A Catholic Wedding

Matrimony has a unique theology among the sacraments of the Catholic Church. It is the only sacrament not ministered by the Church; rather, it is ministered by the couple to each other in the presence of the Church. Saint Augustine defined a Christian marriage as: exclusive faithfulness, life-long commitment and the possibility of children. (An exception is made for older people, unable to have children.) These form the basis for sacramental love between a couple with Christ at their center.

There are some basic Church laws and policies in place for couples preparing for marriage: Catholics are required to be married in the Catholic Church, or to have permission to marry outside it. They must be free to marry. That is, they cannot be previously married, unless either their spouse has died or their previous marriage has been annulled by the Church.

The Diocese of Oakland and St. Mary Magdalen Parish have specific policies as well: Couples must contact the parish at least six months before the proposed marriage, there is some paperwork that establishes ‘freedom to marry’, and we also require classes and counseling.

If you are contemplating marriage during the next year, please give me a call so that I can explain the procedures to you in more detail.