



St.
Patrick's
Wedding
Guide

St. Patrick's Catholic Church
415 N. Chestnut
North Platte, NE
(308) 532-0942
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Dear Friends in Christ,

The priests and people of St. Patrick's rejoice with you at the announcement of your engagement, and we will walk with you in the weeks and months ahead as you approach one of the most important days in your life: the beginning of the sacred covenant of Christian marriage.

In asking to be married in the Catholic Church, you are publicly proclaiming your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and asking to live as Disciples of Christ in the Sacrament of Marriage. The sacred liturgy of your wedding, which begins your married life by the solemn exchange of marital consent, is above all else an act of worship, and our parish staff will help you prepare both for that happy day and for the lifetime of marriage that follows your nuptial liturgy.

We understand that you are concerned about having every detail of your wedding carefully planned and well executed, and we will work with you to ensure that the sacred liturgy is a beautiful and memorable event for you and your families and friends. We ask you to remember that your wedding, although an intensely personal moment for you, is not a private event; rather, it is a public celebration of one of the seven Sacraments given to the Church by the Lord Jesus. For this reason, we must take care to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the mind of the Church and in conformity with liturgical law and local custom. Many years of trial and error have shown us what works at St. Patrick's and what does not. This little booklet is intended to make you aware of and help you understand the policies that govern the celebration of weddings at St. Patrick's.

Please read this booklet carefully and make notes of any questions that may arise. You are welcome to speak with me or any of our staff about these policies and the celebration of your wedding at St. Patrick's.

The Staff of St. Patrick's Church
North Platte, Nebraska

Who can be married at St. Patrick's Church?

For a couple to be married at St. Patrick's one of three conditions must be met.

Either the bride or groom (or both) must be a registered, active, and regularly contributing member of the parish and must have been so for at least six months before the six-month period of marriage preparation begins. To be an active member means attending Mass each Sunday, and between first registration in the parish and a wedding at St. Patrick's on, full year must elapse.

OR

Either the bride or the groom have at least one parent that is a registered and active member of St. Patrick's. We would hope that either the bride or groom (or both) are a registered, active, and regularly contributing member of another parish. In this case you are welcome and encouraged to invite your own Catholic pastor to preside at your wedding here at St. Patrick's.

OR

With special permission others can be married at St. Patrick's. If none of your family has a connection with St. Patrick's you are asked to invite your own Catholic priest to preside at the wedding here at St. Patrick's. All decisions about eligibility for marriage at St. Patrick's are made by the pastor, and no date for a wedding can be reserved until and unless the pastor certifies that the couple is eligible to be married at St. Patrick's.

When can weddings take place at St. Patrick's Church?

Weddings are celebrated on open weekdays between 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Those days closed to weddings are: the Saturdays of Advent and Lent, the Saturdays after Thanksgiving and Christmas, Holy Days of Obligation that fall on Saturday, All Souls Day when it falls on Saturday, and the Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent.

Should the wedding be celebrated inside or outside of Mass?

Usually weddings at St. Patrick's between a Catholic and a non-Catholic are celebrated outside of Mass. Weddings between two Catholics can be celebrated within the Mass, but only if both parties and most of their immediate families are genuinely and actively practicing the faith by attending Mass regularly. The final decision about this matter is made in consultation with the pastor of St. Patrick's.

How is the church reserved and the wedding date decided?

To schedule your wedding at St. Patrick's you must make an appointment and meet with the priest. You arrange the appointment by calling 308-532-0942. Before a date can be decided, your eligibility to be married at St. Patrick's must be verified by a pastor. Only after all of these steps are completed can the church be reserved and a wedding date accepted, and from the first meeting with the priest to the date of the wedding must be at least four full months.

What must be done before the wedding?

A wedding is a simple ceremony lasting only a few minutes; a marriage is a lifetime commitment of sacrificial love in a solemn and sacramental covenant. Wedding preparation and marriage preparation are different things, and preparing for the marriage is by far the more important. When you meet with the priest, he will explain the requirements for marriage preparation that must be completed before the celebration of the wedding.

How much does a wedding cost at St. Patrick's?

The expected stipend for a wedding is \$300 for parishioners/\$500 for non-parishioners. We recommend that \$150/\$250 be paid when the date for the wedding is reserved in the church calendar. This fee is non-refundable. The remaining monies must be paid not less than four weeks before the wedding. Please know that this offering is of great help and support to our Church. Your wedding is an appropriate time to support the Church that is available to you because of many who monetarily support our ministries.

The fee includes the costs for the marriage preparation program, the use of the parish facilities and a fee to our janitorial staff who clean up after your wedding. Checks should be made payable to St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

The wedding fee does not cover the expense of any musicians/cantors hired by the couple. Couples for whom this fee would be a burden and who can demonstrate financial need are welcome to speak with the pastor about a reduction of the fee.

Personal Flowers, Corsages, and Boutonnieres

The wedding party is responsible for making all arrangements for personal flowers, corsages and boutonnieres to be worn or carried by anyone in the wedding. These must be brought to the church by the wedding party or be delivered to the church by your florist not less than two hours before the wedding.

No flowers or greenery are permitted in the windows or aisles of the church, and no flowers or flower petals be dropped inside or outside of the church before, during, or after the wedding or rehearsal. No decorations are permitted outside the church.

Unity Candle or Unity Sand

The Unity Candle and the Unity Sand are rather recent additions to weddings in the United States. They are not an official part of the Catholic Wedding Liturgy. You are welcome to use these if you like but they are not required. If you use these you are asked to purchase and provide the entire “set” of candles and stands or containers for sand.

Church Decorations

St. Patrick’s Church **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 altar or lectern but may not extend above the altar or lectern. See measurements page for reference.

Candelabras should be placed so as not to restrict movement around the altar. Plastic runners must be utilized underneath them to protect the wooden floors of the sanctuary. Also, processions should not be prolonged or punctuated by wagons, strollers, etc.

Do not use nails, tacks or any adhesives or decoration, as they can damage the finish of the church pews. Fun tack placed on metal pew plates, florist’s wire and fishing line work well to hold pew bows. Hurricane lamps with clips need to be placed so as not to scratch the pews.

Following the wedding, the church must be picked up and left as clean as you found it. Have someone outside your immediate family assume this responsibility, so that the families may continue the celebration without being concerned about cleaning up the church.

Candles and Liturgical Furnishings

The furnishings for the sacred liturgy are provided by the church; this includes all vestments, books, altar candles, kneelers, chairs, and other elements as needed. We cannot use family heirlooms in the celebration of the sacred liturgy.

Who plans the wedding liturgy?

Weddings are public liturgical actions of the Church, and the celebration of weddings is governed by liturgical law. The basic form of the wedding liturgy is given by the Church, and no variation from that form is permitted. Within that basic form, the selection of the prayers is made by the priest or deacon who will preside at the wedding after consultation with the bride and groom. Scripture readings are selected by the couple.

Planning the music

All those preparing for a wedding at St. Patrick's are required to meet with our Music Coordinator for Weddings. This person is Karen Matthies. Karen can be reached at (308) 520-4142. She will assist you in choosing appropriate music. She can also assist you in finding keyboard players and cantors.

As with all worship services, music is important. Our diocesan policy in regard to music for weddings states: "Music for weddings must be reflective of the sacramental nature of marriage. Religious hymns or songs that have some particular connection with marriage or special devotion of the couple are most appropriate. Show tunes, Top Ten Songs and other songs which have no significance or are inappropriate for the sacrament are not to be used." (Diocesan Policies, page 3, No 14)

To further clarify, please be aware of the following:

~Music within the liturgy must be sacred. It must draw our minds to Christ, God and God's love working through us. Popular Songs such as "Amazed," "The Rose," "Wind Beneath My Wings" and "Keeper of the Stars" emphasize love between humans only, or they draw attention to the radio or secular world rather than to Church. Sacred music is based on Scripture. It places us in a space that is sacred. Sacred music emphasizes God's love for us.

~Liturgy is a natural human thing, which calls us to the aliveness that live singers and accompanists bring. We strongly suggest you have music that can be sung by the assembly. If you are having a Mass within your wedding service, then the proper parts of the mass are to be sung (Alleluia, Holy-Holy, Memorial Acclamation, The Great Amen and the Lamb of God).

~Taped or CD music is allowed during the liturgy but discouraged. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the couple to ask someone to "orchestrate" the music. We ask that this person be responsible and detail oriented. The commercial sound system at St. Patrick's is very expensive and haphazard use will not be tolerated!

~The same principles that apply to music during the service, apply to the processional and recessional. All music selections must be finalized and approved by the parish office 15 days before the wedding.

Visiting Clergy

The priests of St. Patrick's Church ordinarily preside at all weddings here. If you desire to invite a Catholic priest or deacon to preside at your wedding, you must first submit a written request to the pastor of St. Patrick's, giving the name, title, and address of the cleric you want to invite. Only the pastor of St. Patrick's can grant permission (canonical delegation) for a visiting cleric to preside at a wedding in this parish.

If you desire to invite a non-Catholic clergyman to participate in the wedding liturgy, you must first submit a written request to the pastor of St. Patrick's giving the name, title, and address of the clergyman you want to invite. Non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic wedding by their presence in the sanctuary, but they cannot preside at the liturgy. This means, among other things, that the Catholic priest or deacon must receive the wedding vows and impart the nuptial blessing.

Programs (Worship Aid)

Before you print your wedding program, the final draft must be reviewed and approved by the priest. St. Patrick's has several samples of wedding programs, and we recommend that you review these before designing your program. Please have the final draft ready for review and approval not less than two weeks prior to the wedding. (Please see back of book for suggestions)

Lectors

At the wedding, the texts of Sacred Scripture must be proclaimed from the ambo, and the person who performs this function is called a lector. Most couples choose one or two persons from among their families and friends to perform this duty. Lectors do not have to be Catholic. Those whom you select should be familiar with the Word of God, good public speakers and must be at the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the church.

Eucharistic Ministers

If you choose to have a wedding mass, it is the couple's responsibility to obtain Eucharistic Ministers. Most couples choose one or two persons from among their families and friends to perform this duty. Those whom you select should be an active Catholic in good standing with the Church and must be at the rehearsal to know responsibilities.

Attendants in the Wedding

The bride and groom are permitted up to seven attendants each, although the front of the church is strained to accommodate more than six each, and a smaller number is preferable. The limit of each includes the bride's maids and maid of honor, the best man and groomsmen, flower girls, and ring bearers, and all honor attendants.

Bride's Room

There is a Bride's Room inside St. Patrick's Church. It is located in the Spiritual Life Center Rooms Martha and Mary. The bride and her attendants may use this room to dress. To avoid lost and stolen items, the bride is urged to provide shopping bags for each attendant, and all personal belongings (shoes, clothes, makeup, etc.) should be removed before the wedding. St. Patrick's does not accept responsibility for any items which are lost or stolen. You may bring the dress to the rehearsal and leave it in the room overnight.

Food, Smoking, and Alcohol

No food or drink is permitted in the church proper. You may have food and non-alcoholic drinks in the Parish Hall during your photos. Please have someone responsible to clean up the Bride's Room and Parish Hall after your event. Trash bins are located outside of the parish kitchen to the south. Smoking is prohibited on the campus of St. Patrick's at all times.

The wedding party is expected to refrain from using any alcoholic beverages before both the rehearsal and the wedding. The priest celebrating the wedding reserves the right to remove from the church anyone under the influence of alcohol. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to preserve the sacred character of this event by not abusing alcohol.

The Rehearsal

Rehearsals are scheduled for the evening before between 5:00 through 7:30 p.m., and the wedding party should arrive at least thirty (30) minutes before the scheduled time so that the actual rehearsal can begin promptly. The rehearsal will last about forty-five minutes.

The priest who will celebrate the wedding and the wedding directors are in charge of the rehearsal. The bride and groom must both be present and participate in the rehearsal; no proxies or stand-ins are allowed.

The Marriage License

The bride and groom should bring the State of Nebraska Marriage License to the rehearsal. The license can be obtained from the county clerk. Please contact them for details. No wedding is permitted at St. Patrick's without this document; please be sure to bring this license to the rehearsal. The completed license will be mailed via United States Postal Service, by the celebrating priest or deacon, to the proper county / state authorities. A keepsake license will be left with the bride and groom.

Photographs

Wedding Photographs should be taken before the ceremony. The photographer should finish thirty minutes before the ceremony begins. Photos may be taken during the service and videotaping is permitted. Please remember the following:

The photographer or videographer is the recorder of the wedding, not part of the ceremony.

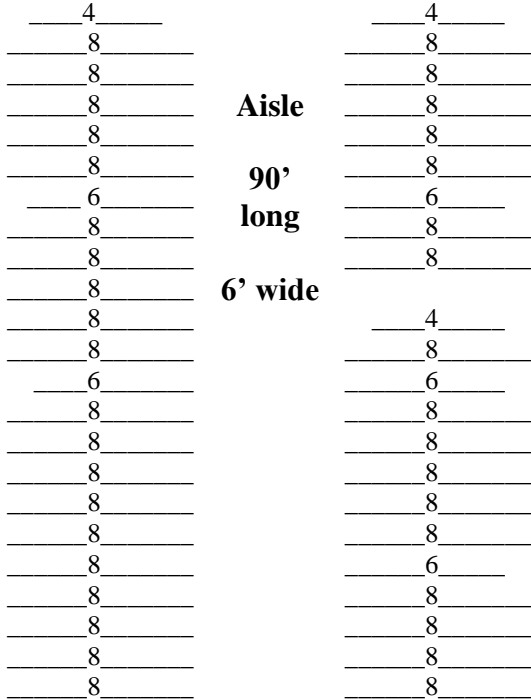
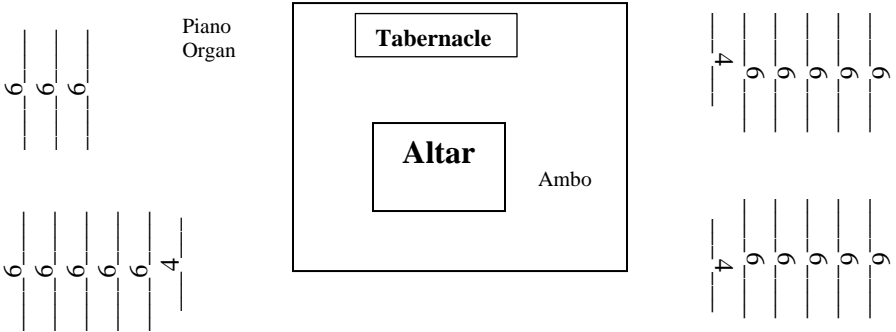
Movement by the photographer or videographer should not distract from the ceremony.

All camera equipment, film packing, etc. are to be removed as soon as the ceremony is over.

Should pictures be desired as a group before the ceremony, we ask out of respect of the Blessed Sacrament that **NO** pictures be taken in front of the Blessed Sacrament Altar (where the Tabernacle is located).

Videotaping may be done from the choir loft or from the far sides of the church, far enough back so as not to be a disturbance to the service itself.

St. Patrick's Church Map



The number represents the number of adults who could comfortably be seated in the pews.

Example of Wedding Program Without Mass

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

INTRODUCTORY RITE

PROCESSIONAL *Trumpet Voluntary* * Jeremiah Clarke

GREETING AND OPENING PRAYER

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Genesis 1:26-28; 31a

PSALM RESPONSE (*refrain sung by all*) Psalm 104 * Ronald Arnatt
Lord, send out your spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

SECOND READING Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (*refrain sung by all*) *Alleluia* * Melchior Vulpus

GOSPEL Matthew 5:13-16

HOMILY

RITE OF MARRIAGE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS AND RINGS

LIGHTING OF UNITY CANDLE (Optional)

~ *Unity Candle Song* * Raymond Haan

PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL RESPONSE: **Lord, hear our prayer**

LORD'S PRAYER (*recited by all*)

MEDITATION *Ave Maria* * Franz Schubert

FINAL BLESSING

RECESSIONAL *Symphony No. 5: Toccata* * Charles-Marie Widor

Example of Wedding Program Within Mass

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE *Music for Trumpet and Organ*

SEATING OF MOTHERS *Canon * Johann Pachelbel*

INTRODUCTORY RITE

PROCESSIONAL *Trumpet Voluntary * Jeremiah Clarke*

GREETING

GLORIA

OPENING PRAYER

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING *Ruth 1:16-17*

PSALM RESPONSE *(repeat refrain after cantor)* Psalm 145 Marty Haugen

REFRAIN: **The Lord is compassionate to all his creatures.**

SECOND READING *1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:8a*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(repeat after cantor)* Alleluia Melchior Vulpius

GOSPEL *Matthew 5:1-12a*

HOMILY

RITE OF MARRIAGE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS AND RINGS

LIGHTING OF UNITY CANDLE (Optional)

*~ Wedding Song * Heinrich Schutz*

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL **RESPONSE: Lord hear our prayer**

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PREPARATION OF GIFTS *Ecossaise * Jeremiah Clarke*

Example of Wedding Program Within Mass (cont.)

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

SANCTUS (*sung by all*)

A People's Mass * Jan Vermulst

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION (*sung by all*)

Danish

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

AMEN (*sung by all*)

Danish

LORDS PRAYER (*recited by all*)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

NUPTIAL BLESSING

AGNUS DEI (*sung by all*)

Holy Cross Mass * David Clark Isele

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.**

COMMUNION

Jesu. Joy of Man's Desiring * Johann Sebastian Bach

CONCLUDING RITE

FINAL BLESSING

RECESSIONAL

Water Music:

Congratulations! We rejoice with you on your upcoming marriage. This is a significant step in your life's journey, a step that is best taken with careful preparation and open heart.

As Catholics, we believe marriage is authored by God himself. Unlike institutions that are created by people, marriage is designed by God to "establish an intimate community of life and love" (Gaudium et Spes: 48:1). Because you are seeking to marry in the Catholic Church, we invite you to enter more fully into this process of marriage preparation, which incorporates the wisdom of Christian teaching and the reality of God's grace.

On the day you exchange wedding vows, the priest or deacon will invite you to enter into the sacrament, which will help you to "assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity." In other words, the Sacrament of Marriage will provide graces needed for you and your future spouse to live in a relationship made whole by lasting faithfulness to each other.