

## **CELEBRATING YOUR WEDDING**

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! This significant and holy event marks the beginning of a life-long commitment. It is an event that will live on long after the ceremony is over. Your special day will be filled with many dreams, a day when your family and friends will gather to share a special moment in your lives.

## **YOUR MARRIAGE IS A SACRAMENT**

Since you are asking to have your special day celebrated within the Catholic Church, it is important to keep in mind the sacramental aspect of this day. The Church will bless and protect your gift of marriage, and so sees your wedding as a holy *and* social event. For this reason, we ask that during your preparation period you both remain honest and open to the working of God's spirit in your lives.

In asking to have your wedding celebrated in the Catholic Church, **it is important that Catholic parties attend Mass and receive Eucharist regularly. Failure in this area is taken seriously and may cause your wedding to be delayed or canceled in this parish.** If an engaged couple cannot in conscience accept the responsibilities of membership in the Catholic Church, there is serious question as to whether or not they are called to the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church. Your wedding day and marriage is not an event of magic but rather an honest proclamation of your faith lives. What you are about to proclaim publicly within the Church needs to be lived honestly before and after your wedding ceremony.

A marriage does not become holy merely because it is celebrated in a church. For this reason, it is better for couples who have little or no attachment to or identification with the Catholic Church to develop this before approaching marriage.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1622): Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the liturgical celebration of marriage . . . must be, per se, valid, worthy and fruitful. It is therefore appropriate for the bride and groom to prepare themselves for the celebration of their marriage by receiving the sacrament of penance.

With this in mind, we now present to you our parish policy and guidelines for weddings at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Del City, Oklahoma.

## CONVALIDATION

In the case of a couple who has married contrary to the laws of the Church, convalidation is permitted after the couples have completed the preparational steps required. It is the actual exchange of consent that forms a marriage; not simply the renewal of the consent previously exchanged in another setting.

A convalidation is not simply a “blessing” of an individual union. It is a commitment and an exchange of vows in the sight of the Christian community. It calls for a full and complete preparation, but consideration is given to the different needs of a couple in this circumstance.

The care given a couple who are seeking to have their marriage convalidated, and who are canonically free to marry in the Church, will emphasize an appreciation of the new dimensions, in most cases sacramental dimensions, which their relationship will be assuming.

The wedding ceremony should be private and not be an elaborate affair.

## COUPLES NOW LIVING TOGETHER

You are aware the Catholic Church does not approve of couples living together before marriage, but instead encourages couples to live up to Catholic Christian standards before their wedding. We are happy to witness your marriage so that your living arrangements can be brought into harmony with God’s law. If the couple agrees to live apart until the wedding, the same arrangements can be made as for a couple not living together. If this is not possible, the same restrictions apply as if the wedding were in Advent or Lent (page 3).

## DATE FOR YOUR WEDDING

Your wedding date request must be made at least six months prior to the actual date of the wedding. This will allow each couple to work within the parish program.

On your initial visit with the priest/deacon, your wedding date can be placed on the parish calendar. **Even though your date is in our calendar, please know that no wedding can take place until all required preparations have been completed. There is no exception to this guideline.** (The date may *not* be reserved until all marriage impediments are resolved).

Should there be any change of your wedding date, wedding time, or should you cancel your wedding, please notify your priest/deacon as soon as possible. This is important since it may affect other couples who are preparing for their wedding day.

## **WEDDINGS DURING ADVENT OR LENT**

Because these are seasons of the Church year set aside for penitence and spiritual renewal, wedding celebrations are discouraged during these times. However, a wedding is allowed if it is in keeping with the character of the season. Church laws require that it be a simple wedding. Large wedding parties with several attendants, flower girl or ring bearer are not allowed. The number of attendants is restricted to a best man and a maid or matron of honor. There are to be no floral decorations or candelabra. Flowers may be carried and simple pew bows used.

## **PLACE FOR YOUR WEDDING**

The church is the presumed place for Catholic weddings. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has a policy that all Catholic weddings are celebrated within a Catholic church. No Catholic wedding may take place in a private garden, boat or wedding chapel.

## **INTERFAITH MARRIAGES**

It is important that marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics require that both parties spend time growing in their understanding and appreciation of each other's faith. Your wedding day should speak of what you both have in common. For this reason, we strongly recommend a wedding ceremony for all interfaith weddings rather than a nuptial Mass. Your priest/deacon will help you with this area.

## **PRE-MARRIAGE CONFERENCES**

It is your responsibility to register and attend these conferences. The priest/deacon will provide conference registration information.

The Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend offers engaged couples a weekend where they can gather together to deepen the sacramental aspect of their relationship. Married couples and a priest present the programs, which begin Friday evening and continue through Saturday evening. It is a good time for each engaged couple to put aside the busy schedules and just spend time with each other and other couples who are preparing for marriage. Each weekend is limited in its number of couples, so we ask that you do not wait until the last minute to make your reservation.

## **PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH THE PRIEST/DEACON**

Along with marriage preparation programs, you are asked to meet with the priest/deacon to cover all areas of your preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, whether you celebrate your wedding in a nuptial Mass or a wedding ceremony. At the back of this wedding booklet, the required documents are listed. All items need to be completed before your wedding can take place.

### **WEDDING REHEARSALS**

Out of courtesy and respect for all involved, it is very important that you and your wedding party are on time for rehearsal. We ask that no one bring food or drink into the church for the rehearsal or the wedding.

### **SCHEDULED TIMES FOR WEDDINGS**

The date and time for the wedding will be arranged with the priest /deacon.

Because of Masses, Baptisms and Confessions, it is important that the rehearsal and the wedding begin on time. If the wedding party is not on time, postponement of the wedding by the priest/deacon is possible.

### **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Each couple is responsible for getting their marriage license. You must bring your marriage license to the wedding rehearsal. A marriage certificate will be given to you immediately after the ceremony. Our parish secretary will send the marriage license to the district court clerk's office.

### **BANNS**

Your names will be published in the St. Paul the Apostle Church bulletin a few weeks before the marriage date unless you request the banns *not* be published.

### **MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING**

A Church wedding is a religious ceremony; therefore, the music you choose for your wedding should be appropriate for a religious ceremony. Each couple is expected to share with the priest/deacon all music involved with their wedding and comply with our parish guidelines.

Each couple is responsible for arranging music and musicians for their wedding ceremony. Our parish musicians are open to assisting couples in arranging for music.

Couples are responsible for finding out the appropriate fee for their musicians. Fees for musicians should be made payable in the name of the musician chosen for your wedding and paid in advance.

## **WEDDING DONATION**

Wedding donation for parishioners registered for at least one year: \$150

Wedding donation for non-parishioners: \$300

These fees help with the church expenses incurred with your wedding and include the stipend to the priest/deacon for his services. We ask that this fee be made payable to St. Paul the Apostle Church and paid in full, or at least one-half of the amount, at the time the date is set with the priest/deacon. If the donation is not paid in full within three weeks after the priest/deacon confirms the date, the date will be canceled and made available to someone else. If there is a cancellation the donation is non-refundable.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Only one photographer and one video recorder are allowed in the sanctuary area (around the altar). Inform the photographer that he or she should see the priest/deacon before setting up the equipment. No posed pictures are allowed during the ceremony.

## **CHURCH ENVIRONMENT AND FLOWERS**

Our church environment is based upon the liturgical season and will not be changed for wedding ceremonies. Flowers purchased by the couples, not the church, may be used but should not obstruct the movement of your wedding ceremony. The priest/deacon should be consulted before the purchase of flowers, candles or other decoration to be used in the church. Should you wish to donate any floral arrangement to the church, know that it will be appreciated.

The use of any candleholders or floral arrangements in the main aisle or on pews needs to be done without any bare metal, wire or tape items. These tend to ruin the wood on our pews.

PLEASE NOTE THE EXCEPTIONS IF THE WEDDING IS DURING THE SEASON OF ADVENT OR LENT.

## **DRESSING ROOMS**

Because of limited space, the church building does not provide rooms for the wedding party to dress before the ceremony. If the use of such a room is necessary, please contact the secretary in the parish office to reserve a room in another building.

## **RICE, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI, FLOWER PETALS**

Rice, birdseed, confetti or flower petals, etc., may not be used at our parish – inside or outside of the church – out of respect for our environment, safety and maintenance. These items pose a hazard to people walking into our church and are difficult to clean up. Please inform your family and wedding guests of this parish policy.

## **SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND FOOD IN CHURCH AREAS**

Church etiquette requests that no smoking be permitted within any room in our church facility. As a parish policy, we ask that no one bring food, gum or alcoholic drink to the wedding rehearsal or wedding ceremony in the church.

## **WEDDING CLEAN UP**

Please remember to assign someone the duty of cleaning up after your wedding. Items such as flower boxes, clothing, candles, bows, aisle runners, hangers, programs etc., need to be picked up immediately following your ceremony. This is important if you are re-using flowers or candles at your reception. Our parish thanks you for your attention in seeing that the church is "picked-up" after the wedding.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

<b>BRIDE</b>		<b>GROOM</b>
	<b>BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE</b>	
	<b>FIRST COMMUNION CERTIFICATE</b>	
	<b>FREEDOM TO MARRY TESTIMONY</b>	
	<b>DISPENSATION</b>	
	<b>COPY OF ANNULMENT</b>	
	<b>OTHER</b>	

**Wedding Date and Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rehearsal Date and Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment of Wedding Donation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** Marriage license must be given to the priest/deacon.