CONVALIDATION : Bringing Your Marriage Into The Church

What is a convalidation?

The Catholic Church believes that marriages entered into by non-Catholics in their particular church, or wherever they may take place, are valid. In the eyes of the Church, even two atheists or agnostics who are married civilly before a judge or magistrate enter into a valid marriage.

Catholics, however, are bound to observe a certain form of marriage ritual in order that their marriage be valid. Canon law—the law of the Church—requires that Catholics enter into marriage by free mutual consent that is witnessed in a church by an authorized bishop, priest, or deacon and at least two other witnesses. Marriages in which one or both parties are Catholic and which are not witnessed by an authorized bishop, priest, or deacon, or which do not receive proper permission to take place in another forum, are considered invalid in the eyes of the Church.[1]

Simply put, If the couple has entered into a civil marriage and if either spouse is Baptized Catholic and they were not married in the Catholic Church, then they would need a Convalidation, to validate their marriage in the eyes of the Church.

It may be that the Catholic who entered into marriage outside the Church did not realize that these requirements existed, but more often, it is because one or both of the spouses was not free to marry in the Catholic Church because of a previous marriage or because they were awaiting an **annulment.** Also, the Catholic partner(s) may not have been active in the Church and did not consider having a Catholic wedding.

Regardless of what happened in the past, the Catholic Church invites you to bring new meaning to your lives by embracing the vocation of marriage and dedicating your family's mission to sharing God's love.

CONTACTS

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[1] Together for Life : A Convalidation Ceremony in the Catholic Church

STEPS FOR THE COUPLE

1. Fill out the "Request for Convalidation" form.

2. Husband and Wife will complete the "Prepare & Enrich" Online Questionnaire.

3. Begin to collect paperwork (see below for checklist).

4. Meet with a Deacon to review your results from the Prepare & Enrich Questionnaire.

5. Attend 3 Convalidation Preparation Classes. (These take place once a semester)
   Both Husband and Wife are required to attend. This is a community-based class so you get to know other couples on the same journey as you.

6. Meet with the Deacon and fill out the Prenuptial Questionnaire and go over the Ceremony.

7. Once you have completed the Steps 1-5, you will be able to schedule a date for your Convalidation. *We highly encourage **small** convalidation ceremonies. You will work with our Convaldiation Coordinator to schedule and plan the Convalidation Ceremony.*

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

❏ Copy of Wife's Baptismal Certificate
   If Baptized Catholic, call the Church you were baptized at and ask for a "recently issued" certificate.
   If Baptized in a Protestant Denomination, then a copy of the baptismal certificate is needed.

❏ Copy of Husband's Baptismal Certificate
   If Baptized Catholic, call the Church you were baptized at and ask for a "recently issued" certificate.
   If Baptized in a Protestant Denomination, then a copy of the baptismal certificate is needed.

❏ 4 Freedom To Marry Forms
   Given to the Couple at the first Deacon Meeting.

❏ Prenuptial Questionnaire
   Filled out and completed with a Deacon.

❏ Copy of Marriage License

❏ Dispensation/Permission to Marry Non-Catholic (if applicable)

❏ Decree of Nullity (if applicable)

❏ Final Divorce Decree (if applicable)

❏ Death Certificate (if applicable)

WEDDING DATES & TIMES

- Weddings are celebrated in the main sanctuary on Saturdays at either 2:00pm or 7:30pm or in the Chapel at 11:30am if it is available. Friday evening weddings may be scheduled if the Church is available beginning no earlier than 5pm during the school year.

- Special weekday wedding dates are permitted only if the parish schedule allows.

- There are no weddings on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligations.

REHEARSAL WEDDING DATES & TIMES

- Rehearsals are generally on the evening before the wedding on Fridays at 5, 6, 7 p.m., or on Thursday evenings at 4:30pm or 8pm due to Mass at 6:45pm. Rehearsals are conducted by one of our St. Anthony of Padua Wedding Coordinator teams and last approximately 1 hour. Since multiple rehearsals are often scheduled for the same evening, rehearsals *must start on time.*

- The wedding and rehearsal dates and times will be **tentatively** scheduled with the Convalidation Coordinator once she has received their online **Request for Convalidation** form (**ap.church/convalidation**)

WEDDING FEES & HONORARIUMS

St. Anthony of Padua is pleased to celebrate your marriage ceremony at our Parish. As with everything else, there are costs associated with keeping our beautiful Church operational and properly maintained. The fees below (as of July 1st, 2016) do not cover the entire costs of having your wedding here, but they do help defray the expenses of hosting your wedding.

- **St. Anthony of Padua Registered Parishioners:** $ 500.00
- **Non-Parishioner Rate:** $ 1,000.00
- **Con-validations (without mass)** $ 200.00
- **Weddings in chapel** $ 300.00

Altar Server: (required for Nuptial mass) $25.00 *to be given in cash*
Fee to be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the wedding rehearsal. (Please place in envelope)

Music Ministry: *Music fees for accompanist and Cantor should be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the wedding rehearsal. Please place in envelope.* Outside music fees are handled according to the policy set by the contracted Musician(s) and paid to them directly by the couple.

- **Accompanist** $ 200.00
- **Cantor** $ 150.00

Clergy Offering: Amount to be determined by the couple. If you would like to offer a gift to the celebrant and need some guidance, your Convalidation Coordinator can provide examples of past amounts given. This *should be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the wedding rehearsal, please place in envelope.*