

## **Guidelines for Preparing for a Destination Wedding at Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church**

We are honored that you have decided to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at Our Lady of the Snows in Sun Valley, Idaho. Since you will be completing your marriage preparation at a parish other than Our Lady of the Snows, it is important that you read over the guidelines below so that you know what is expected of you.

The first thing you will need to do is contact the office of your local parish at least 4 months before the intended date of your wedding to schedule a meeting with the priest or marriage prep minister to initiate your Pre-Nuptial Inquiry process. During this process you will be obtaining and/or filling out the paperwork necessary for your marriage to go forward.

We will need the following to be completed and submitted to our parish office no less than four weeks before your scheduled wedding date. This list is not completely exhaustive, but covers the basic parts. Your local parish priest or marriage preparation minister will be the one to take you through this process.

### **Preparation:**

It is necessary for the bride and groom preparing for Holy Matrimony to complete both spiritual and canonical preparation.

1. **Spiritual:** This assists the couple in understanding the Catholic sacrament of Holy Matrimony. This formal preparation is generally one of the following forms:
  - a. A parish based pre-marriage program of classes
  - b. A pre-marriage retreat such as Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter or other formal program

It will be necessary to provide a certificate of completion of your spiritual preparation along with your canonical paperwork.

2. **Canonical:** A couple must complete the proper paperwork to ensure they are free and able to marry. This paperwork is completed at their local Catholic parish, and is then sent to their local diocese for approval. From there it is sent to the Diocese of Boise for final approval, and finally to Our Lady of the Snows. This paperwork will consist of the following with possible additional paperwork and testimony:
  - a. **Pre-Nuptial Investigation:** This must be scheduled at least 4 months in advance of the intended wedding date. Each couple individually completes an interview with the parish priest or marriage prep minister to see if they are each free and able to marry. This will also determine if any special dispensations or permissions are needed for the marriage to take place

- b. **Dispensations or Permissions:** In certain situations, most commonly when either the bride or groom is not Catholic, the couple must request a dispensation or permission from their local diocese in order to be married
- c. **Testimony of Freedom:** A separate witness for the bride and groom offers a testimony to each person's freedom to seek Holy Matrimony
- d. **Sacramental Certificates:** Newly issued certificates of the bride and groom's sacramental history must be provided, which are less than six months old. These can be requested from the church of baptism. It is necessary for both parties to provide these if they are baptized in the Catholic Church or any other Christian Church. For Catholics, the back of the baptismal certificate should include notifications for any other sacraments they have received. (It is a good idea to remind the person you request the certificate from to include these notifications)
- e. **A letter of permission:** For Catholics to receive sacraments outside of their local parish, they must receive a letter of permission from their pastor
- f. **Letter of Good Standing:** If an outside clergy member, priest or deacon will be officiating at the service he will need to provide a letter of good standing from his diocese or religious order
- g. **Civil Marriage License:** A civil marriage license must be obtained from the Blaine County Court House in Hailey, Idaho before the wedding liturgy. This marriage license is not part of the paperwork to be sent to the diocese. However, if the bride and groom are already in a civil union, a copy of the civil marriage license must be included in the paperwork.

All the above paperwork and testimonies, as well as any other necessary documentation is to be completed and received by Our Lady of the Snows at least one month before the scheduled wedding date. This means that the Diocese of Boise will need to receive the paperwork no less than 2 months before the scheduled wedding date. Without completing the proper spiritual and canonical preparations, the Parish of Our Lady of the Snows will not be able to serve as host to the wedding liturgy in any form.

After completing your paperwork, you may begin planning your wedding ceremony. Your local parish will provide you with a planning booklet such as *Together for Life* to aid in this. The priest at Our Lady of the Snows will then work with you to help plan the details of your wedding liturgy, such as choosing your readings and music.

Again, we are honored that you have chosen to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Matrimony with us, and invite you to contact us with any questions or concerns at 208-622-3432 or parishofficeols@gmail.com.