



St Jerome Catholic Church

1709 W. Lunt Ave. Chicago, IL 60626

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Marriage Preparation Process

1. The official contact is a priest. **Only the priest can reserve the wedding date and time.** At least one of the couples must be a member of St. Jerome Parish or live within the neighborhood. Otherwise, she must receive special permission from the priest of her parish to schedule the date at St. Jerome. **Please fill out the attached form to register as a parishioner of our parish.**
2. If either couple has been previously married, we cannot promise a wedding date until the correct documentation is completed, releasing the person from any canonical responsibility before entering another marriage bond. For any previous marriage, (civil or church) we will advise you what documents are necessary to present.
3. **A period of at least 6 months is recommended.** Because? Because during this time the couple will focus more seriously on their spiritual formation, preparation for the Sacrament of Christian Marriage in the Catholic Church. Some expectations are the following:
 - The couple is expected to **attend Sunday Mass** with their local parish community, either here at St. Jerome's or another Catholic church closer to their home. If the bride or groom is not Catholic, then that person is encouraged to continue the practice of her own faith tradition.
 - Appropriate **participation in parish life** (volunteer service, ministries, prayer groups, etc.) also helps to enrich faith in preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage and the lifelong commitment it entails.
 - Additionally, the couple is advised to **celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)** days before the wedding, either here at St. Jerome's or at any other Catholic church. It is not recommended to wait until the last week before the wedding.
 - Finally, the couple is encouraged to **read the Bible** (scriptures) and participate in a few minutes of daily prayer (before eating, in the morning, or before bed).In this way, you will be building habits in the practice of the Christian faith in the Catholic Tradition, individually and together as a couple. These ways strengthen the bonds of Christian love in the present and in the future.
4. After attending the **Marriage Information**, the couple will have to make an appointment with the priest to discuss the **Pre-nuptial Questionnaire**.
5. Both the bride and groom need to **obtain a new baptism certificate from the church where they were baptized. These must be recent (within the last 6 months).** If you don't have the church address, ask us for help. If you were baptized outside the United States, write, or call that church immediately, because it may take months to obtain your certificate.
6. Afterwards, the couple must attend the **Marriage Preparation Sessions** and will have to schedule another appointment with the priest for follow-up and begin planning the ceremony.
7. The couple must take the **Pre-Cana marriage course**, offered by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, 3-4 months before the wedding date. At the end of the course, couples will receive a certificate at the end, which they must present to the parish office of San Jerónimo, before their wedding date. **To register for a Pre-Cana course, visit:**
<https://events.archchicago.org/ereg/index.php?eventid=612264&>
8. Before getting married in Chicago or suburban Cook County, couples must obtain a **Marriage License from the Cook County Clerk's Office** one month before the wedding day. To apply, couples must go together in person, to the location closest to you in Cook County.

Note: Anyone who has applied for permanent residence at the United States Department of Immigration, through her parents as a single person, upon marriage the processing of your application will be delayed and may be rejected by the INS Department. By being rejected you also lose your place on the immigration waiting list. You will have to complete a new application as a married person, and this will be a new process with a new waiting list. Keep this in mind before applying for the Marriage License.

DO NOT GET MARRIED in a civil ceremony; In other words, in the United States you **DO NOT NEED** to get married before a judge before the church ceremony. Simply go to the Cook County office, purchase, and bring the blank license to the priest or deacon. We will hold the license until the day of the wedding when we sign it and mail it to the Cook County Clerk's Office.

If a couple is already civilly married, then a COPY of the Civil License should be brought to the priest as soon as possible.

9. **2 Official Catholic Witnesses** are required during the wedding (preferably a man or bridesmaid or two others). They should be practicing Catholics. They can be married or single and be at least 18 years old. **If they are married, they must be married in church.**
10. Both the bride and groom **need 2 Witnesses** and will need to make an appointment with the priest or deacon to fill out the **Witness Affidavit Form**. These two may be the Official Catholic Witnesses or two other people (see #9 above). If your witnesses live outside the area, they can fill out the Declaration Form in the presence of any priest or deacon in any Catholic Church in the world. Those completed forms must be submitted to the St. Jerome Parish Office prior to the wedding ceremony.
11. **The total offering is \$800. \$900 for those who are not parishioners.** A \$100 deposit is required and is applied to the total. It is important to pay in full at least two weeks before the wedding. If you wish to have music, please inform the parish office, who will contact the St. Jerome Music Director. **The music offering is included in the \$800/\$900 total.**
12. If the **couple is to be married in another church**, and the preparation process is completed here at San Jerónimo, **the offering is \$150.** We will prepare a letter of authorization and documentation for the church where the wedding will take place, indicating that you have completed the Marriage Preparation Classes.
13. **Photographers must strictly follow church directions** and consult with the priest or usher before the wedding. We ask that you do not enter the Sanctuary area during the ceremony. **Please report this to the photographer.**
14. **NOT ALLOWED:** Aisle runners for safety reasons, tape on the floor or pews, arches are not necessary, rice/confetti/bird seed/balloons, etc., inside or outside the church. **Please inform families and their guests.** Simplicity is beautiful in itself! **Chewing gum, food or drinks are not allowed in the church at any time.** Remember to place your gum in the containers by the front door of the church before the ceremony.
15. **WE ALLOWED:** Flower petals inside the church, small bells or bubbles outside the church, and decorative flowers should be kept to a minimum. All of this is allowed if family members are able to clean them after Mass. **There are no maintenance people on weekends and you will be asked for \$100 if cleaning is necessary.**
16. The ceremony rehearsal will be confirmed with the Parish Office. Punctuality on the day of the wedding celebration is **REQUIRED** by all participants. **If the bride arrives after 15 minutes**, the priest will automatically hold a shorter wedding service during which Holy Communion will not be distributed.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and accept the terms and conditions required for the celebration of the Marriage.

Signature

X _____
Date