

*These are important excerpts from our Marriage Policies that you should thoroughly review prior to starting the marriage preparation process at St. Thomas Aquinas. The complete Marriage Policies Packet will be provided to you at your first meeting with the clergy.*

## **REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION**

To be eligible for marriage at St. Thomas Aquinas, at least one member of the couple must profess the Roman Catholic faith and reside within our parish.

Both the bride and groom must be “free to marry in the Roman Catholic Church.” Any person who has been previously married—either in the Church or civilly—and whose former spouse is still living is not free to marry in the Church without obtaining an annulment. Civil divorce or civil annulment does not satisfy this requirement. Individuals in this situation must pursue an annulment through the Catholic Church before continuing with marriage preparation. Please contact the parish for guidance on this process if needed.

Marriage preparation typically takes several months. *Wedding dates are not confirmed until the couple is well into the preparation process and required steps have been completed. Please do not contact vendors or reserve a reception venue until your date has been officially confirmed.*

If you reside in our parish but are planning to marry in another church, state, or country, do not schedule a date at that location until we have confirmed your preparation timeline, including the time needed to complete and transfer your file through the appropriate diocesan channels.

The Catholic Church reserves the right to delay wedding plans if there are special circumstances or concerns about readiness. Marriage preparation includes interviews with the parish priest, completion of the diocesan Pre-Cana program, and submission of all required documentation. All Christians must provide proof of Baptism.

## **TYPES OF NUPTIAL CEREMONIES OFFERED AT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**

For couples who are not already civilly married:

- If both parties are Catholic and have received First Communion, three options are available: Full Mass with Nuptials, Liturgy of the Word with Nuptials, or a Nuptial Ceremony.
- If one party is not Catholic or has not received First Communion, two options are available: Liturgy of the Word with Nuptials or a Nuptial Ceremony.

For couples who are already civilly married:

- Only a Nuptial Ceremony is available.

Details of each type of ceremony are below.

<b>Full Mass with Nuptials includes:</b>	<b>Liturgy of the Word Ceremony with Nuptials includes:</b>	<b>Nuptial Ceremony includes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liturgy of the Word</li> <li>• Liturgy of the Eucharist</li> <li>• Exchange of vows</li> <li>• Nuptial blessing</li> <li>• Music and Readings</li> <li>• Bridal Party / Bride Procession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liturgy of the Word</li> <li>• Exchange of vows</li> <li>• Nuptial blessing</li> <li>• Music and Readings</li> <li>• Bridal Party / Bride Procession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange of vows</li> <li>• Nuptial blessing</li> </ul>
This ceremony must be presided over by a priest and lasts approximately one hour.	This ceremony may be presided over by a priest or deacon and lasts approximately 45 minutes.	This ceremony may be presided over by a priest or deacon and lasts approximately 10–15 minutes.
Available only for couples who are not currently civilly married, when both parties are Catholic and have already received their First Communion.	Available for couples who are not currently civilly married, where one party is not Catholic or has not already received their First Communion.	Available for all couples.

If you wish to have an outside priest preside, permission is required. A priest from the Diocese of Orlando may send a letter directly to our pastor. A priest from another diocese must submit a letter of good standing through his diocese and receive delegation from the pastor of the parish. Please contact the pastor with any questions regarding this process.

If you plan to be married in another church (within the Diocese of Orlando, another diocese, or another country), you must complete the full preparation process at St. Thomas Aquinas. Your file will then be sent through the Diocese to the church where the marriage will take place. The preparation timeline remains the same, with additional time required for file transfer. Notify us immediately if you intend to marry elsewhere, and do not schedule a ceremony date until instructed.

### **WEDDING TIMES**

Wedding times are subject to priest and church availability. Please note that the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is not celebrated during the Lenten season.

Full Mass or Liturgy of the Word with Nuptials: Friday: 5:00 PM or Saturday: 11:00 AM or 1:00 PM

Nuptial Ceremony: Monday–Friday: 6:00 PM

For other days or times, please contact the priest or Megan Holmberg.

All ceremonies begin promptly at the scheduled time. For a Full Mass, if the bride or groom is more than 15 minutes late, the ceremony will be reduced to a Liturgy of the Word with Nuptials. After 30 minutes, it will be reduced to a Nuptial Ceremony only. For a Liturgy of the Word ceremony, if the bride or groom is more than 15 minutes late, it will be reduced to a Nuptial Ceremony.

**BRIDE AND ATTENDANTS’ ATTIRE**

A wedding is a sacred celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. Attire must reflect the dignity of the occasion and respect for the church as a sacred space.

Dresses that are low-cut, strapless, have spaghetti or thin straps, backless, or are otherwise revealing, as well as mini-skirts or high, revealing slits, are not permitted. Shoulders must be covered. The neckline must be modest and non-revealing or designed to look as if the skin of the entire torso is visible under light lace. If attire is deemed inappropriate by the priest, a shawl will be required and provided. To avoid this situation, please follow these guidelines carefully.

Brides with questions about appropriate attire should consult Megan Holmberg before purchasing dresses. Members of the bridal party who do not comply with these guidelines may not participate in the ceremony and will be seated in the church instead. These standards also apply to lectors and all participants. Shoulders must be covered, and attire must be appropriate for a church setting.

**FEES AND OFFERINGS**

<b>Full Mass with Nuptials</b>	<b>Liturgy of the Word Ceremony with Nuptials</b>	<b>Nuptial Ceremony</b>
Active Parishioner: Presider stipend \$100 Ceremony coordinator \$100 Cantor \$100 Accompanist \$150 Altar server \$25 Preparation materials \$50	Active Parishioners: Presider stipend \$100 Ceremony coordinator \$100 Cantor \$100 Accompanist \$150 Preparation materials \$50	Active Parishioners: Presider stipend \$100 Preparation materials \$50
Non-Active/Non-Registered Parishioners: Church or chapel \$500 Presider stipend \$100 Ceremony coordinator \$100 Cantor \$100 Accompanist \$150 Altar server \$25 Preparation materials \$50	Non-Active/Non-Parishioners: Church or chapel \$500 Presider stipend \$100 Ceremony coordinator \$100 Cantor \$100 Accompanist \$150 Preparation materials \$50	Non-Active/Non-Parishioners: Presider stipend \$100 Preparation materials \$50

Please note that Pre-Cana workshops require additional fees paid directly to the Diocese of Orlando at the time of registration.	Please note that Pre-Cana workshops require additional fees paid directly to the Diocese of Orlando at the time of registration.	Please note that Pre-Cana and Convalidation workshops require additional fees paid directly to the Diocese of Orlando at the time of registration.
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File Preparation Only – for parishioners marrying elsewhere

- Materials and mailings fee: \$150, plus Pre-Cana and Convalidation workshops additional fees paid directly to the Diocese of Orlando at the time of registration.