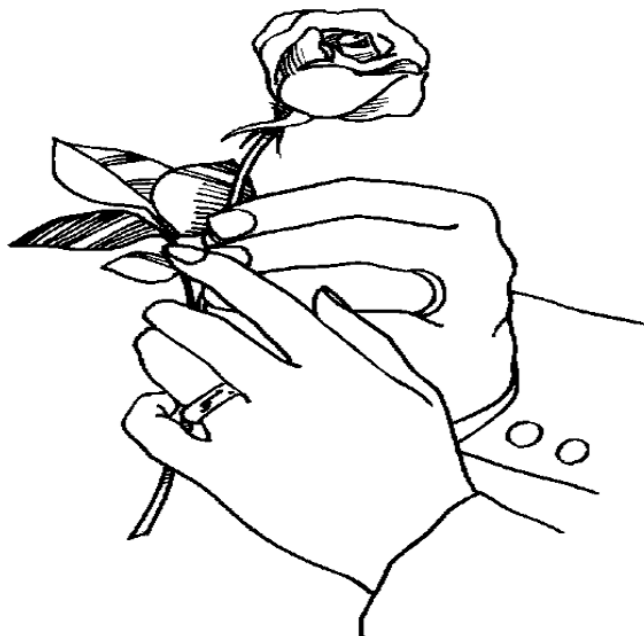


Wedding Guide



St. Patrick Parish
328 E Benton St.
O'Neill NE

S T . P A T R I C K ' S C A T H O L I C C H U R C H



17 March 2007

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Everyone has the right to marry once, well.” These were the very simple and direct words of a young man preparing for marriage. He was asked about the importance of preparation for marriage, and his words succinctly emphasize both the goal and the process. We hope that you may find some assurance and clarity with this introductory letter.

As Americans we love to speak of our rights. We do not like our desires frustrated, nor our hopes dashed, so we often speak of rights to assure that our desires are met and our dreams come true. Your desires and dreams are no accident. Your meeting and dating is no coincidence. In approaching the Church for marriage, you are implicitly saying that God has brought you together. God has made your hearts burn with love. Your right to marry is only possible because God has made you rightly to give and receive love. So the question that guides our prayer and discussion: “How has God called you to love and honor each other all the days of your life?”

While our hearts can soar with loving desires, we also know that we are weak. Many couples approach marriage with the intention of loving each other as well as humanly possible. However, when bad times overshadow the good or when sickness seems threaten all health, then our human frailty will need divine assistance. If God has called you to marriage, then God will keep the promise made at every wedding: “What God has joined, men must not divide.” Once joined in marriage, your bond will be your constant care and the way of your sanctification.

For in the end, your marriage is meant to bring you into a life of holiness. A marriage in the Catholic Church will distinguish you from many who marry. Not everyone knows how or does not truly desire to “marry well.” In a world full of easy divorce and broken families, many can be cynical about preparing or unsure of its worth. Through this process of marriage preparation, we believe that the Church offers some of the best possible opportunities to strengthen your lifelong commitment. The wedding will take place in a day, but the marriage is a lifetime. We welcome you to this time of preparation. May God bless our desire to love as well as Jesus Christ has made possible. Be assured of our prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Francis Nigli, Pastor

Marriage Preparation

As a couple approach the sacrament of marriage, the Church has several expectations of the couple. Among these is the fact that the couple must be practicing their faith, i.e., attending Mass every Sunday. Couples living together are acting contrary to the express teaching of Jesus Christ and the Church. Church attendance and a serious progress in the Christian life are necessary for a healthy, sacramental marriage.

The Archdiocese of Omaha requires a six-month period of preparation and instruction before marriage. St. Patrick's has a four-level approach to the preparation.

1. Attend the Archdiocesan Pre-Session. Here you will receive an overview of marriage procedures of the Archdiocese, take the Foccus, and attend a short session on developing communication skills.
2. A priest/deacon will call you when he receives the Foccus. This is a tool that helps the couple recognize areas where further communication is needed in their relationship.
3. After Foccus, a second level of preparation is recommended for every couple. There are various options (explained more fully at the Pre-session). These are as follows: "Engaged Encounter," When Families Marry session; Sponsor Couple Program; Pre-Cana Evenings; Remarriage Program. Dates for these sessions may be obtained by calling the Family Life Office, 551-9003. See also the brochures in the Marriage: A Journey for Life Packet.
4. The couple will be required to attend an introductory session on Natural Family Planning, a safe, effective means of birth control sanctioned by the Catholic Church. This session will be presented every first Sunday of the month at 1:00pm. Call the Parish Center at (402)336-1602 for more information or to sign up, reservations are required.

Documents

Each party is to acquire an official baptismal certificate from the church in which they were baptized the certificate should be issued within six months of the marriage. Photocopies are not acceptable.

Civil Requirements

All weddings planned for St. Patrick's require a valid Nebraska Marriage License. The License is obtained from any County Court House. It must be presented to the priest/deacon BEFORE the Wedding. The priest/deacon, by law, cannot witness the wedding in the absence of a valid Nebraska Marriage License.

Witnesses (Maid/Matron of Honor, Best Man, Attendants)

While we prefer that your witnesses be Catholic it is still permissible for one or both witnesses to the marriage may be non-Catholic.

Prayers and Readings for the Wedding

Couples select scripture readings from among those listed in the book Marriage: A Journey for Life. The psalm may be sung. Prayers and blessings are selected from the wedding ritual. Permission for prayers or readings other than those listed must be obtained from the priest/deacon.

Servers are to be selected by the couple, if needed the parish can provide a list of servers that you can choose from. Family or friends who have been trained to minister as altar servers may serve. Tell the priest/deacon at one of your early preparation sessions so that your selection may be approved.

Musicians are also pastoral ministers. Musicians act as ministers of prayer as well as of song. If you have ideas please contact them so that they have enough notice so that may be available. Also if you need a list of musicians who minister please call the Parish Center, 336-1602, and we will provide some names to choose from.

Stipends

It works well for your Best Man or host couple to give out the stipends BEFORE the wedding begins.

Recommended stipends for the use of the church building and the services given by the ministers are as follows:

stipend to the priest/deacon (celebrant)	\$50 –100
Parish Altar Servers	\$10.00 each
Sacristan (only needed with a mass)	\$30.00
Musicians	as per your agreement with the individual musicians
Church usage	\$50.00
Damage Deposit (refundable)	\$50.00

If there are any other questions please feel free to call the Parish Center, 336-1602.

Candelabra may be used in the sanctuary ONLY when the following conditions are followed:

- ❖ Metal cylinder candles or candles with votive cups are to be used. Candles must be white. A Plastic drop cloth 3 foot square is placed under each candle stand
- ❖ Candelabra are available from the parish for free. However, if you rent a set please remove them immediately after the wedding. They may not be left in the church, even overnight. They are to be removed by 4:00 PM on Saturdays. The parish will not store them nor is the parish responsible for any damage to rented equipment.
- ❖ Electric candles are not allowed. No Candles are to be attached to the pews along the aisle.

Altar Furnishings (altar, ambo, presidential chair) cannot be moved.

No one is to touch, lean on, or place any objects on the sanctuary furniture.

Church Environment

We have worked to make a suitable environment for the current Church Liturgical Season. Please seek permission from the priest for any adjustments to the existing environment.

NO rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals (silk or fresh) may be thrown inside or outside of the building. However, you may use bubbles, and only bubbles, outside of the Church.

CLEAN UP. Appoint a person to be in charge of clean up. Remove all programs, pieces of dropped flowers or leaves, pew bows, candelabra, or anything else that distracts from the worship environment necessary for the next Mass.

Decorating

Decorating and flowers need to be scheduled so they will not conflict with other parish functions.

The Eucharistic Reservation Chapel is for devotional prayer it is not to be used for pictures, for waiting before the ceremony begins, or for any purpose other than prayer and devotion.

Flowers carried to Mary's Shrine. This option takes place after communion. Both husband and wife walk to the shrine to place the flowers. You provide your own vase or container if you want one.

UNITY CANDLE. This is an option, however the symbolism that the lighting of the Unity Candle denotes is already present in the exchanging of the rings. For this reason we prefer that no Unity Candle is present at the Liturgical Celebration. If you would like to still have the Unity Candle ceremony we recommend that you reserve it for a later time, perhaps at the reception.

Music for the Rite of Marriage

Music is a major element for the joyous celebration of the sacrament of marriage. The Roman Catholic Liturgy is a sung liturgy. It is expected that the service music (psalm, gospel acclamation, eucharistic acclamations) will be given priority. Your guests are more than spectators; they are participants in prayer and song.

Arrange for musicians well ahead of time, three months at the minimum. You will meet with the musicians to select appropriate music, some suggestions are listed in the attached flyer. The music choices need to be approved by the priest/deacon. Music choices must be suitable to worship. The service music must be sung. Music from movies and contemporary popular songs are not suitable to a religious ceremony.

Appropriate contemporary Christian hymns may be used with permission. However, contemporary pop culture, movie themes, love songs, ...ect are not suitable for a religious ceremony. Notable examples are: The Wagner "Bridal Chorus" ("Here comes the Bride") and the Mendelssohn "Wedding March" ("Newlywed Game" theme song) are NOT permitted.

Wedding Environment

Food and Drink

DO NOT BRING ANY FOOD OR DRINK into Church. This includes the Worship Space, the Eucharistic Chapel and the Commons Areas. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in or around the church premises, at rehearsals, and pre-ceremony times. Any person who has been drinking alcoholic beverages will not be allowed to be a part of the wedding ceremony.

Etiquette in the Church during rehearsal, pictures, and following the ceremony.

This gathering place of the People of God is a house of prayer. Appropriate clothing should be worn. Children must not be running around; they must always be supervised. Conversation should be kept to a minimum, avoiding loud outbursts. The church hold the Blessed Sacrament in reserve, therefore, all should be reverent at all times.

Dressing Room

We no longer use the Aide Room located in St. Mary's Grade School for the bride and her attendants to dress. The room opposite of the sacristy in the church now serves that purpose. Please remember to remove all boxes, hangers, and personal belongings after the wedding and leave the room in a tidy condition.

Aisle Runners

Aisle Runners are not allowed. They are unnecessary with the carpeted aisle and are dangerous and impractical.

Aisle bows or flowers on pew

Bows and flowers are allowed on a pew if and only if they are attached to the pews with plastic bow-hooks or ribbons. These are available from florists or hobby/craft stores. Absolutely NO tape, tacky substance or other adhesive can be used. Decorations will be removed if they are improperly attached.

Be sure the musicians know the date and time of the rehearsal and the wedding. Stipends are arranged with each musician. These people are willing use their talents to make the wedding something special, so please make them feel appreciated.

Marriage: A Journey for Life includes music suggestions and ceremony planning guidelines. The supplement Music Resources for the Wedding Liturgy has additional suggestions.

Liturgical Ministries

Non-Catholics may not be altar servers, lectors (readers) or Ministers of the Eucharist.

Family members or friends who have been ordained as a Deacon or persons mandated in the Archdiocese of Omaha as a Minister of the Eucharist, may request permission from the priest/deacon for them to serve at the wedding liturgy.

A Lector (reader) must be a Catholic and must have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Friends or family members who have served in the capacity of Lector may proclaim the readings at the wedding liturgy. They must attend the rehearsal. The parish has lectors who are willing to minister at wedding liturgies. Contact the Parish Liturgy office at 336-1602 for names of parish lectors.

A Sacristan may be assigned to assist with the preparation and clean up the parish items needed to celebrate the liturgy, *if you wish*. This is not mandatory, however if you would like to have one please call the Parish Center or confer with the priest/deacon. They can answer any questions a guest priest/deacon may have; they mark the liturgical books and prepare the communion materials. Their assistance is valuable to celebrating mass smoothly and properly.