

Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage

Congratulations to the both of you. Weddings are a special and joyful times for the bride and groom, for their families and friends, and for their community. The new beginning, the love, the promise and the hope that a wedding brings to us, make the celebration a special and grace-filled time. The church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their Christian lives together. Indeed, so important is marriage in Christian life that it is called a Sacrament.

Great care is to be taken to see that the celebration is reverent, graceful, and beautiful and open to the special movement of God's Spirit among us. Our celebrations of the Sacraments, marriage included, are always rooted in listening to Sacred Scripture so that we can be nourished and strengthened by God's Word. Always we celebrate the Sacraments as a worshipping community. We gather with our brothers and sisters in faith and ask for their prayerful support. These celebrations are incomplete unless they are filled with song, prayerful gestures and silence in which we hear the voice of God in our lives.

In this spirit, we provide the following guidelines for the celebration of weddings in the building which shelters our worshipping community.

QUESTIONS OF THE CHURCH

As you come to the church to begin your preparation for your wedding, the Church asks some basic questions of you:

Am I a parishioner?

A parishioner is defined as "one who lives within the territorial boundaries of the Church and is registered in the parish."

Am I registered in the Church?

A pastor can only officiate at the marriage of his parishioners therefore you **MUST** be registered in a Catholic Parish. If you are not registered, you have no pastor and, thus, no one to officiate at your wedding.

Am I a practicing Catholic?

This is clearly defined as “one who is actively engaged in the practice (i.e. Attending weekly Mass, living the Commandments and the Church Precepts to the best of your ability) of the Catholic Faith.” ***One of the couple must be practicing his or her faith, at the very least, for the marriage to take place in the Church.***

Am I cohabitating?

Cohabiting is against Church Law and the Church looks at this as a serious matter. If you are cohabitating you are asked to separate until the wedding ceremony. If you cannot afford different residences then separate bedrooms will suffice. During this preparation process, **PLEASE**, refrain from sexual activity.

If I am not a member of the Catholic Church I want to get married in, does the pastor of this church have to do my wedding?

The answer to this question is “No, he does not have to.” If you have ties to this parish such as your family resides and are registered in this parish most pastor have no problem in doing the service as long as you have written permission from **YOUR** pastor, you are registered in a parish, and are practicing your faith on a regular basis. The pastor usually will take this on a case by case basis.

WHO MAY MARRY AT THE HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH?

Only members of Holy Family. If neither the bride nor the groom belongs to our parish community, permission must be obtained from the pastor, in writing, of the church where he/she/they are registered and practicing their faith. The wedding cannot take place without this written permission. (Even with the permission from your pastor we are not obligated to accept your wedding if we find good reason to postpone.)

If an **ANNULMENT** is needed by one of the couple, a date **CAN NOT** be set until the annulment is granted.

SETTING THE DATE OF OUR WEDDING

Couples must contact the priest at least six months before the proposed date they hope to celebrate their wedding. Only after sufficient opportunity to meet with the engaged couple will the priest confirm the wedding date. It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the date with the church **before making commitments with caterers, receptions halls, etc.**

SETTING THE TIME OF THE WEDDING

Weddings are scheduled with respect to the couple's wishes and the availability of the church building and the parish ministers. Normally, weddings take place on Saturdays. The latest starting time would be 1 p.m. If the couple wishes a later time for the ceremony, it is recommended that they get married on Friday.

There are times in the Church Liturgical year when wedding celebrations are less appropriate. For example, Lent is a time of penance in the life of the church community and that spirit touches and colors all parish liturgies in the parish between Ash Wednesday and Easter.

PREPARATION

The couple will meet with the priest to fill out the necessary paperwork. After this meeting the Marriage Preparation team will take over the process.

The couple must complete the **FOCUS** Marriage Preparation Instrument.

The couple will also be asked to go to a Pre-Cana workshop. This workshop is usually a weekend long program.

Other things may be asked of you if deemed necessary by the priest.

THE CELEBRATION

The Marriage Ceremony is the Sole and Exclusive property of the Church. To insure a proper celebration we will be using exclusively: the Roman Ritual - "**The Rite of Marriage**" revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI – copy right 1969.

If what you desire is not in "**The Rite of Marriage**" it will not be permissible in the ceremony.

Marriage Ceremony Outline:

To help you in preparing the "Order of Worship" for your celebrations here are the proper outlines for you to choose from:

Marriage Within Mass:

- ❖ Entrance Procession
- ❖ Opening Prayer
- ❖ Old Testament Reading
- ❖ Responsorial Psalm
- ❖ New Testament Reading
- ❖ Alleluia
- ❖ Gospel
- ❖ Homily
- ❖ Statement of Intentions
- ❖ Exchange of Wedding Vows
- ❖ Blessing of the Rings
- ❖ Prayer of the Faithful
- ❖ Presentation of the Gifts
- ❖ Prayer over the Gifts
- ❖ Preface
- ❖ Nuptial Blessing
- ❖ Sign of Peace
- ❖ Communion
- ❖ Prayer After Communion
- ❖ Final Blessing
- ❖ Recessional

Marriage Outside of Mass:

- ❖ Entrance Procession
- ❖ Opening Prayer
- ❖ Old Testament Reading
- ❖ Responsorial Psalm
- ❖ New Testament Reading
- ❖ Alleluia
- ❖ Gospel
- ❖ Homily
- ❖ Statement of Intentions
- ❖ Exchange of Wedding Vows
- ❖ Blessing of the Rings
- ❖ Prayer of the Faithful
- ❖ Nuptial Blessing
- ❖ Final Blessing
- ❖ Recessional

Marriage Between A Catholic and an Unbaptized Person:

- ❖ Entrance Processional
- ❖ Opening Prayer
- ❖ Old Testament Reading
- ❖ Responsorial Psalm

- ❖ New Testament Reading
- ❖ Alleluia
- ❖ Gospel
- ❖ Homily
- ❖ Consent
- ❖ Exchange of Rings
- ❖ Final Blessing
- ❖ Recessional

MARRIAGE LICENSE

Please bring the marriage license with you to the wedding rehearsal. It is important that the marriage license be brought in at this time so that the priest will have appropriate time to fill in the pertinent information.

MINISTERS FOR THE CELEBRATION

PRESIDER:

Ordinarily, the pastor is the presider at the wedding liturgy. A couple may have a special priest friend or priest relative whom they want to invite to concelebrate with the pastor or even preside at the wedding. In a case like this, the couple will need to first obtain permission from the pastor. Visiting priests shall celebrate the liturgy in accordance with the parish and diocesan customs. In the case of a wedding where ministers of other Christian denominations or other faiths are taking part, the appropriate adaptations will be made after the presider's consultation with the engaged couples and the other minister.

ALTAR SERVERS:

At least one server is required for a wedding service and two servers for the wedding Mass. You may use the servers from the parish (a list can be obtained from the parish office.) If others are asked to serve, they are required to be present at the wedding practice.

MUSIC MINISTERS:

Ordinarily, music ministers in the parish will provide the music for the wedding celebrations in the parish. You will be required to speak with the parish musician and the priest regarding the planning of the liturgy and music for the wedding ceremony. The best place to start looking for sacred music for your wedding celebration is in the hymnals in the church. ***Secular music is not permitted during the wedding celebration.***

The couple may invite instrumentalists and soloists from outside the parish to be involved, but they are to discuss the possibility first with the priest before making arrangements or commitments.

LECTORS:

The proclamation of the Word of God is an integral part of the worship and therefore must be proclaimed well. We encourage you to choose lectors who are already practicing this ministry in their parish, or choose a relative or friend who is willing to practice the Readings in order to proclaim them well.

Inviting the lectors to the wedding practice is required. This will give them the opportunity to practice and become familiar with the worship space and placement.

USHERS:

In addition to seating the guests, handing out and picking up programs, and attending to other details; the ushers help to offer a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the celebration by greeting those entering the church. Men or women may serve as ushers.

ATTENDANTS:

Only two witnesses are required for the celebration of marriage. Any additional attendants are, excuse the phrase but “Window Dressing”, and as such are not required. Ring bearers and flower girls, though nice to have, are not required. Couples are asked to consider the age of the children involved and whether their presence will add to or distract from the joyful and solemn celebration taking place.

Please keep in mind the size of the church when choosing a bridal party and choose a number of attendants that will not over crowd the available space. In choosing the attendants for the wedding celebration a maximum of five couples are allowed to stand with the bride and groom. This number includes the best man and the maid of honor.

SYMBOLS OF UNITY

Marriage is a Sacrament of **UNITY** and couples are encouraged to prepare carefully using the many signs and symbols of unity already available in the Marriage Rite. **Prime examples of unity are the exchange of vows, the exchange of rings and the celebration of the Eucharist itself.**

The so called “unity candle” is a commercial product of which no mention is made in the Liturgical Books of the Church, “Rite of Marriage.” The product is sold as a trio of candles, two small and one large. There is no history behind it. For this reason, the Diocese of Marquette has asked that the use of the so called “unity candle” be removed from the wedding ceremony.

As an Appendix, at the end of these guidelines, you will find a prayer service that you can use at your reception if you would like to use a so called “unity candle.”

ENVIRONMENT OF THE WORSHIP SPACE

Many desire to place floral arrangements in the church. Flowers and plants which are meant for the church should be discreet and tasteful in their message and design.

We welcome any floral arrangements you may wish to leave in the church after the wedding celebration. They will continue to enhance parish worship and be a fine gift to the parish.

Please refrain from placing flowers or other decorations on or near the altar.

Before you change the environment of the church; colors, decorations, etc., please contact the pastor.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

The liturgy during which you and the entire community celebrate your marriage is a sacred moment for rejoicing and prayer, song, and gesture. Photograph taking and videotaping should not distract from the sacred ritual. We ask you to carefully observe the following so that the sacred joy of this day will not be marred by photo taping equipment and those who operate it.

- ❖ Flash photography is allowed during the processional and recessional but is not allowed during the liturgy.
- ❖ Photographers and videotapers are not permitted to roam about the church during the liturgy. However, they may take pictures from a space off to the side designated by the pastor.
- ❖ Photographers and videotapers are not allowed, at any time, to be in the sacristy unless invited by the priest. It is suggested that the couple assign one person to do the videotaping.
- ❖ Photographers and videotapers are not permitted to interfere with the processional and recessional.
- ❖ Only lighting already available in the church may be used. No additional lighting may be brought into the church during the wedding ceremony.
- ❖ After the wedding, picture taking (including flash) is permitted, but must be completed by **2:45 p.m.** and all must be out of the church by **3:00 p.m.**

REMUNERATION

It is customary to make an offering to the church on the occasion of the celebration of marriage. An offering (\$60) has been established by the Diocese of Marquette and is to be given to the officiating priest for his services.

It is expected that each server will receive \$20 for his/her service. Remember they are giving up more than the hour the service usually takes. They are giving up the whole morning for you.

The fee for the services of the parish organist is set by the organist. Any fee for the services of musicians outside the parish is determined by the couple and those individuals and is not the responsibility of the parish.

PREPARATION FOR THE LITURGY

In consultation with the pastor who will preside at the wedding, the couple will determine if the marriage is to be celebrated with a Mass or in a Liturgy of the Word. The determining criteria will center on what form of liturgy best will enable a particular assembly to celebrate with the bride and groom.

Initially, couples will receive the book, **Marriage Is For Keeps**. It is to be used to help plan their wedding liturgy. In it, there are options for selection including options for the exchange of marriage vows, general intercessions, and the scripture readings appropriate for use at weddings. It also contains a lot of helpful materials for continued use throughout the couples' married life.

When preparing the wedding liturgy, couples will be urged to incorporate elements which will encourage the “**active**” participation of those who gather for the celebration. This includes participation through song and spoken prayer.

The Sunday liturgical celebration is the model for the planning of appropriate music and when it will be used at a wedding. Because the Catholic Church celebrates in both spoken and sung prayer, every effort must be made to select music that is familiar or can be easily learned.

PROCESSIONS

Normally, the entrance procession at the wedding is an extended form of the regular entrance of the priest and ministers at Sunday Mass.

MEMORIZING VOWS

The exchange of vows and rings is a most solemn moment in the wedding celebration. It is at this time that the bride and groom administer the Sacrament of Marriage to each other. Couples are encouraged to memorize their vows. The celebrating priest will always assist with the vows if they are forgotten. You may **NOT** make up your own wedding vows.

INTOXICATION

Any evidence of intoxication or any alcohol use **by any** member of the wedding party upon their arrival at the church will result in the **immediate cancellation** of the wedding

service. Neither may there be any use of intoxicants on the church grounds before or after the celebration.

MODEST DRESS

One would presume that people getting married in a Church or even just attending Mass, would understand proper decorum. If you look around you, at Mass, you will find that often times they don't.

It is embarrassing for the Church that this topic should even come up in preparations of a wedding. We, in our society, have forgotten what real modesty is.

When selecting the wedding gown and bridesmaids dresses please make sure that they are not of a provocative nature but of a modest nature. The congregation and priest should not have to be afraid that the gowns are going to fall off. Nor should the gowns be of a nature that the priest has to be embarrassed when he has to look at the bride and groom.

MISCELLANEOUS

All Catholics involved in the wedding party, especially the bride and groom, should celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the wedding celebration. The priest will be happy to celebrate this Sacrament with you after the wedding rehearsal.

It is not necessary to have an aisle runner. However, if the couple chooses to have one for personal reasons, arrangements are made through the florist. Ushers are responsible for the removal and disposal of the runner. Also, if flower pedals are used, it is the responsibility of the ushers to remove and dispose of them after the celebration.

To avoid any safety hazard and to minimize custodial work, the throwing of rice, bird seed, etc., inside or outside the church, following the celebration is not allowed.

If it is the couple's desire to invite the priest or musicians to the wedding rehearsal dinner and/or to the wedding reception, out of courtesy, please extend the invitation(s) in advance of the occasion just as you would for other guests.

Please be on time for the wedding rehearsal and ask your wedding party to be on time as well.

The parish staff and Church community are very happy for all engaged couples during this special time. May the fullest of God's blessings come upon all couples who are preparing for the Holy Sacrament of Marriage.

APEPENDIX I

LIGHTING THE WEDDING CANDLE WITH TABLE GRACE AT THE RECEPTION

Just before the entrance of the bridal party, the parents (or family representatives) light the two side candles. The bridal party enters the reception hall according to custom.

Once all are in place a designated person (possibly the best man) may offer a blessing for the meal using the following or similar words.

Lord Jesus, be present among us as you were present at Cana of Galilee. Come with abundant gifts for N. and N... May their union in marriage truly image Your love for Your Church. Bless all of us, too, who have come to join with them in joyful celebration. We thank You, Lord, for all this food and for the grace to eat together. May we all feast with you one day at the banquet of eternal life. We ask this of You, Lord Jesus who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen

Immediately following the blessing, one of the attendants (possibly the matron of honor) continues the prayer with the lighting of the wedding candle saying:

We continue to ask God's blessings upon N. and N. as we celebrate their commitment to each other in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

As a sign of their marriage, they light the wedding candle from the two candles representing their individual lives.

Lighting their tapers from the two side candles or using the two smaller candles, themselves, the bride and groom join their two flames and light the wedding candle. As they do this the attendant continues:

As the two flames become one, symbolizing their union with each other in the Lord, we ask God to bless their marriage, and to keep N. and N. close to Him in the years ahead.

May they always turn to God in time of joy and in times of need. We pray this through Christ our Lord.

The two side candles are extinguished. The best man may offer the customary toast. The reception continues.

Approved by the Parish Pastoral Council at the December 8, 2015 meeting.