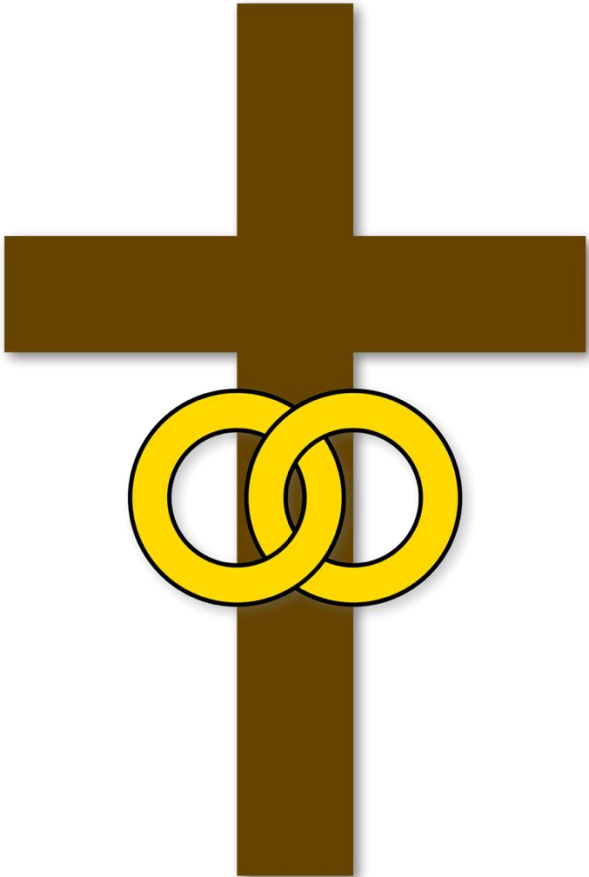


**Guidelines for Engaged Couples for Weddings at
the Church of the Holy Redeemer**



Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement! We want to do all we can to make your wedding a meaningful celebration, and to prepare you for a lifetime commitment through the preparation program we offer.

Because you are asking to be married in our parish, it is expected that the Catholic member be regularly and actively involved in parish life and attending Mass each week. The Lord who calls you to express your commitment to each other in sacramental marriage calls you also to pray together and worship Him. Christian marriage must be prepared for and continually nurtured by your coming together with God's people to listen to His Word, offer Him praise, and be strengthened with the Sacramental life of the Church.

These guidelines are offered to help you in planning your wedding day, as well as what needs to be done before. Pope Francis has asked parishes and parish priests and deacons to be especially mindful of the importance of marriage preparation and to do all we can to make marriage preparation a priority in the life of every parish. It is because of the importance of your marriage and nurturing and protecting marriage in our culture and society that we have developed these components of preparation for your wedding.

Requirements of Marriage Preparation

1. The couple is to give at least six months' notice of their intention to marry, to allow adequate time to prepare for a wedding.
2. Meet immediately with the parish priest or deacon in person to request a date for the wedding.
3. Every couple is to take a Diocesan Pre-Marriage course. These are provided throughout the year at different times in Olivia and possibly through other dioceses. The parish priest or deacon will give you the form to register.
4. The couple is also required to register for the workshop God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage that is offered in Sleepy Eye. This day-long workshop is especially helpful in teaching the aspects of the theology of marriage. The parish priest or deacon will also give you a sheet to register for that workshop when you meet with him.
5. The couple will complete the "Fully Engaged" inventory and meet with a "mentor couple" for 3 or 4 meetings lasting about an hour. This preparation can also be done with a local priest or deacon if the couple to be married lives far away from Marshall, such as with a priest or deacon at a University chaplaincy.

Funerals

Couples and their families should be aware that they are subject to a funeral taking place in the church the morning of the wedding day. If a funeral was to be scheduled for that morning, the wedding party would only be able to access the church and family room after 12:30pm. The use of Carlin Hall will be limited, as a luncheon follows each funeral.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

It is necessary that Catholic members of the wedding party prepare themselves spiritually for the wedding celebration. The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be received prior to the wedding.

Date and Time of Rehearsal

The bride and groom, in consultation with the parish priest or deacon, will plan a time for the rehearsal. It is usually in late afternoon or early evening of the day before the wedding. A time must be chosen when all involved in the ceremony – bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, etc. are able to attend. Please emphasize the importance of being punctual to the whole wedding party.

Marriage Ceremony

There are several decisions to be made about the wedding ceremony. You will go over these with the priest or deacon. There are two ways of celebrating weddings in the Catholic Church: 1) Within a Mass (normally for a couple who are both Catholic); 2) Outside of Mass (for a couple when either the bride or groom is not Catholic).

Day and Time of Wedding

Weddings can be celebrated any time of the year, though normally the seasons of Advent and Lent are avoided. They can be scheduled for any day of the week except Sunday. The time of the ceremony is usually late morning or early afternoon. Weddings cannot be scheduled after 2:30 pm on Saturdays.

Music

All music will be planned and approved in consultation with the priest or deacon. Music should be of a sacred or religious nature. A cantor and accompanist will be needed to assist the congregation with the Mass parts that are sung as well as the hymns that are chosen. At least one of the two musicians should be Catholic and be familiar with the local parish church. They should be booked and sent the music at least two months in advance. They should be paid before the wedding, and this is handled directly by the couple and the cantor and musician.

Projection System

We offer the use of the projection system in which readings, hymns, and the camera feed can be displayed. This feature is optional. It takes two operators to run the projection system and the church will coordinate who they will be. They should be paid \$75 before the wedding, and this is handled directly by the couple and operators.

Sound System and Lights

The priest or deacon will be responsible for turning on the sound system and lights for your rehearsal, pictures and wedding. Please do not attempt to operate these systems on your own.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

If you wish to have a flower girl and/or ring bearer, ***we ask you to choose children at least five years of age for obvious reasons***. They must be at rehearsal with at least one parent.

Ushers

Ushers welcome guests, hand out programs, and take guests to their seats. ***After the ceremony, ushers are responsible for picking up programs and any other things left in pews or in the church***. They are also needed at the rehearsal.

Invitations to Priest or Deacon

A priest or deacon will conduct your rehearsal and marriage ceremony. We do not presume to be invited to your reception unless we receive an invitation like your other guests. Often, our schedule does not allow us to attend a rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception, and we hope you understand.

Scripture Readings

Numerous options for Scripture readings will be provided. You will want to study these readings together to make your choices. You should select readings that are meaningful to both of you. The parish priest or deacon will provide you with your options.

Lectors

You may ask a participating Catholic who is a good public speaker/reader to be a lector. The lector must be present at the rehearsal. It is preferable that they are regular lectors in a parish.

Photographers/Videographers

Reverence and respect for the Blessed Sacrament present in the Tabernacle should be observed at all times. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to inform the photographer/videographer of the following guidelines:

- Photographic personnel are expected to behave in a professional, courteous manner at all times. They are not allowed in the sanctuary (altar area) during the liturgy. Pictures should be completed in the sanctuary area one half hour before the wedding.
- Photographers/videographers may not climb on or move furniture.
- All posed pictures are to reflect a basic respect for the Church as a house of prayer; e.g. no 'garter shots' of the bride or 'gag shots' in or around the Church.

Flowers and Decorations

The decoration of the church reflects the liturgical season of the year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time. Weddings should not dominate nor replace the seasonal environment. Whatever is chosen should reflect the liturgical season and *enhance* the space, not clutter it (*Diocesan Guidelines p.3*). Please talk to the parish priest or deacon regarding your wedding environment.

- Pew bows/flowers must be attached with ribbon, elastic, string, or floral clips. No tape, tacks or glue, please.
- Flowers and plants are permitted in the sanctuary but not on the altar (table) or ambo (pulpit).
- Rice, bird seed, confetti and balloons are not permitted.

Food, Alcohol and Smoking

Please make sure that liquor is not served prior to the rehearsal or the wedding. All parish facilities are non-smoking. Food, beverages and gum are never allowed in the church. Any food and beverages brought in must remain in Carlin Hall and must be removed immediately after the ceremony. Someone must be assigned to be responsible for the clean-up. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on parish property.

Marriage License

Our state and federal governments recognize church marriages as legally binding. The government requires that you first obtain a Marriage License. At least one of the parties to the marriage must apply in person at the county recorder's office in the courthouse. The License will cost you \$115.00. However, with a signed letter/certificate from the priest or deacon stating you received 12 hours of premarital education, the Marriage License would be \$40.00. You must be married in the state where the license is issued. However, in Minnesota you do not have to be married in the county where the license is issued. ***There is a waiting period of 5 days for the license.*** The license is valid for 6 months. The witnesses need to be 18 years of age.

The marriage license and certificates **should be given to the Priest or Deacon as soon as you receive them from the county. The office staff will fill out the certificate.** Copies of the certificate will be given to the bride and groom and the license will be sent to the clerk of court after the wedding takes place.

Signing the Marriage Certificates: The marriage certificate is a legal document. The witnesses will sign the certificate immediately after the wedding ceremony with the priest or deacon in the sacristy.

Interfaith Marriages

Unity of faith strengthens the bond of marriage. In an interfaith marriage (a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic), it is important to know that the Catholic spouse reaffirms his or her faith and promises to do everything in his/her power to assure that any child born of the couple's union is raised in the Catholic faith.

Parishioner Intentions

The Church needs to know where the bride and groom are planning to be parishioners, whether that is continuing to be parishioners at Holy Redeemer, becoming parishioners at Holy Redeemer, or joining another parish.

The "Unity Candle" The use of a unity candle is not a part of the Marriage rite, and highly discouraged, although not forbidden at this time. (It is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage.) A more appropriate time to light a unity candle would be at the reception before the meal prayer.

Living Together Before Marriage

We would be remiss to not add a few strong words about cohabitation before marriage. Unfortunately, this has become more acceptable and more common in our culture, despite studies and statistics that show that couples whom cohabit before marriage have a greater risk of failure in their marriage. For a variety of reasons, couples try to justify their decision to live together before marriage, contrary to the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels and taught by the Catholic Church. The priest preparing the couple will address this, should the couple be living together, he will strongly encourage them to make other living arrangements until the wedding for their own benefit, as well as to protect the sanctity of the Sacrament of Marriage.

Baptismal Certificates

For Catholics: If you were not baptized at the parish where the wedding will take place, you must obtain a copy of your baptismal certificate, which is less than 6 months old. Write or call the parish (or stop by) where you were baptized and ask for a copy of your baptismal certificate for marriage purposes. State your name, birth date, and parents' names. Please ask also for a notation about Confirmation to be made on the baptismal certificate. If there are any unusual circumstances concerning your baptism, state that in your letter (such as baptism at 7 years of age, etc.) Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the parish to return your certificate to the priest or deacon arranging for your marriage. (After the marriage the priest or deacon will notify the parish where you were baptized that you have been married and that fact will be entered into your records. The marriage will also be recorded in the parish where the wedding takes place.) If you were baptized at this parish, you do not need to do anything outside of informing us of this.

For non-Catholics who have been baptized: Proof of baptism is required. The original certificate will suffice. Usually other faiths issue a booklet at the time of baptism, which has all the facts, recorded on one page. If you do not have it in your possession, ask the Pastor of the

church where you were baptized to mail the baptismal verification to the priest arranging your marriage.

Wedding Offering

The wedding fee to the parish is \$250.00. This fee includes use of the family room for the bridal party and the sanctuary. If you are planning on using Carlin Hall, there is a required deposit of \$50 for damages or cleaning that needs to be done. According to diocesan policy, this donation is given to the parish, not to the priest. If you further wish to give something to the priest, you may do so separately.

If neither party is a member of the parish in which the wedding is taking place, the fee to the parish is \$500.00.

A stipend is a payment made to thank a person for their services. The fee above does not include any stipends to the musician, cantor, or altar servers. Normally the cantor and musicians will let you know their fees when you contact them.