

# JOINED TOGETHER FOR LIFE

## PREPARING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Congratulations on your engagement and approaching marriage! We are happy that you have decided to be married at St. Patrick's.

The celebration of marriage, like any other sacramental experience, is first and foremost an expression of the worship of the Church. Sacraments are always an encounter with God for all who are present. Your wedding is a celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, a religious ritual that celebrates not just "two becoming one" but the reality of God's love known in all people – a celebration of Christian life. Marriage is a call to a lifestyle that is grounded in the love of God and spent in service of others. Sacramental marriage is more than a one-day ceremony for the couple; it is a public celebration of the Church, a reminder for all of us of the sacredness of marriage and of the responsibility of the married couple to be living examples of love and grace for all Christians.

### CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Christian marriage and Christian wedding ceremonies belong not only to the couple, but to the community of believers as well. Christian weddings are an expression of faith for the community: we believe that God creates, supports and nourishes all love as His gift to the Church. Since you have asked to be married within the Christian community, our parish family has expectations and norms regarding your wedding celebration. These guidelines are intended to help all who gather for the ceremony to celebrate and participate in the prayer.

## SETTING A DATE AND TIME

The Archdiocese of Omaha requires that a couple contact the priest a minimum of six months before the proposed wedding date. This allows the couple ample time to complete the marriage preparation program.

The Archdiocese allows weddings, within or outside of Mass, to be conducted Monday through Friday beginning no later than 8 p.m., and Saturdays beginning no later than 2:00 p.m. Weddings are normally scheduled on Fridays or Saturdays.

## FEES

St. Patrick's requests a minimum donation of \$300.00 for the use of the Church and the St. Mary's Commons/Parish Hall. (Payable to the parish Business Manager 1-2 months prior to the wedding date.)

## WEDDINGS AT ST. PATRICK'S

*Our parish follows these norms:*

- A person who wishes to marry at St. Patrick's must be a registered and active member of the parish, be the child or grandchild of a registered member, or whose family has some direct historical connection to St. Patrick's. (For example, your great-great grandparents were founding members of the parish, and were married at St. Patrick's.)
- All weddings at St. Patrick's are celebrated and witnessed by one of our parish priests or permanent deacons. A priest or deacon who is a brother, uncle or cousin (or in rare cases a close friend) of the bride or groom is welcome to celebrate the Mass and witness the marriage, but he must receive permission from the pastor of St. Patrick's to do so. The marriage preparation can be done by the priest or deacon witnessing the marriage, or by one of the parish priests, or if need warrants, it can be done in another parish or diocese. (All marriage paperwork will be forwarded to the pastor of St. Patrick's in advance of the marriage date.)

## STATE AND CHURCH REQUIREMENTS

*For our record keeping and to meet the requirements of the State of Nebraska, couples need to be aware of the following:*

### **The Catholic Church requires:**

- 1) A recent baptismal certificate not more than six months old. This is requested by the bride and groom from the church of their baptism and sent directly to the priest preparing the couple for marriage. This certificate **must** have the seal of the church from which it was sent.
- 2) Proof of freedom to marry, as testified by a family member or close friend.
- 3) Permission from the Archbishop of Omaha for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic or a non-Christian. This is called a "dispensation" and is applied for through the priest preparing you for marriage.
- 4) Pre-marriage counseling and "permission to marry" from the Archdiocese for persons under 19 years of age.
- 5) A signed promise by the Catholic party in an inter-denomination or inter-faith marriage that all children will be baptized and raised in the Catholic faith.
- 6) Couples should be married in the home church of either the bride or the groom. Weddings cannot be held in parks, gardens, halls, or other non-sacred locations.

### **The State of Nebraska requires:**

- 1) The couple must be legally free to marry.
- 2) Persons under 17 cannot marry in Nebraska.
- 3) Persons under 19 can marry only with a parent's consent.
- 4) Couples must obtain a marriage license. A valid identification or birth certificate is necessary for this. Licenses are obtained from County Clerk's Office, located at 204 N 4<sup>th</sup> Street in O'Neill. The fee is \$25. The address is: Holt County Clerk, PO Box 329, O'Neill, NE 68763. More information is available from your priest.

## PLANNING THE CEREMONY

*Catholic celebrations of marriage, like all Catholic liturgical actions, are celebrations of the assembly. The model, which guides our planning, is the Sunday celebration of Mass, which calls for the "full, conscious and active participation" of the whole congregation. Above all, it is to be remembered that a wedding is not a show for the assembly to watch, but a prayer for the assembly to offer.*

### **Choosing the prayers and readings:**

- \* The marriage ceremony must follow the Roman Catholic Rite for Marriage.
- \* The wedding rite for two Catholics takes place within the Mass. The wedding rite for a Catholic and another Christian, or for a Catholic and a non-Christian (a person not baptized) may take place outside of the Mass, in a Liturgy of the Word.
- \* Couples are to choose the scriptural readings and prayers for the ceremony from the "Marriage: A Journey for Life" booklet.

### **Inter-Faith Marriages**

The celebration of inter-faith weddings includes those elements in which all present may participate (such as the Liturgy of the Word, the General Intercessions, the Our Father, etc.) and excludes those elements reserved for practicing Catholics (the Eucharistic prayer, reception of Communion, etc.) The celebration of the Eucharist is not typically recommended for mixed marriages, since it can cause feelings of awkwardness and excludes the non-Catholic family from fully participating. The lack of receiving communion in no way lessens the sacrament of marriage.

### **Ministers and the wedding party:**

- \* Only two witnesses (besides the priest) are needed for the ceremony. Both must be at least 16 years of age.
- \* Children in the wedding party (Junior bridesmaids, flower girls, ring bearers) should be no younger than four years old. Smaller children are often uneasy about being in front of large groups.
- \* Lectors must be comfortable and able to proclaim the scripture effectively. At a Wedding Mass, the lector must be a Catholic. A key consideration should be whether or not this person can convey the meaning of the Scriptures with clarity and effectiveness.
- \* Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be involved in that ministry in their home parish.

\* If your wedding is in the context of Mass, two servers will be assigned from the parish to serve. We ask that the couple provide a \$10 stipend to each server. You should give this to the priest at the rehearsal to pass on to them.

\* It is customary to provide the priest/deacon(s) witnessing and assisting with your wedding with a stipend. A minimum of \$150 is suggested and you may increase your gift if you so choose.

**Other items to note:**

\* The use of a “unity candle”, “unity cross”, or “unity sand” are practices that have become popular in the wedding liturgy, but they are not a part of the Catholic Rite for Marriage. It is optional. If it is important that you have one, you will need to bring your own as the church does not provide one.

\* The practice of presenting flowers before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, and even to Saint Joseph, is a devotional practice that has become a custom of the Church in the United States. As Mary represents the perfection of motherhood, and as St. Joseph represents the perfection of fatherhood, the presentation of flowers and a prayer asking for their intercession is most appropriate, but it should represent something real. Therefore, if you have a strong devotion to Mary and/or Joseph, you may wish to incorporate this devotion into your ceremony.

\* The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, etc., is prohibited both inside and outside of the Church. These items not only create a cleaning problem for the parish, but also can be hazardous to our elderly parishioners or guests at your wedding. No animals (including birds) are allowed.

\* Often, your wedding is not the only activity taking place in at the church on a given day. In addition to weddings and our regularly scheduled times for confession, we may schedule wedding rehearsals and music practices, and when necessary, funeral Masses and wake services on the same day as a wedding.

\* Donations to St. Patrick’s for use of the church and commons should be made, with a \$300 minimum and should be paid to the Business Manager one month before the wedding date.

\* It is helpful to have a worship program printed for your guests so that they might be aided in their prayer and participation. The priest will assist you in determining what to include, although the preparation and printing will be your responsibility.

## BEFORE AND AFTER THE CEREMONY

*To maintain the dignity of the ceremony and out of respect for others using the church, both for weddings and other gatherings, it is necessary to be mindful of the following things:*

- \* A wedding consultant may be helpful in arranging your wedding preparations and organize the day, but his\her responsibilities cease at the church door and begin again at the reception. The priest and his assisting ministers are solely responsible for arranging and directing the wedding rehearsal and the wedding ceremony.
- \* A gathering area for the wedding party is available in the St. Mary's High School commons area. Whenever this space is used, it is expected that you appoint someone to see that the area is returned to its original clean and orderly appearance. No smoking is allowed in or around any of the buildings on our campus. There are two large bathrooms for women, so they may choose to dress there. If other events are scheduled for that area, another appropriate place will be made available for you.
- \* The groom and groomsmen are to be dressed for the ceremony when they arrive. There is no suitable room for them to use for this purpose.
- \* The entire wedding party is to be gathered in the high school commons 30 minutes before the ceremony is to begin. They are to remain there until it is time to begin the procession.
- \* Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the St. Mary's Commons, Parish Hall, or the parish grounds either before or after a wedding or a wedding rehearsal. The presence of alcohol is grounds for cancellation of the wedding by Church law.
- \* Wedding party members may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when attending the rehearsal and wedding. If a wedding party member appears inebriated, the priest has the right and obligation to remove that person from the wedding party and/or to cancel the wedding.
- \* If the wedding party is having a small luncheon or snacks while preparing for the wedding ceremony, remember that there is a one hour Eucharistic fast before receiving communion. This means that during at least the last 30 minutes before a wedding Mass, those who will be receiving communion should neither eat nor drink anything except water.
- \* If you desire there to be a receiving line after the ceremony, please remember that a receiving line at the church drastically cuts into the time you will have to take pictures after the ceremony. As such, another option may be to have the receiving line at the reception.
- \* In respect for the parish & school, the high school commons, or other areas used as part of the wedding preparation, are to be made orderly and clear of trash before the procession begins.
- \* All wedding parties are cautioned that valuables should not be left in the high school commons during the ceremony. St. Patrick's is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

\* A person is to be assigned by the bride and groom to remove all wedding items from the church *immediately* after the church is emptied of wedding guests. This includes bows, empty flower boxes, worship aids, etc. You can ask the ushers to consider this part of their duties.

\* If the high school commons, bathrooms, rooms used by the wedding party, and church are not left in the same clean condition which they were before the wedding, a \$50 cleaning fee will be assessed to you before the marriage license is submitted to the county. If any damage is found in the church immediately following the rehearsal or ceremony, an additional fee will be established and assessed. This is to protect the property of the parish and her members.

## DECORATING THE CHURCH

*When considering decorations, remember that St. Patrick's Church is already a beautiful environment and an appropriate setting for a wedding celebration.*

\* Aisle runners are not permitted in our church due to safety issues.

\* The only candles permitted are those already in place in the sanctuary, and all are lit for a wedding ceremony. The church does have two candelabra that may be used at no cost to you. The candles in the sanctuary are provided by the parish. If a unity candle is used, the couple must supply the stand and the candles.

\* No decorative archways are allowed in the center aisle. If bows are to be used, they must be attached with elastic, string, or approved pew clips. NO tape, tacks or Velcro may be used.

\* Because of seasonal floral arrangements, additional bouquets may not be needed. If desired, however, two bouquets of flowers may be placed, one on either side of the tabernacle behind the main altar – the church will provide stands for them. No flowers are allowed to be placed around or near the altar.

\* Any decorating must keep in mind the liturgical season during which the wedding is taking place. Seasonal decorations are part of the liturgical environment and may not be removed or changed for weddings. Couples planning weddings during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Easter or Lenten seasons should be mindful of this.

\* You can opt to have a guest book at the entrance of the church. You are responsible for providing the book and writing instruments; we will provide a table. The guest book CLOSES at 5 minutes prior to the start of the wedding. It will then be made available again after the wedding has concluded.

\* Balloons are not allowed within the church or gathering area. They must be left outside in a car and may only be used in an outdoor release if desired. Likewise, the modern practice of releasing butterflies may only occur outside.

## THE REHEARSAL

- \* Schedule the time and date of the rehearsal with the priest, and inform all members of the wedding party to be punctual in arriving. All members of the wedding party, including the lectors, ushers, and the parents of the couple, must attend the rehearsal.
- \* Decide the pairing of the groomsmen and bridesmaids before the rehearsal begins.
- \* Do NOT bring your wedding rings to the rehearsal.
- \* There is to be no food or drink in the church, including bottled water, gum, etc.
- \* All children must be supervised.
- \* Out of respect for the Lord who is present in the Blessed Sacrament in the Church, all talking is to be kept to a minimum when in the Church proper.
- \* Bring marriage license to the church. Without the license there is no wedding.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO TAPING

*A church is a place of worship and a house of God. Therefore it is important that all photographers and videographers respect with reverence the church sanctuary. The celebration of a wedding is foremost a sacramental moment. To maintain the high dignity of the ceremony and the quality of the prayer, photographers and videographers need to follow these guidelines:*

- \* Flash photography may be used only for the entrance processional and the recessional. Flash may not be used at any other time during the ceremony.
- \* Photographers are not allowed to stand at the front of the church or in the center aisle during the processional.
- \* Photos during the ceremony may be taken from the back of the church, from the loft or from the side aisles. Photographers are not allowed in the sanctuary area, the center aisle, or the front pew during the ceremony.
- \* **Photography for the ceremony should be completed an hour before the wedding is to begin.** However, the scheduling of that time may be stipulated by other events in the church that day (a funeral, etc.) The time may be split before and after the ceremony if needed. On Saturday afternoons, all photography equipment will need to be removed from the church by 4:15 pm.
- \* The behaviors of all involved should be respectful of the sacred nature of the church. Food, drink, and inappropriate clothing (hats, etc.) are not allowed in the church.
- \* All videotaping should be done from the choir loft. Any exceptions must be cleared with the priest witnessing your marriage.



## YOUR WEDDING MUSIC

*(Please read this fully before contacting a Parish Musician)*

Music is an important part of any Catholic liturgical celebration, and can add to the beauty and solemnity of your marriage celebration. The following information is given to help you understand the Catholic theology of music and its role in liturgy and to assist you in making decisions regarding your wedding ceremony. Keep in mind that the music you choose must fit the spirit & structure of the Catholic Rite of Marriage, be in keeping with liturgical season, and help the gathered assembly participate and pray.

### **Places for music within the ceremony:**

Music is part of the prayer of Catholic liturgy, and is not considered an “extra”. Within the wedding liturgy, the most important elements of song are those which the assembly sings. Choosing this music should be a priority in your planning. First among these parts to be sung are the Alleluia before the Gospel reading, the responsorial Psalm, the Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen, and the Lamb of God. There is a song at communion, the presentation of gifts, and the entrance procession.

### ***For Ceremony with Eucharist: (\*indicates must have, all other places are optional)***

Prelude

Procession

Gathering Song

\*Psalm Response (after 1<sup>st</sup> reading)

\*Alleluia/Gospel Acclamation

Preparation of the gifts

Unity Candle

\*Mass Acclamation (including Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen)

Communion

Closing/Recessional

### ***For ceremony without Eucharist (\*indicates must have, all other places are optional)***

Prelude

Procession

Gathering Song

\*Psalm Response (after 1<sup>st</sup> reading)

\*Alleluia/Gospel Acclamation

Lighting of the Unity Candle

Closing/Recessional

### **Types of Music Suitable to a Wedding Liturgy:**

There are many sources for music which may be used at your wedding. Start with the hymnal the parish uses and the resources of the parish musicians. There are three basic criteria to follow in selecting music:

- 1) The music must help the assembly pray and participate. Congregational singing is essential.
- 2) Anything used must be good, quality liturgical music.
- 3) Anything used must fit the spirit and structure of the Catholic Rite of Marriage.

Music at a wedding liturgy must fit the context of faith and the dignity of the occasion. Songs which speak of joy, gratitude, and hope for the blessings of life fit the spirit of the liturgy. Music and love songs borrowed from the entertainment industry, however touching, may not express a spirit which fits a Catholic wedding liturgy or Christian marriage, and as such, are usually not allowed to be used as part of the wedding ceremony.

Following are suggestions for music selections for your wedding. **This list is by no means exhaustive**, but is intended to give you a place to start. All couples must meet with a musician to make arrangements for music. The final decisions regarding the music for your wedding ceremony will remain within the parish guidelines and **must be approved by your priest**. Every effort will be made to provide music which pleases the bride and groom and is in good taste, but ultimately must be fitting for the liturgy.

#### ***Processionals (You may select only one processional for both your attendants & the bride and groom, or you may select one for the attendants & one for the bride)***

Aria from Cantata #208 (Sheep May Safely Graze) by Bach

Canon in D by Pachelbel

Largo from Xerxes by Handel

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by Bach

Ode to Joy by Beethoven

Air from Water Music Suite by Handel

Bridal Chorus by Wagner

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

For the Beauty of the Earth

Trumpet Voluntary by Stanley

Trumpet Voluntary by Clarke

Allegro Moderato from Water Music by Handel

Rondeau by Mouret

Trumpet Tune by Purcell

Hornpipe from Water Music by Handel

***Recessional***

Wedding March by Mendelssohn  
Ode to Joy by Beethoven  
Allegro Maestoso from Water Music by Handel  
Ode to Joy by Bach  
Rondeau by Mouret  
Trumpet Tune by Purcell  
Trumpet Voluntary by Stanley  
Trumpet Voluntary by Clarke  
Hornpipe from Water Music by Handel  
Sent Forth by God's Blessing (Ash Grove)  
Now Thank We All Our God  
Spring from the Four Seasons by Vivaldi

***Wedding Songs for other parts of ceremony: (\*indicates can be congregationally sung)***

*Here I Am Lord	The Wedding Song
*Hear Us Now, Our God & Father	Prayer of St. Francis
Ave Maria	The Lord's Prayer
*One Bread, One Body	Where There is Love
*Servant Song	*On Eagles Wings
*Gift of Finest Wheat	*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
*Blest Are They	*Wherever You Go
*You are Mine	How Beautiful
The Gift of Love	*Taste and See
The Prayer	

### **Selecting a Musician:**

The musicians from our parish are ordinarily able to provide music for your wedding. They have the knowledge and ability to make your celebration beautiful, and they are familiar with the mass setting, etc. of our parish. If you have a friend or relative sing at the ceremony, that person may assist the parish cantor, but his/her role will be limited. There must be a serious reason for another musician to play at your wedding.

\* Here is a list of suggested musicians from our parish. (Others may be available as well, but these are those who generally play/sing for most of our weddings. Pianists may be able to give you other suggestions for vocalists as well.)

Pianist	Susie Kramer	402-340-3747	krmrlwn@yahoo.com
	Paula Havranek	402-336-4328	cphavranek@gmail.com
	Lisa Lueninghoener	402-340-4805	lisal@telebeep.com
Vocalist	Kay Stepp	402-336-3280	kstepp@hotmail.com
	Monica Huber	719-404-6813	heholdsusup@gmail.com
	Keith Willis	402-340-6271	<a href="mailto:poptimes16@gmail.com">poptimes16@gmail.com</a>

\* If you have someone you wish to play or sing who is not an approved parish musician, their participation must be approved from the parish priest and/or priest witnessing your marriage.

### **Musicians' Stipends:**

Your chosen musician will help you plan your music and play at your wedding, and may arrange for cantors and/or additional musicians if desired and agreed upon. Each musician (vocal & instrumental) is an "independent contractor" and as such, charges for their services.

The basic standard fee for an organist/pianist for your wedding is \$100. If there is a vocalist that they must prepare with, we strongly recommend \$125 to \$150 as the stipend, depending on the amount of preparation required.

A basic standard fee for a wedding vocalist is \$50, with recommendations of \$75-100 for more extensive music requirements.

**These fees should be given to the musician(s) no later than the night of the wedding rehearsal.**

## PREPARATION CHECKLIST

### **Long-term preparation: (completed at least 6 months prior to the wedding date)**

- Complete FOCCUS and schedule wedding and rehearsal dates/times.
- Complete initial session with the priest.
- Complete FOCCUS discussions with priest
- Attend remaining preparation sessions with priest.
- Attend one of the marriage preparation classes offered by the Archdiocese.
- Contact parish musician.

### **Two months before ceremony:**

- All necessary documents completed.
- Baptismal certificates received and turned in to the priest.
- Marriage License received.
- Plan ceremony with priest.
- Any fees are paid, including a donation made to St. Patrick's for use of the church and commons (\$300 minimum).

### **A week before the wedding:**

- Remind wedding party members to be on time for rehearsal, and of the rules regarding alcohol.

### **The day of the rehearsal:**

- Bring marriage license.
- Bring stipend for priest/deacon(s) and servers.
- Pay fees for musicians' services.
- Arrive on time!

