

# St. Mary's Cathedral



## Wedding Guide

Congratulations on your engagement. We are excited to help you prepare for the sacramental blessing that God desires to share with you through your wedding.

Preparing for your wedding day is an exciting and wonderful time in the life of a man and woman in love. The Church shares your excitement and looks forward to helping you. Our faith teaches that it is an even more profound joy to prepare for your married life by entering into the Sacrament of Marriage. Our theological perspective tells us that the Sacrament of Matrimony is a living reflection of God's love, and that you, the bride and groom, "mirror" that reflection of love to each other, as well as to all God's people as you live this Sacrament for the rest of your lives. Couples preparing for this vocation need a clear vision of this Sacrament. That is why the Church is happy to cooperate with you in the celebration of your wedding day which is the beginning of the rest of your lives as a couple married in Christ.

St. Mary's Cathedral Parish is particularly happy that you will be celebrating your wedding here. St. Mary's Cathedral is both a local parish community of faith, as well as the "Mother Church " of the Diocese of Grand Island. In both capacities, St. Mary's Cathedral is a church where many services are celebrated every year.

Those who are registered members of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish in good standing have an automatic right to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage here.

Catholics from any other part of the Diocese of Grand Island also are welcome to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage here but will need to make their own arrangements with a priest/deacon. (The priests/deacon of the Cathedral are principally responsible for those who belong to the Cathedral parish. While they may be available to officiate at other weddings, that cannot be assumed. If they do so, a pastor's permission must be granted from the pastor of the bride's and/or groom's home parish.)

For the sake of clarity and equity, the following policies and procedures have been established. Please note the distinction within the policy and procedures between active registered members of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, and Catholics who are non-parishioners.

For the sake of definition, an "active registered member of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish" is understood to be a practicing Catholic who has been a registered, involved and contributing member of the Parish for at least one year prior to the reservation of a date for a wedding.

A "non-parishioner" is understood to be a Catholic who is not registered at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish.

## **Wedding Days and Times**

The times for weddings to be celebrated at St. Mary's Cathedral are most weekdays at 2:30 p.m. and Saturday's between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. The latest that we can begin a wedding on Friday or Saturday is 2:30 p.m. This is because the Cathedral has Confessions and Masses scheduled for these afternoons and evenings. Also, no weddings are scheduled on Saturday at 11 a.m. because Confessions are offered at this time.

By Diocesan law, no weddings are permitted on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

Because the Cathedral's schedule is very full, every couple must be aware that there are time limitations. Generally, you are able to use the worship space of the Cathedral from 12 noon until 4 p.m.

Those who have organized and/or decorated for your wedding are also responsible for cleaning up after (e.g. the removal of ribbons, bows and wedding programs from the pews). This clean up should be done promptly after the completion of the ceremony so that the Cathedral can be ready for the next scheduled liturgical event.

Please be aware that our beautiful Cathedral was constructed in 1926. The heating and cooling units are often not sufficient to effectively cool the building on a hot day nor to heat the building effectively on a very cold day. If you have a summer wedding, please know

that the building is often somewhat warm. We will do our best to make you comfortable.

## **The Wedding Rehearsal**

Rehearsals are generally scheduled the evening before the wedding. Since multiple weddings occur on a given day, a period of 45 minutes will be reserved for this purpose. It is most important that all arrive on time. If a wedding is scheduled for Saturday – the rehearsal is scheduled for the Friday prior at 6:00 pm.

The priest or deacon who is to officiate at the wedding is expected to be present to conduct the rehearsal.

Please bring with you to the rehearsal your NE State Marriage License and any wedding programs you plan to distribute. The wedding rehearsal is not the rehearsal for musicians. Any necessary music rehearsals should take place at a separate time arranged through the music office

The Diocese of Grand Island requires that those wishing to be married allow a minimum of four months for the preparation and assessment of the engaged couple to be completed. Therefore, initial arrangements for your wedding must be made at least four months prior to the desired date.

Inquiries as to dates and times for weddings at St. Mary's Cathedral are to be made through the priest, at which time preliminary questions will be asked to

determine your freedom to marry. Requests for dates are handled in the order that they are received.

**For Non-Parishioners:**

1. A signed *PASTOR PERMISSION FORM* from the pastor of each Catholic to be married must be given to the priest/deacon who is preparing you for your wedding. He will include it in the pre-nuptial file.
2. The Cathedral may be able to provide a priest or deacon for the wedding of non-parishioners. But it is the custom and responsibility of the couple to select a Catholic priest/deacon from their own parish, family or friends who will be able to take care of all aspects of marriage preparation and the celebration of the marriage.
3. The Catholic priest/deacon who will witness the wedding must return a signed *Pastors Permission Letter* to the Pastor of the Cathedral indicating the following:
  - a.) That the couple is canonically free to marry;
  - b.) That he agrees to be responsible for ensuring the required marriage instructions are taken care of; that the required marriage papers are completed, including obtaining any necessary permissions or dispensations; that he will obtain necessary delegation; and that he will conduct the rehearsal and be present to celebrate the Wedding Mass or Service;

- c.) That he brings all papers to the Cathedral after the wedding so they may be recorded in the Sacramental Book, and where also the notification to the Church of Baptism will be completed for him.
4. The couple agrees to a service stipend as mentioned in the *STIPEND* section of this booklet. This does not include the visiting priest's stipend.

### **Making Selections for Your Wedding Liturgy**

The marriage ritual provides a wide variety of options and choices for the wedding liturgy, including Scripture readings, the exchange of consent, blessings, etc. These options should be discussed beforehand with the priest or deacon who is to officiate.

The use of readings which are not taken from Scripture or the use of so-called "original vows" composed by the couple is not permitted by Church law. Downloading Scripture from the Internet is not recommended, since often it brings up translations that are not officially approved for liturgical use.

The Old and New Testament readings, and the Prayer of the Faithful may be proclaimed by a lay reader (lector). Therefore, in choosing lectors, one should be mindful of the acoustics of St. Mary's Cathedral and select someone with a strong, clear voice and good enunciation. Anyone you select to serve as

lector/cantor must be appropriately and modestly dressed.

Altar Servers are not required. If you have family members or friends who are altar servers, they are welcome to assist at the wedding.

If you are having a wedding with a Mass, then we generally need two or three people to assist as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. If you have family members or friends who fulfill this role in their home parish they are welcome to assist at the wedding.

### **Unity Candle** (or Unity Sand, Unity Cross, etc...)

Although the use of a Unity Candle is not an official part of the Marriage Rite, one may be used. (Some couples choose to have the unity candle ceremony at their wedding reception). If one is to be used, the couple shall be responsible for providing these candles and they should be brought to the Cathedral at the time of the rehearsal. (Please note: If the couple wishes to keep their unity candle after the ceremony, they should designate someone to retrieve it before leaving the Cathedral. We are not responsible for items left behind.)

### **Church Decorations**

St. Mary's asks that you neither move nor rearrange anything in the church without permission. No movement of altar furniture or furnishings without permission.

Nothing is to be placed on the altar except the Eucharist bread and wine. Flower decorations may be placed to the side of the altar or in front of the lectern but may not extend above the altar or lectern.

Candelabras are optional. If you use them they should be placed so as not to restrict movement around the altar. Plastic runners must be utilized underneath them to protect the floors of the sanctuary. Also, processions should not be prolonged or punctuated by wagons, stroller etc.

Do not use nails, tacks or any adhesives for decoration, as they can damage the finish of the church pews. Florist's wire and fishing line work well to hold pew bows.

### **Before, During and After the Wedding Ceremony**

In light of the clean-up efforts and time constraints, the throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals, or anything else of that nature as well as the release of balloons, butterflies, doves etc. is not permitted.

We respectfully ask you to keep the sacred space clean and neat. All pew decorations, used programs, and flower boxes or debris must be promptly removed after the ceremony.

## **Stipends**

### For active registered members of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish:

For active registered contributing members of the Cathedral Parish, an offering of \$200 is asked to cover any related expenses for the use of the Cathedral. This offering is deposited in the general operating fund of the Cathedral and helps cover the normal maintenance and utilities of the Cathedral building. It is also a fitting way to thank the Church for assisting you with this important sacrament. This does not include an optional honorarium for the priest/deacon.

The musician's fee is separate and can be arranged with the Music Director during your wedding music consultation. Any parishioner with an inability to pay – may speak with the priest.

### For non-parishioners:

The couple agrees to a service stipend of \$500 which includes an offering for the use of the Cathedral, utilities and other concurred expenses. (Please note: other music-related fees such as cantors/soloists and instrumentalists must be negotiated with the Cathedral Music Director). This does not include an optional honorarium for the priest/deacon.

We ask for more from non-parishioners because our parishioners are financially supporting the Cathedral throughout the year whereas visitors do not.

## **General Information**

### **I. Dressing procedures**

For the sake of privacy, space and time, it is highly recommended that the bride and her immediate attendants arrive already fully dressed in modest attire for the wedding. A bride's room is available for your use located on the basement level of the Cathedral.

We do have a room in the basement of the church that can be used as a bridal preparation room. There is a bathroom attached. While the wedding party has the use of the Cathedral worship area from 12 noon – 4 p.m. – the bridal room is available any time after 8:00 am on Saturday morning. At the rehearsal the evening prior you are able to bring your wedding dress, bridesmaids dresses and decorations to store in the bridal room. At this point we do not have a room for the groomsmen other than the general restroom.

### **II. Music**

Arrangements for all aspects of the music for the wedding liturgy must be made through consultation with the Music Director at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish. To arrange a meeting with the Music Director, please contact the parish office. The Director will assist you with music selections, and discuss other possible fees for cantors or instrumentalists. A comprehensive outline of musical guidelines is available on request. It should be noted that no secular music (other than instrumentalists) will be allowed.

Cathedral's Music Director will make all final decisions concerning music.

#### **IV. Photographers/Videographers**

Those who take still photographs or make videotapes of the wedding ceremony must be aware of the sacred nature of this event. While photographers and videographers are permitted in the Vestibule (entrance) and Nave (main body) of the Cathedral, they are not to come into the sanctuary area (i.e. – above the steps). They must be discreet and respectful in all aspects of recording this sacred event.

The prudent use of flash is not regarded as objectionable; however, the use of additional temporary lighting (e.g. portable floodlights, reflective umbrellas) constitutes a serious distraction and cannot be allowed during the service. Videographers are welcome to make use of the choir loft or the area located in front of the center sections of pews, near the first set of columns.

#### **V. Programs / Worship Aids**

If you are preparing a program to be handed to your guests, it should be reviewed by the priest/deacon officiating at the wedding and/or the Cathedral Music Director before it is printed.

## **VI. Marriage License**

The couple is responsible for obtaining a civil marriage license from the State of Nebraska as required by civil law. The marriage license should be brought to the priest/deacon who will be witnessing the marriage at the time of the rehearsal.

## **VII. Parking**

The Cathedral has very limited parking facilities. Extended use of the parking facilities, e.g. to attend the wedding reception cannot be allowed. Limos, trolleys, buses or other modes of transport should not block the driveway entrances of the Cathedral parking lot.

The physical address of St. Mary's Cathedral is:  
204 S. Cedar Street, Grand Island NE.

The mailing address of St. Mary's Cathedral is:  
112 S. Cedar St/, PO Box 936,  
Grand Island, NE, 68802

## **VIII. Alcohol / Drug Policy**

Alcohol and drugs are prohibited in the Cathedral.

## **IX. Proper Etiquette**

Due to the sacred nature of the Cathedral Church, please remember that no food, gum, smoking or

refreshments should be brought into the worship area of the Cathedral. At any given time, the faithful community may be in the Cathedral to pray, please be respectful of their needs and refrain from loud conversations, running, or other inappropriate behavior. Anyone not observing this will be asked to leave immediately.

## **X. Food / Lunch for wedding party**

We understand that the wedding party may be present for a few hours prior to the wedding liturgy. You are allowed to bring in a simple lunch / snacks for the party. You are welcome to serve this in the bridal room in the basement or the north sacristy (located behind the musician's area of the church - above Mary's Closet Thrift Store). Please have someone responsible to clean up and properly dispose of all food and beverage remains. Again – please keep all food and beverages out of the worship area of the church.

Feel free to contact your priest / deacon or the parish office if you have any questions.

May God bless you in this time of preparation.

Edition March 2017