preach as deacons in St. Thomas More's daily chapel. The feasts of St. Thomas More and St. Joseph are still high points of the year, but matured to embrace Our Lady of Guadalupe, Blessed Juan Diego and more. And still people come as well have, to call St. Thomas More home.

Pre-Requisites & Checklist



One of the couple must be baptized Catholic. Your celebrant will inform you that all couples contemplating marriage in the Palm Beach Diocese are required to participate in a premarriage education course.

- The date and time of the marriage are to be approved by the Pastor or his designee. Do not sign a contract with any catering hall until this date is approved. Dates are approved contingent of all requirements being met by the couple.
- The Prenuptial Questionnaire must be completed in writing by the Clergy or their designee who will assist you in making your arrangements.
- A certified copy of the baptismal record of both parties must be obtained from the church at which you were baptized, and it must be issued not more than six (6) months prior to the wedding.
- Two witnesses for both bride and groom are required to fill out Witness Questionnaire forms to certify that both parties are free and eligible to marry. Parents are the preferred witness, but you may have someone who has known you for a considerable length of time. Unless the Celebrant personally knows the couple and can vouch for them, the Witness forms must be notarized by a certified Notary.
- The bride and groom are required by the Church to take pre-marital instructions. For **FIRST** marriages **ONLY**, you should register for the Engagement Encounter or Joy Filled Marriage. You can register online for the programs by going to www.diocesepb.org. Go to **FAMILY LIFE**; then go to **ENGAGEMENT ENCOUNTER** and follow directions. If you don't have access to a computer you may register at the Family Life Office, call 561-775-9557. At St. Thomas More, the online Engaged Encounter is not acceptable. The engaged couples must attend an on-site Engaged Encounter in one of the designated Parishes.

ENGAGEMENT DATES FILL QUICKLY!

The Certificate of Completion you will receive is to be given to the church to be placed in your wedding file. If you marry in Florida; a copy of this certificate will entitle you to a discount on the wedding license.



Important Points to Remember

The following pages outline important points for you to consider before booking a wedding at St. Thomas More Catholic Church.

1. FEES & SCHEDULING PROCEDURES

If you would like to schedule your wedding here at St. Thomas More Catholic Church, please contact Mrs. Kaiser at 561-737-3095. Due to the large number of inquiries we receive, the church does not accept pencil bookings. A minimum of 6 months notice for scheduling your wedding is required.

If you are an active, registered and tithing in the parish for at least six months, the donation is as follows: \$500 for the use of the Church OR \$250 for Chapel + \$200 processing fee + \$200 donation to Clergy + Rehearsal fee of \$75.00.

A non-refundable deposit of \$300.00 deposit is required to reserve and confirm your wedding date and the balance is due no later than two (2) weeks prior to the ceremony. There will be an addition \$100 security deposit for use of Church building. This deposit will be relinquished if there are damage to the building or furniture or must be used to clean building beyond normal wear and tear.

If you are a non parishioner and would like to schedule your wedding at St. Thomas More, a booking is confirmed after: a donation of \$1000.00 + \$200 processing fee + \$200 donation to Clergy. A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 is required to confirm your date, once it is approved. It is also necessary to book a time for your rehearsal. We recommend you do this the same time as confirming

2. CELEBRANT

As you look forward to your wedding day, one of the first things you need to do is contact a Catholic Priest who will act as your primary marriage celebrant, usually this will be your local Parish Priest. If you would like a specific Celebrant for your wedding, please confirm his availability on the day and time you have chosen, a minimum of six months notice is preferable. We will try to make every effort to accommodate your request; however we will not promise a particular priest for your wedding due to many demands from the parish.

A meeting with your celebrant will be scheduled, and he will help you prepare your order of service, let you know about the premarriage course and complete the necessary paperwork. It is customary to give the priest a koha/donation (minimum suggested donation of \$250.00) for his part in preparing you for your marriage and all that is associated with your wedding ceremony. This is given directly to the priest. It is always appropriate to send an invitation to the clergy.

NOTE:

All inquiries regarding the use of the church need to be addressed to Mrs. Kaiser at the Parish Office, your.

3. TIME OF ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

It is ESSENTIAL that brides be on time to avoid conflict between weddings or other events. Therefore, we need an assurance that your wedding will start on time before you book.

4. WEDDING PARTY CHURCH ENTRANCE

There are three choices of entry for your wedding party they are as follows:

Formal Entrance – Groom, Best Man and Celebrant enter from side aisle. Groomsmen enter single file followed by bridesmaids, ring bearer, flower girl and Maid of Honor. Then the Bride and escort enter. All exit church as couples.

Semi Formal – Groom, Best Man and Celebrant enter from side aisle. Groomsmen enter from side aisle to center aisle where they join bridesmaids who have walked half way down the center aisle to meet groomsmen. Maid of Honor walks alone just before the Bride and her escort. All exit as couples.

Informal – Groom, Best Man and Celebrant enter from side aisle. Groomsmen and Bridesmaids enter as couples except for maid of honor and best man. Maid of Honor enters singularly and Best Man accompanies groom to front of altar.

- If the wedding starts 15 minutes late, there will be no homily.
- If the wedding starts 20 minutes late, there will be no mass, just the ceremony.
- If the wedding starts 30 minutes late, it will need to be rescheduled.
- Weddings will be on Saturdays at 11am & 1pm. Again, as a courtesy to your guest, Church staff and other Church patrons, we must insist that services commence at the appointed time.

5. FLOWERS & DECORATION

No more than two (2) baskets are permitted on the altar and white flowers only. It is respectfully requested that the couple donates the altar flowers to St. Thomas More. In this way, the newly married couple will be remembered at all Masses celebrated during the weekend of their Marriage.

Candelabras are not permitted. Flowers and/or bows may be placed on the pews, but only attached with padded "S" hooks or rubber bands. NO TAPE or any other device which will damage the pews is permitted. No fabric is to be used blocking entrance to the pews from the center aisle. Florist may contact Mrs. Kaiser at the Parish Office at 561-737-3095 if further clarification is needed. If you are using a wedding coordinator, please make sure they contact the parish office at 561-737-3095 for important information and requirements during the Mass and ceremony.

The following cannot be used inside or outside the church for safety reasons:

- Use of runner down aisle for bride
- Runner outside (sometimes placed by limo driver)
- The throwing of rose petals, rice, confetti, birdseed, etc.
- Blowing of bubbles
- No stage settings of any kind to be constructed
- Formal picture taking in the lobby



Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.(Genesis 2:24)

6. UNITY CANDLES

Many couples choose to signify that "two have become one" by lighting a unity candle during the wedding ceremony. Before or at the beginning of the wedding ceremony, a representative from each family lights two taper candles. During the ceremony, the bride and groom use the two taper candles to light a large pillar candle (the "unity candle") together. Unity Candles may be used. However, the wedding couple is responsible for purchasing both the candles and the candle holder. Unity Candles are available for purchase at the St. Thomas More Gift Shop. A discount will be given to those who are active members of our church.

7. PRAYER BEFORE THE VIRGIN MARY

In some places it is customary for the bride (or the bride and groom together) to place a bouquet of flowers before a statue or shrine to the Virgin Mary (assuming one is present in the Church); usually the couple then spend a few moments in silent prayer before the shrine. Music is frequently played at the same time. This tradition recognizes the special role that Mary has as the mother not only of God, but of the Church and all the faithful. It is natural, then, to request that Mary pray for you as you begin your own family.

If you wish to include the Prayer in your wedding ceremony, ask your parish wedding coordinator about the custom.

8. DRESS ATTIRE

Please remember that you are in a Catholic Church and the Holy Sacrament of Marriage should be respected, we kindly ask that the bride and bridal party be appropriately dressed. Common sense is a good guide when it comes to wedding attire. On the one hand, you want your outward appearance to be a sign of your inner dignity, and the beauty of the love you share as a couple. Groom & Groomsman should not wear sneakers. You want to avoid dressing in a way that distracts from the liturgy.

9. MUSIC

The purpose of any Catholic liturgy, including a wedding liturgy, is to give glory to God and to sanctify (make holy) the worshipers. Your wedding music should reflect that purpose; in other words, it should help the assembly to pray and to give thanks to God for your marriage. No secular music is permitted. All musical arrangements must be at least two months in advance with the Parish Music Director. They can be reached at 561-737-3095. The selection of music must conform to Liturgical NORMS. Inform the Music Director of the scripture readings you have selected so the music may be chosen to conform to the guidelines. The Music Director will make arrangements with one of our Church vocalists for your wedding. You may not use your own vocalist or organist.

Organist Fee: \$200 | Vocalist Fee: \$125

These fees should be made payable to St. Thomas More and mailed no later than two weeks before the wedding. If these fees are not paid by this time, there will be no music or vocalist for your ceremony.



Hail Mary Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.



Photographers Videographer

10. PHOTOGRAPHERS/VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographers/Videographers should consult with the officiating priest or wedding coordinator prior to the ceremony regarding rules and regulations. It is recommended that you organize your picture taking on paper for the most efficient use of time. If you want anyone in your pictures (Godparents, aunts, uncles etc.) besides the wedding party, be sure to tell them ahead of time to wait in the church. You don't want to waste time looking for them. At no time should a photographer enter the sanctuary, stand on furniture, cause a disruption or delay the proceedings.

If you are getting married at 1:00 PM on Saturday, please be mindful of the fact that people will begin arriving for Saturday evening Mass at 2:15 PM.

We ask that everyone be respectful and keep your voices down while taking pictures. If necessary, additional pictures may be taken at the Shrine of Our Lady at the southwest parking lot or St. Peregrine Garden. All weddings are allowed 1½ hours from the scheduled starting time. This allows the next wedding or the Saturday Vigil Mass to proceed on time. Any delays from the scheduled starting time of the wedding may result in a Mass being changed to a service. Also the allotted time for the picture taking may also have to be cut by an equal amount of time.

11. LIMOUSINE SERVICE:

By rule of the Fire Marshall: No Vehicles should be parked in front of the church during the ceremony. Please have your driver park elsewhere until the ceremony has concluded. **NO LIMOUSINE SHOULD BE PARKED IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH DURING THE CEREMONY DUE TO FIRE MARSHALL REQUIREMENTS.**

NOTE:

If there are cultural traditions/customs that you would like considered for your ceremony, please discuss them in advance with the Wedding Coordinators. Kindly designate a family member or a friend who is not in the wedding party to be responsible for removing the unity candle, the altar flowers if you are not donating them to the Church and bows/flowers from the pews immediately after your ceremony. Since parishioners begin arriving for Saturday evening Mass at 2:15PM, there is not time for a receiving line in the church after your wedding. Please greet your guests at the reception.

NEW LITURGY & MASS TRANSLATION PAGE

Greeting

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act:

I CONFESS TO ALMIGHTY GOD and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(We strike our breast three times)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I asked blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Gloria:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise You, we bless You, we give You thanks for Your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen

Gospel Acclamation:

Deacon (or Priest): A reading from the Holy Gospel according to..

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father,;

though Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, *At the words that follow up to and including* and become man, *all bow*, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and become man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Fathers and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of the sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Invitation to Prayer:

The people rise and reply: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name, for our good and the good of all His holy Church.

Preface Dialogue:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: and with your spirit.

Priest: Lift up your hearts,

People: We lift them up to the Lord

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right and just.

Holy, Holy, Holy:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of host. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.

The Mystery of Faith:

Priest: The mystery of Faith.

People: We proclaim Your Death, O Lord, and profess Your Resurrection until You come again.

-or-

People: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim Your Death, O Lord until You come again

-or-

People: Save us, Savior of the world, for you Your Cross and Resurrection, You have set us free.

Sign of Peace:

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And with your spirit.

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION PRIEST:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb. And together with the people the priest adds once: Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

FINAL BLESSINGS:

Priest: The Lord be with you

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the son and the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen

CONCLUSION

Priest: Go forth the mass has ended

-or-

Priest: Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord

-or-

Priest: Go in peace, glorify the Lord by your life.

-or-

Priest: Go in peace.

People: Thanks be to God.



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