

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What if we are already living together?

Cohabitation before marriage is a serious situation and cannot be justified by the fact that “everyone does it,” or due to economic reasons or from a desire to “see if it works out.” Cohabitation devalues the dignity of married life and of the individuals involved and is never compatible with a genuine life of faith in Jesus Christ. Remember that as Christian disciples, we are called to live differently than those of the world. If you are living together, we exhort you to stop and to live separately in chastity until marriage. The priest will be glad to help you with any questions.

### What if we are already civilly married?

Many couples come to the Church after many years, even many decades, of civil marriage and desire to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. We warmly welcome such couples. It is a great grace to have been moved by God to “regularize” your situation, to seek all the graces of the Sacrament and to share fully in the Eucharistic banquet of the Holy Mass as a couple.

Many elements of the preparation described above also apply to civilly-married couples. Make an appointment with a priest, and he will be very happy to discuss the details of your situation and the necessary requirements.

### What if I haven't received First Holy Communion or Confirmation?

If you are a baptized Catholic but haven't received your first Holy Communion or Confirmation, we warmly encourage you to enroll in our adult faith formation courses as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). These courses begin in the Fall and extend through Easter, and they are designed to teach the fullness of the Catholic faith both to those who are entering the Church for the first time and those who are already part of the Catholic faith but are lacking First Communion and/or Confirmation.

Receiving all of your Sacraments of Initiation is an important part of the life of faith, and the time of preparation for your wedding is the perfect opportunity to receive them. We encourage both the bride and groom to participate in the RCIA, even if only one is lacking the Sacraments.

### What if one of us is not Catholic?

We always welcome to Nativity those who belong to another Christian denomination or non-Christian faith. If a Catholic wishes to marry someone outside the Catholic faith, some important discussions must take place, and those discussions will represent a major part of the marriage preparations. The Catholic party in a marriage remains Catholic, of course, with all of the rights and responsibilities that this entails, including the obligation to attend Mass and to raise his/her children in the Catholic faith. The non-Catholic party will be asked if he/she understands those obligations and what, if any, obstacles are envisioned for the future. If either party is unwilling to accept those obligations, which are part of the marriage vows, marriage in the Church should not be sought.

The wedding of a Catholic and non-Catholic should typically not be celebrated in the context of a Nuptial Mass, in which Holy Communion could only be distributed to the Catholic party. In its place, a simpler Liturgy of the Word with the Rite of Marriage is preferred.

### What if the bride is pregnant?

Whether planned or not, the life of unborn children is to be cherished and respected. Planning for the love, care and upbringing of the child should be a top priority, and therefore, any discussion about a wedding should be postponed until after the child is born. The priest would be happy to discuss the particulars of your situation with you.

### What if we do not regularly attend Mass?

The time of preparation for your wedding is a particularly good time to return to the Lord and to the practice of your Catholic faith. Begin now to live the life of faith together, assisting and praying for each other on the way of salvation in Christ, and beseeching of the Lord his grace as you prepare for your life together.

The good habits of faith, made firm by prayer and consistent participation at Mass, will be a source of blessings to you in this life and certainly in the life to come. Later, if you are blessed with children, you will thus be prepared to fulfill your duties in passing on the faith to them, just as it was passed to you.

It is our expectation, and our hope, that couples preparing for marriage at Nativity will attend Mass with us every weekend. We invite you to join us and also to consider what ways you would like to be involved in our parish. There are a number of ministries and activities year-round, and young couples are especially welcome to participate. We will also invite you to register as formal members of the parish, and we pray that you will be able to financially support the parish in all the good work we do.

How much will the wedding cost?

We ask for a donation of \$500 to help cover the operating and maintenance costs of the parish. In addition, our cantor and organist should each be paid \$150 for their services at the wedding.