

***GUIDELINES FOR  
MARRIAGE***

***ST. DOMINIC  
CHURCH  
BREESE, ILLINOIS***

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# St. Dominic Catholic Church

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Dear Friends,

**Congratulations** on your approaching marriage! We at St. Dominic join you in praying to God that you will have a happy and blessed marriage. We are delighted to be part of your wedding day.

Because it is a sacred commitment, marriage deserves the most careful attention and preparation. You, the bride and groom, have a very active role in the preparation of your wedding liturgy. Since communication is important to a healthy marriage, preparing your wedding liturgy will give you an opportunity to practice that skill and be open and sensitive to each other's tastes. Just as careful attention and planning are given to the rehearsal dinner, reception, etc. this same attention should be given to preparing the wedding liturgy. When the basic elements have been prepared well ahead of time, everyone will be less anxious and free to celebrate.

We give you the following guidelines regarding weddings at St. Dominic with the hope that your preparation for married life will be a happy and memorable experience. Be assured we will help in every way possible.

May God bless you both,

Father Pat Peter  
Pastor

## **CHAPTER II: THE TRADITION OF MARRIAGE**

Marriage in the Catholic Church has evolved over two thousand years. For one thousand years, there was no specifically Christian rite of marriage. Marriage was understood primarily as a contract between two families, usually arranged by the groom and the bride's father.

In the fourth century, some churches developed marriage blessings for Christian couples. After the marriage ceremony, the couple would visit the priest and ask for his blessing on their marriage. Even though eventually most marriage ceremonies came to be celebrated in the presence of the priest and in the church building, couples were allowed to exchange their marriage vows in private. Sometimes, however, private marriages were to force the bride into marriage without her consent. At the Council of Trent in 1563, it was passed as church law that Catholics had to marry in the presence of a priest and two or three witnesses. At the same council marriage became a sacrament.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the personal love between a man and woman came to be recognized as the primary motivation for marriage. No longer was it a contractual arrangement between families. The Church and society came to understand the couple as partners: each person possessing talents and rights, yet equally responsible for creating a home and family. To reflect this deeper understanding of marriage, a revised wedding liturgy was issued in 1969, the Rite of Marriage. This serves as the basis for all weddings in the Catholic Church today.

As you can see, your marriage ceremony is the result of many years of tradition. It will be a public commitment which creates an indissoluble union. It will be celebrated in the presence of a priest and two witnesses in the Church of St. Dominic. It is the result of your personal love for each other and commitment to each other. Most of all, you are celebrating a sacrament. When you exchange your vows, you are providing for the parish a visible sign of God's presence and love. You are creating a new family within the community.

## **CHAPTER III: MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM**

### 1. Programs

As part of your preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, you are required to attend a formal marriage preparation program. Two programs are available:

**Pre-Cana Days** are offered by many parishes in the Diocese. These are usually advertised in The Messenger, the diocesan newspaper. The North Central Deanery sponsors several Pre-Cana afternoons throughout the year. These are held at Mater Dei High School. Applications are available in the parish office.

**Engaged Encounter** is an alternative program. This weekend program is extremely beneficial. Again, dates, times and places can be found in The Messenger or by calling King's House Retreat and Renewal Center, 397-0584.

Couples are also required to complete **PREPARE**, a relationship assessment instrument. You are encouraged to complete your preparation early in your engagement. The priest working with you will give you information on these programs.

### 2. Documents Needed

Couples are required to provide a copy of their Baptismal and Confirmation records to the priest who is to preside at your marriage. This should also be accomplished early in your engagement.

## **CHAPTER IV: WEDDING (General Information)**

### **Place of Wedding**

The appropriate place for a Catholic marriage celebration is the parish church of the bride if she is Catholic, or in the parish church of the groom if the bride is not Catholic.

### **Weddings for Parishioners of St. Dominic**

If the bride is a member of St. Dominic parish, we look forward to the celebration of her wedding in our parish church. If the groom is a member of St. Dominic, he is most welcome to celebrate his wedding here, but the bride needs written permission of her pastor to be married at St. Dominic. Early in your marriage preparation this written permission should be submitted to the priest who will be celebrating the wedding

You and your fiancé are encouraged to contact the parish soon after you announce your engagement. The parish must be notified at least four months or more in advance so that all can be readied (C.F. Diocesan Guidelines). Initially, the priest you ask to witness your marriage will meet with you to discuss necessary preparations for marriage. The time and date for your wedding will be arranged with the priest after this preparation.

You are welcome to invite a priest who is a close friend or family member to act as presider at your marriage at St. Dominic. He will be responsible for the preparation meetings with you and the necessary written forms. Please ask him to contact the pastor of St. Dominic for permission to officiate at your wedding and to arrange for the time and date of the ceremony.

You are also welcome to invite priest(s) who are close friends to concelebrate your marriage at St. Dominic. Again, inform the pastor in advance that there will be additional priest(s) attending.

Today, marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics are becoming more and more common. If you wish to involve a minister from a non-Catholic parish in your wedding liturgy, talk to the pastor before you extend the invitation. It is important that you and the priest work out who will say what prayers. The minister may lead some of the prayers or blessings. However, certain parts of the wedding liturgy must be performed by the priest. It is most important that the planning be

accomplished to make the participation of the minister a beautiful sign of your ecumenical marriage.

## **CHAPTER IV: WEDDING (General information, continued):**

### **Time and Date of your Wedding**

Weddings may be scheduled for Friday no later than 7:00 p.m. or Saturday, no later than 2:30 p.m. if the wedding is celebrated within a Mass and no later than 3 p.m. if the wedding is celebrated without a Mass. Weddings will not be scheduled during the Lenten season.

Only you and your fiancé, in consultation with the priest celebrating your wedding, may set or change the date/time of your wedding.

### **Appropriate Dress and Behavior for the Wedding Day**

The Marriage liturgy is the celebration of two people receiving a sacrament in the house of God. This should be remembered when selecting your clothing, most especially the gowns for the bride and bridesmaids. It is hoped that the gowns will be modest and appropriate for a Catholic Church Wedding. If the gowns are strapless, a cape or shawl would be appropriate for the Church Ceremony. The clothing should not be too elaborate.

Likewise, the Marriage liturgy is the event from which the remainder of the wedding day celebration gains purpose. It is not appropriate for ushers, chauffeurs and friends of the couple to not attend the marriage liturgy because they are outside of church decorating the wedding cars.

## **CHAPTER V: MARRIAGE LITURGY – The Mass**

Every couple wants their wedding to be wonderful. This should be accomplished not by adding unique decorations, theatrical dress, assigning a job to every possible family member or an unending parade of attendants. A truly wonderful wedding is accomplished by selecting readings, vows, intercessions and music that reflect how you, as a couple, love God and one another.

### **Liturgical Roles**

You and your fiancé are especially encouraged to participate actively in the planning of the liturgy for your wedding day. The parish will supply you with a booklet, "Together for Life," which will assist you in choosing scripture readings, prayers, etc. for your liturgy. Likewise, you are encouraged to include relatives and friends who are qualified to participate in the liturgy as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, servers, and in the offertory procession.

You are welcome to invite mass servers who are friends or family members to serve at your wedding. Or if you would like St. Dominic parish to provide the servers please inform us well in advance so this can be arranged.

### **Readings**

The readings that are selected should be chosen very carefully. It is your chance to share with each other your true feelings about Christian marriage and Christian life. It is customary to have three readings at the Marriage liturgy; the first reading from the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), the second reading from the writings of the apostles (Epistles), and the third reading from the Gospels.

### **Vows**

The marriage rite is the central part of the wedding liturgy. It is during this ceremony that you give yourselves to each other in marriage freely and unconditionally in the presence of the priest, best man, maid (or matron) of honor and the entire assembly. During the rehearsal the priest will instruct you to stand in such a way that during the exchange of vows you are both facing the assembly with the best man and maid of honor standing to either side of you. The assembly should remain seated so that all might be able to have a clear line of vision. A microphone can be placed in front of you so that all might hear what is being said. Please put energy into proclaiming your vows and into the prayer for the exchanging of the rings.



## **General Intercessions**

You should never forget that you are part of the parish family, the Christian community and the world. Therefore, when the general intercessions are prepared it is important that the intercessions not be restricted to only the needs and intentions of you and your partner, but that they include the needs and intentions of the wider community who celebrates and witnesses your love and your marriage liturgy.

## **Music**

Your musical selections **must** be made in consultation with a parish musician and /or the priest witnessing your marriage. St. Dominic follows the Diocesan guidelines on wedding music which requires that religious music, contemporary or traditional, must be used for the liturgy even if the selections are preludes. A copy of these guidelines will be given to you. Similarly, **all** service music should be sung: Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, Holy Holy Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, and Lamb of God. Soloist(s) should be chosen by their ability to sing what the liturgy requires.

You are encouraged to use one of the parish musicians if they are available: Diane Antonacci, Darlene Menietti, Duane Grapperhaus or Maribeth Detmer. (You can call the parish office for their phone numbers). However, musicians from other parishes may be used, provided they are organists and have a working knowledge of Catholic weddings.

## **Wedding Party**

The bride, groom, maid/matron of honor, and best man will have places in the sanctuary. Other members of the wedding party will have a place in the first pew on either side of the main aisle. It is suggested that the total number in the wedding party not exceed sixteen people, (this includes the bridesmaids, groomsmen, junior bridesmaids, miniature brides, flower girls and ring bearers), because the 1<sup>st</sup> pew will only hold eight (8) people on a side. Chairs **MAY NOT** be set up in the aisles. This creates a hazard in the event of an emergency. If there are more than sixteen people in the wedding party, other seating arrangements will have to be made.

If you choose small children for your wedding party please be sure they are old enough and mature enough to walk down the aisle with

reverence and poise, and not have to be dragged down the aisle screaming and kicking.

### **Wedding Party (Cont'd.)**

St. Dominic does not have facilities for the wedding party to dress at the church. The bride may dress in the Cry Room. However, we ask that all hangers, plastic bags, boxes, dress forms, etc. be removed from the church before the wedding party leaves for the reception. Also, all candles MUST BE extinguished before leaving church.

### **Decorations and Flowers**

Suitable space is available for tasteful flower arrangements. Flowers should be appropriate for the occasion and the church season. Flower arrangements may be placed on either side of the tabernacle on the high altar. Floral arrangements may also be placed on pedestals behind the presider's chair or near the reader's podiums. Flower arrangements are **never** placed on the altar of sacrifice. Flowers **may not** be placed on either end of the altar of sacrifice or where they will hinder the movement of the priest or wedding party. Flowers should enhance an already beautiful space and not overwhelm it.

If the church is already decorated for a particular season (e.g. Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas) please consult the sacristan or pastor before rearranging these decorations.

If candelabras are used, they must be placed such that they **do not** cause a sight obstruction or obstruct the movement of the wedding party in the sanctuary.

You are welcome to have decorations such as an aisle runner, bows, aisle candles, or other items. Cellophane or adhesive tape, nails, pins, screws or tacks may **not** be used to fasten items to the church walls or furniture. All aisle candles **must** have chimneys. Please inform your florist that all decorations, as well as boxes and other wrappings should be removed from church immediately following the ceremony. If you are providing your own flowers, the same holds true -- boxes, wrappings, etc. must be removed immediately after the service.

Also, please arrange for any programs, film wrappers, Kleenex, etc. to be removed from the pews immediately after the service.

For your reference: the church center aisle is 75 feet to the Holy Water Font, and 101 feet to the street doors. There are 20 rows of pews on each side of the main aisle and 14 pews on the outer west side of

church and 15 pews on the outer east side of the church. The church main floor will seat about 400 adults.

### **Unity Candle, Flowers for Virgin Mary**

The unity candle ceremony is not an essential part of the Catholic liturgy. In fact, the giving and receiving of rings is the main symbol of two becoming one. If, however, you wish to have a unity candle, you may. The church only provides the side candles.

Similarly, the offering of flowers to the Blessed Mother is not a required part of the Catholic liturgy. If you have a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary, you are more than welcome to take flowers to her altar during the marriage liturgy or after the rehearsal.

It has recently become a custom for the bride and groom to present flowers to their parents. Although it is a thoughtful gesture, it too is not part of the marriage liturgy. If you still wish to present the flowers to the parents, it is acceptable, and is done at the "Sign of Peace."

We do not encourage couples to simply go through the motions of any of these rituals or ceremonies just because "everyone else does it."

### **Wedding programs**

The program for the wedding liturgy need not be fancy or elaborate. A simple program can be an attractive reminder of your wedding, and provide the texts and directions needed by the assembly. If there is an artist among your relatives or friends, you might ask them to design a cover or do calligraphy.

**Before printing the program, make sure that you finalize the choices of prayers, readings and music with the priest and music minister.**

## **CHAPTER VI: RITE FOR CELEBRATING MARRIAGE**

The Rite of Marriage provides two forms for celebrating marriage in the Roman Catholic Church:

1. The Rite for Celebrating Marriage During Mass is used when two Catholics marry.
2. The Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass is used when a Catholic marries a baptized person from another Christian Church or when a Catholic marries someone who is not a Christian.

Each of the two forms is equally valid in the eyes of the Church; a wedding is not any more or less complete because of the celebration of mass. It is possible to use the rite for marriage within Mass when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, but it is not encouraged since current church regulations prohibit non-Catholics from receiving communion at Mass. This may be a source of disunity at a time when you want to stress unity. The choice of which form you use should be made in consultation with the priest or deacon.

## **CHAPTER VII: PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS**

Photographs may be taken during the ceremony. They are wonderful remembrances of the special day. The photographer should be able to obtain all the pictures you want without becoming a distraction. During the ceremony the photographer/videographer is not allowed in the sanctuary. (The sanctuary is defined as the raised and carpeted area in the front of the church.) Please let all photographers and videographers know they **may not** stand anywhere on the carpeted area to take pictures or record. Movie or video lights may not be used. You may take pictures after the service, but keep in mind certain time constraints. There may be another wedding that day or some other service scheduled. Please have the photographer check with the celebrant. Normal time allotted for photographs after the service is one hour. If pictures are taken before or after the service, please remember to maintain a spirit of reverence and quiet in the church. None of the sanctuary/church furnishings should be moved or used as props for photographs. Nor, should anyone at anytime,

stand on the pews or other furnishings to get a "good shot." Remember, this is not a studio.

## **CHAPTER VIII: REHEARSAL**

Rehearsals are to be arranged with the celebrant, music minister and when the church is available. Reverence and decorum require appropriate dress for the rehearsal as well as the ceremony. Shorts, halter tops, muscle shirts, etc. are not acceptable. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church grounds either at the rehearsal or the wedding. Nor do we approve of wedding parties gathered around the trunks of vehicles drinking. There is, often, plenty of time to "party" after you leave the church. Smoking is appropriate only outside, not in the sacristy or the church building proper. Please keep food and soft drinks outside of church and no chewing gum.

## **CHAPTER IX: RICE THROWING**

For the safety of your guests and our older parishioners, and for the general appearance of the church, rice, bird seed, flower petals, suckers, lollipops and other such substances may not be used. Balloons are permitted.

## **CHAPTER X: APPROPRIATE OFFERING FOR SERVICES**

The parish does not require an offering for the use of the church. However, the expense for heating/cooling and lighting the church for the both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony are great. An offering of \$75 would be greatly appreciated. If both the bride and groom are not from St. Dominic, an offering of \$100 for the use of the church is expected.

According to the guidelines established by the Diocese of Belleville, there is NO stipend for the presiding minister at a wedding. Any fees for the musicians and soloists are your responsibility.

An offering of \$10 for each of the Mass servers from St. Dominic is also appreciated.

### **DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER AT YOUR PARISH:**

**Please note:** After you are married you and your spouse are considered a separate family, a household within a parish. It is your responsibility to

register in the Catholic parish in which you will be residing. Your pastor or the church secretary will be able to help you with this.

## **CHAPTER XI: BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Celebrating Marriage, Paul Covino, Editor, Lawrence Madden, Elaine Randler, John Buscemi

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We Will Celebrate a Church Wedding, George R. Szews

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