

## **WEDDINGS**

For the sacramental union of a man and a woman to be proper in the eyes of the Church, the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony must be performed in the Orthodox Church. For such an ecclesiastical marriage to be valid, the following must be adhered to:

- 1.) No impediment to marriage may exist.
- 2.) A civil marriage license must be obtained from civil authorities and presented to the parish priest prior to the wedding.
- 3.) An ecclesiastical marriage license must be obtained from the Metropolis Department of Registry authorizing the priest to perform the sacrament.
- 4.) At least three pre-marital meetings must take place with the parish priest before the wedding.
- 5.) The sacrament of marriage must be celebrated by an Orthodox priest according to the liturgical tradition of the Church.
- 6.) The priest must belong to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. A marriage performed by a priest of another Orthodox jurisdiction in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is also recognized as valid by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.
- 7.) Before requesting permission from the Metropolis for the marriage the priest must verify:
  - a.) that the parties in question are not already married either in this country or elsewhere;
  - b.) that the party or parties who are members of another parish obtain a certificate of membership from the parish to which they belong;
  - c.) that if either or both parties are widowed, that he or she present the death certificate of the deceased spouse;
  - d.) and that if either or both of the parties have been divorced and/or have remarried, whether or not the remarriage was recognized by the Church, that they present the appropriate certificates.
- 8.) No more than a total of three marriages will be allowed by the Church.
- 9.) When one or both of the parties are divorced, they must obtain an ecclesiastical divorce as well in order to marry again in the Church.

10.) In the case of a mixed marriage, the non-Orthodox partner must be a Christian who has been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. A marriage cannot take place in the Orthodox Church between an Orthodox Christian and a non-Christian.

11.) In the case of mixed marriages between an Orthodox Christian and a non-Orthodox Christian, the marriage must be celebrated by an Orthodox priest in the Orthodox Church according to the Orthodox tradition.

12.) The Sponsor (Koumbaros or Koumbara) must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church. A person who does not belong to a parish, or who belongs to a parish which is not in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, or who if married, is not married in the Orthodox Church cannot be a Sponsor. Non-Orthodox persons may be members of the rest of the wedding party.

13.) *Invitations are not to be printed until the date and time are cleared by the parish priest.*

14.) If the bride and/or groom have come from Greece after their 16th birthday, they must present, when they apply for their church license, a Certificate of Eligibility for Marriage from the Bishop of their town or province in Greece.

15.) To insure the proper dignity and solemnity of your wedding ceremony, pictures/videos can only be taken if the photographer/videographer speaks with the parish priest at least one half hour prior to the wedding.

16.) Should you desire the services of the church organist, arrangements may be made with the organist by first contacting the Church Office to obtain the names and telephone numbers.

17.) The singing or playing of Orthodox or non-Orthodox hymns and other secular songs before or after the service must be cleared through the parish priest.

18.) If the priest is expected to attend the reception, a formal invitation must be sent as is done in the case of other guests.

19.) If a guest priest is to be invited to participate in the service, it must first be approved of by the parish priest.

20.) If the bride is under 18 years of age, and if the groom is under 21 years of age, a letter of consent from the parents must be presented at the time they apply for the Ecclesiastical Marriage License.

### **The following are necessary for the ceremony:**

1.) Rings for the bride and groom.

2.) Stefana (crowns).

3.) 2 white candles.

**Days when marriage is not permitted:**

1.) January 5-6

2.) Great Lent and Holy Week

3.) August 1-15

4.) August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Baptist)

5.) September 14 (Elevation of the Holy Cross)

6.) December 13-25

7.) The day before feast days and all Holy Days of our Lord.

**NOTE: Exceptions to the above can only be made by special permission of the Bishop of the Diocese.**