



Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church

Ιερός Ναός Αγίου Δημητρίου

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΚΑΝΑΔΑΣ
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA

Rev. Fr. Thomas Sandberg

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PETITION FOR MARRIAGE

Holy Matrimony

We as a parish rejoice in the love that you, as a couple, share for one another and the commitment that has been made to bring you to this day in preparation for your marriage.

Your decision to be married in the Church is an indication that the Christian faith and the sacramental life of the Church are important to you. In the eyes of the Church, marriage is the sacramental union between a man and a woman that is used in the Bible as the image of God's faithful love for ancient Israel (Isaiah 54; Jeremiah 3; Ezekiel 16) and Christ's sacrificial relationship to the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Jesus Himself, together with His mother the Theotokos and the disciples attended and blessed a wedding in Cana of Galilee, performing His first miracle, which assisted in the celebration of that event (John 2:1-11). When we say that Christian marriage is a sacrament, we use that word to convey the depths of the bond you are about to enter into: a sacramentum in the ancient Roman Empire was the oath of loyalty unto death that a Roman soldier took to the emperor when entering the military. As Christians, the sacrament of marriage is your oath of loyalty unto eternity to each other and - as a couple - your oath of loyalty unto eternity to our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian marriage is intended to be a sign of God's presence and love in this fallen and broken world.

Those who would like to have a Wedding in our Parish must meet certain financial obligations. These obligations have been set by our Parish Council and are intended to help meet the financial needs of our Church and to encourage regular and consistent membership in our Community from year to year.

What to know before considering Marriage

As marriage is a sacrament, weddings cannot be celebrated in a spiritual vacuum. This, therefore, presupposes that:

1. At least one of the couple to be married is an Orthodox Christian, baptized and /or Chrismated in the Church, committed to Christ and His Church and an active steward for at least a year prior to the date of the wedding; and
2. The intended spouse be a Christian baptized in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as commanded by the Lord (Matthew 28:19).

Because of the sacramental nature of the marriage bond (in which a couple not only pledge their love for each other but also their love for Christ) a wedding between an Orthodox Christian and a non-Christian may not be celebrated in the Church.

Inter-Christian Marriages

It is a fact that the more a couple has in common, the more likely they are to live together in peace and concord. Shared faith and traditions spare couples, their children, and their extended families many serious problems, and help to strengthen the bonds between them. Even so, the Orthodox Church will bless marriages between Orthodox and non-Orthodox partners, provided that:

1. The non-Orthodox partner is a Christian who has been baptized, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and
2. The couple should be willing to baptize their children in the Orthodox Church and raise and nurture them in accordance with the Orthodox Faith.

A baptized Orthodox Christian whose wedding has not been blessed by the Orthodox Church is no longer in good standing with the Church, and may not receive the Sacraments of the Church, including Holy Communion, or become a Sponsor of an Orthodox Marriage, Baptism or Chrismation, or receive an Orthodox funeral. A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian does not thereby become a member of the Orthodox Church, and may not receive the Sacraments, including Holy Communion, or be buried by the Church, serve on the Parish Council, or vote in parish general assemblies or elections. To participate in the Church's life, one must be received into the Church by the Sacrament of Baptism or, in the case of persons baptized with water, in the Holy Trinity, (after a period of instruction) by Chrismation. Music for the wedding is restricted to the church's cantor (live vocalists or instruments are not permitted in the Orthodox Church).

Booking the Date

The date and time for the Sacrament should be arranged with Fr. Thomas and Penelope at least six (6) months prior to the wedding. A wedding date will not be

confirmed until the bride and groom have met with Fr. Thomas, have gone over the marriage preparation sessions, and Fr. Thomas feels comfortable performing the wedding. At your first appointment with the priest, please bring:

1. Bride and groom forms
2. Baptismal certificates
3. Membership receipts
4. Letters of freedom to marry from your parish priest (if not from St. Demetrios)
5. An ecclesiastical marriage license and a civil marriage license (Please note that because of the separation of Church and state, two marriage licenses are necessary, one for the Church and one for the state. Also, please note that because a civil license carries a time limit of 90 days in Alberta, your civil license should be secured less than three months prior to the desired date of the wedding.

6. **In case of prior marriages:**

If either of the parties has been previously married, the death certificate of the deceased spouse or the civil divorce decree issued by the state must be presented to the parish priest. If the prior marriage was celebrated in the Orthodox Church and ended in divorce, then an ecclesiastical divorce decree must also be presented.

Prior to confirming the date, all necessary documents and fees must be paid in full. For booking and payment of financial obligations, please contact: Penelope at admin@calgaryhellenic.com or (403) 246-4555 ext 3. According to the official policies of our Archdiocese, weddings may not be celebrated during the fasting seasons or the major feast days of our Church:

- December 13-25 (The Advent and Christmas season)
- January 5-6 (Epiphany)
- February 2 (the Presentation of the Lord to the Temple)
- Great Lent and Holy Week (usually mid-February, the entire month of March and part of April)
- August 1-15 (the fast of the Theotokos)
- August 29 (the beheading of John the Baptist)
- September 14 (the Exaltation of the Cross)
- The Ascension (40 days after Pascha)
- Pentecost (50 days after Pascha)

This is in keeping with our ancient way of celebrating the Christian mystery in worship and exceptions can be made only rarely, in extreme circumstances, with the permission of the Archbishop.

Financial Obligations

Each Orthodox person must be a member in “good standing” at our Parish or at their Eastern Orthodox Parish. Members in “good standing” are those who have paid their membership dues in the current year, have not married outside of the church or participated in any foreign sacraments, as this would excommunicate them from the Orthodox Church. Currently, the membership dues at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church is according to the following:

- **Family Membership \$250**
- **Senior Couple Membership \$150**
- **Single Membership (18-64) \$150**
- **Single Senior/Widow(er) Membership \$75**
- **Student Membership (18-25) \$75**

If the Bride/Groom/Koumbaro/a are members at another Eastern Orthodox Church, they must bring proof of current membership. A letter from the Parish Priest indicating membership in “good standing” with the church is required. If there is more than one Sponsor, both must become members in “good standing”. In addition, for every Wedding there is a Sacrament Fee of \$500 for members.

The Wedding Party

The “Koumbaro” or “Koumbara” (the Sponsor) will participate sacramentally in the service by exchanging the rings and the crowns. This forms an integral part of the marriage rite. They must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing at his/her parish: there are no exceptions to this rule. "In Good Standing" means that they are not married outside of the church or participated in any foreign sacraments, as this would excommunicate them from the Orthodox Church. In addition, the Koumbaro/a serves to guide, teach, and counsel the couple in the Orthodox faith. The Koumbaro/a, if from another Orthodox parish, must provide proof from his/her parish priest certifying his/her active stewardship/membership in the Church. Other members of the wedding party need not be Orthodox.

The Bridal Dress and Attendants Gowns

Care should be taken in selecting the bride’s dress. The bridal gown and attendant’s dresses should also exercise a decorum befitting a Church ceremony.

Music

Only Eastern Orthodox liturgical music can be used during the times before the wedding and after the recessional. All hymns must be approved by the priest.

Photography/Videography

Photographs of your wedding are permitted but should not in any way impede or distract from the celebration of the sacrament. Photographers should be quiet and respectful; the use of a flash is allowed. If you are planning on professional photography and videography, please ask that your photographer arrive early at the Church so that guidelines can be laid out. Also, please ask guests to be respectful of the professional's space, for your benefit.

Visiting Clergy

Guest clergy, in Communion with the Orthodox Church, may participate in a wedding at Saint Demetrios. It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to extend an invitation to guest clergy, and the responsibility to guest clergy to reach out to Fr. Thomas to participate in the sacrament. Orthodox Christian clergymen in communion with the Archdiocese are welcome to participate in the celebration of sacraments at St. Demetrios with the blessings of our priest. Non-Orthodox clergymen from other Christian communities may not take part in the celebration of the sacrament of marriage.

Preparation for Marriage

In your meetings with the priest, he will discuss the sacramental nature of the marriage bond, the Christian understanding of marriage as it is expressed in the Scriptures and the marriage service itself. In cases where one of the spouses is not Orthodox, the couple should plan to meet with Fr. Thomas to have any questions answered. Further, the couple should make an effort to attend re-catechism classes.

A Note to the Bride and Groom

To those spouses who are Orthodox: there is no substitute for Jesus Christ in maintaining the dignity and sanctity of the marriage bond. For the celebration of your marriage in the Church to be real, you must live out, in subsequent years, the Christian commitment that you will make on the day of your wedding. To those spouses who are not Orthodox: you are always welcome here at St. Demetrios. Please note that your marriage in the Church does not automatically grant you membership in the Orthodox Church. If you desire to become an Orthodox Christian this must be your decision, made after much prayer and thought, in consultation with the parish priest, and never for the sake of convenience. To both of you: the Lord and this parish are here to help, support and sustain you in your marriage bond and the life of faith to which we are called as Christians. May the Lord grant you both many years together in peace and oneness of mind and heart.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long is the Service?

The Wedding service is approximately 60 minutes long.

What items does the Koumbaro/a need to bring for the Wedding?

- Stefana (Crowns of Marriage)
- Rings for the Bride and the Groom
- Two 4' Labathes
- Two 18" Candles
- Silver Tray with Koufeta for the Stefana
- Civil marriage license

My fiancé and I live in Saskatchewan. I'm Greek Orthodox and she is not. I'm a member in good standing at my Greek Orthodox Church. The Koumbaro/a is also from Saskatchewan and a member in good standing at his Greek Orthodox Church. We want to hold the Wedding at your parish. What fees can we expect?

You and the Koumbaro/a must submit a letter from your Parish Priest indicting membership in "good standing". If you and the Koumbaro/a are members in "good standing" at your parish, only the Church Fee of \$500 would only apply.

My fiancé and I live in Winnipeg. We are both Greek Orthodox but not members in "good standing". The Koumbaro/a is from Toronto and also not a member in "good standing". We want to hold the Wedding at St. Demetrios here in Calgary. What fees can we expect?

Both the Bride and Groom must become members in good standing in our parish. The same holds true for the Koumbaro/a. In this case, the couple must pay their Family Membership dues (\$250); the Koumbaro/a (if he/she is not a member in a Toronto parish) must also pay their Individual Membership (\$150) or Family Membership (\$250) in addition to the Church Fee of \$500. In summary, \$250 + \$250(\$150) + \$500 = \$1,000 (\$900) is payable prior to setting a Wedding Date.

We would like to rent the Church Hall for our Wedding. Can you accommodate us and are there any fees attached to renting the Church Hall.

Yes, we can accommodate you. Please contact Shannon Kelsick for further information at events@calgaryhellenic.com.