

“A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh.”

– Mark 10:7-8



BRING YOUR MARRIAGE INTO
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



A Guide to Convalidation

For more details on marriage preparation
in the Archdiocese of Denver,
visit [archden.org/marriage](https://www.archden.org/marriage)



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

CONVALIDATION

If you as a couple have been married outside of the Catholic Church and now wish to bring your marriage into the Church, we look forward to walking with you as you grow in your understanding and appreciation of Catholic marriage. We will help prepare you for marriage in the Church, enrich and strengthen your relationship together and with God.

What are the Benefits of a Catholic Marriage?

Being married in the Catholic Church is special in that baptized couples enter a sacramental union, which represents a visible sign of an invisible reality. As a result, Catholics can fully receive and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. The sacramental relationship between husband and wife becomes a mirror, reflecting the sacrificial and loving relationship of Jesus for his people. A couple's life together becomes sacramental to the extent that the couple invites and cooperates with God's action in their lives and sees themselves as living "in Christ." Christ then lives and acts in your relationship, attitudes, and actions.

Another benefit of a sacramental marriage is that God's love becomes uniquely present to the spouses in their total union and flows through them to their family and community. By their permanent, faithful and exclusive giving to each other, the couple reveals something of God's unconditional love.

Catholic teaching holds that sacraments bring grace to those who receive them, with the proper disposition. Grace is a way of describing how God shares his divine life with us. God's sacramental grace helps couples keep their commitment as they journey through the ups and downs of marriage and become more able to give and receive from each other.

For those couples where one individual is not baptized, they will have a non-sacramental union that is still a Catholic marriage.

Is My Marriage Recognized by the Catholic Church?

The Church respects that you've entered into a life-long covenant and encourages you to deepen your commitment further by receiving the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Catholics who exchange vows in the presence of ministers from other religious traditions or civil officials are not considered validly married in the eyes of the Catholic Church. It is required that baptized Catholics marry before a priest or deacon.

What if There is a Prior Marriage?

When someone has been previously married and wishes to marry in the Catholic Church, the Church needs to determine if that previous marriage was valid. If it is determined that the individual was invalidly married, a declaration of nullity is granted, and the individual is free to be married. At that point, the couple is free to pursue preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church. Those who petition for annulment are at times motivated by a desire to seek peace and as a result can receive healing from the wound of a failed marriage.

Catholics and those wishing to marry a Catholic should inquire with their pastor to see if a declaration of nullity is needed. You may also consult the Archdiocese of Denver's Metropolitan Tribunal's office and/or visit archden.org/tribunal.

What Can I Expect?

Just as with any sacrament within the Catholic Church, individuals can expect a time of preparation. This preparation will be customized to the specific situation and needs of the couple seeking marriage in the Church. You can expect a time of study and reflection on the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony as well as an enrichment and strengthening of the marriage relationship. Additionally, you will be encouraged to deepen your personal relationship with God and be provided guidance and encouragement to depend on God more closely in your married life together. The marriage ceremony is typically a small and intimate ceremony.

For more information about preparation for marriage within the Archdiocese of Denver, visit archden.org/marriage.