

Celebrating Marriage



Wedding Policies and Guidelines

St. Francis de Sales Parish
Holland, Michigan

2020 Edition

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MARRIAGE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Introduction

We have written the following guidelines to inform and assist you in your wedding preparations at St. Francis. Answers to many common questions are gathered here for you. Understanding these policies and guidelines is very important. If, after reading through this booklet, you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed, feel free to contact our parish staff.

Although beginning a marriage is a very special event for an engaged couple, it is also more than the **personal** exchange of vows and rings. Weddings are **public** rituals of the community, celebrated with family, friends and the rich traditions of our faith. By choosing to be married in the Catholic Church you are seeking a particular celebration in a particular spirit. Weddings will be placed on the public parish calendar on our website.

Preparation

The Catholic Church takes marriage very seriously. Requirements for your marriage preparation are not arbitrary, but come from the universal Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Province of Michigan, the State of Michigan, and our local church in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. A couple is expected to demonstrate evidence of our Catholic Christian faith being present and practiced in their lives and must show a willingness to take the time and make the necessary effort for proper religious preparation for the reception of the sacrament.

There are many dimensions to preparing for this sacrament. Spiritual preparation for the sacrament of Christian Matrimony demands more time, thought, prayer and discussion than the material preparations for the wedding day itself. While these material things must be arranged, they have no effect on the outcome of the marriage. They are merely incidental to it.

The wedding day is just one day; the *marriage* is the true focus of these preparations. As part of your preparations for the marriage, we cannot encourage you enough to pray together regularly. Collaborate in selecting the scripture readings and other elements of the wedding liturgy. Working together to prepare the “event” will support working together on the marriage itself.

Marriage Preparation Period

The Catholic Province of Michigan requires a minimum of six months preparation time for all marriages. (We recommend one year or more.) At St. Francis, this preparation includes:

1. A pre-marital questionnaire, filled out at your initial meeting with the marriage prep coordinator.
2. Fulfillment of all other preparation responsibilities, as outlined in this booklet.

Age Requirements

If one or both persons are under the age of 18, or if there is a pregnancy involved, a longer and more careful assessment will be made, which will minimally include professional counseling and pastoral judgment. This may lengthen the necessary preparation period.

Inter-Denominational and Inter-Faith Marriages

The marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic is permitted if certain requirements are fulfilled and proper permission is obtained from the Church. When these weddings are celebrated at St. Francis, the Rite of Marriage is celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word, and not within Mass. Proper dispensation may need to be obtained from the Bishop. The ceremony may take place in the church of the non-Catholic party.

Dates and Times

Reserving the Church

To reserve a wedding date at St. Francis: Contact the parish office as soon as possible once you know you want to be married at St. Francis. While there is a minimum of six months preparation time for all marriages, we strongly advise couples to contact the parish **one year or more** before the proposed wedding date. The following details must fall into place before the proposed date will be scheduled on the parish calendar:

- ❑ Catholic *and* non-Catholic people who have been through any previous marriage ceremony should consult with the Catholic pastor and parish staff to see what special documentation will be necessary in their specific cases to ensure that they are free to marry. Contact the parish at least one year in advance of the tentative wedding date. **Dates cannot be held for couples waiting for a declaration of nullity from the Tribunal confirming their freedom to marry.** The date should be set after the declaration is obtained; a process that commonly takes 12 months, sometimes more.
- ❑ Deposit of \$100 paid (MUST be paid before the date is reserved).
- ❑ The final page of this document is to be signed and delivered to the parish to certify that you have read and agree to the terms of our wedding policy.

Please wait until confirming your wedding liturgy date at St. Francis before scheduling any other wedding facilities or services.

The Time of Year

The liturgical seasons of Lent and Advent are not well suited for weddings. In Lent, neither flowers nor instrumental music are to be used in the church. In Advent, restraints are placed on music and decorations that may not match your expectations. Weddings are strongly discouraged during these seasons for these reasons. Please be aware that there are weekends of the year for which no weddings will be scheduled.

Confirming the Time for the Wedding Liturgy

Weddings at St. Francis commonly take place on **Saturday Mornings** at 11:00 AM and **Saturday Afternoons** at 2:00 PM. The church is opened at 9:30 AM for an 11:00 AM ceremony, or 12:30 for a 2:00 PM ceremony. After the wedding liturgy, the church must be clean and empty no later than 12:30 PM for an 11:00 AM ceremony, OR 3:30 for a 2:00 PM ceremony. **Friday evening** weddings are also possible. The building would be open 1½ hours before the scheduled wedding time. Times can be negotiated with the parish office. It is also possible, and recommended that you examine the possibility of celebrating the sacrament of marriage at: a.) **A regularly parish Saturday (Vigil) Mass**, b.) A regular parish **Sunday Mass**, or c.) A wedding liturgy **shared with another couple**. These options place some restrictions on the wedding liturgy and should be chosen with care – if this is something you are interested in, please contact the Director of Music and Liturgy as soon as possible to discuss feasibility.

Please inform your florist and photographer of these times and plan deliveries and photography times accordingly. Only a member of St. Francis pastoral staff may open the church building for photographer, florist and/or wedding party.

Choosing the Time for the Rehearsal

Rehearsals for Saturday weddings take place most commonly on Friday evening at 6:00 PM. For a Friday night wedding, the rehearsal time would need to be arranged with the office because of the various events happening at the parish.

Wedding Fees

To help defray costs associated with weddings, our parish has set fee levels for members and non-members. Financial support of your parish, within one's means is a sign of participation in the work of the church. Couples are encouraged to reflect on the concept of Stewardship, where we return to God a portion of what has been given to us. We believe that tithing (giving of 5% of one's gross income to the church, and 5% to other charities) is a spiritual exercise that strengthens marriages.

If you are currently a registered, tithing parishioner, the cost is \$400, since you are already supporting the church's ministry we only need to cover incurred costs. If you are a registered member of the parish, but are not tithing (contributing weekly), the fee for a chapel wedding is \$550, and a sanctuary wedding is \$700 to cover stipends and the expenses of operating and maintaining the facilities. If you are not currently attending St. Francis, the fee is \$1500. Your deposit is applied to these fees - the remainder is to be paid to the parish office *no later than one month before your wedding*, or your wedding may be cancelled.

There are no fees for the priest in any case as this is part of their priestly ministry, and the parish musicians are included in these fees.

Musician Costs

Parish musicians will be providing the music for your celebration and their fees are included in the fee to the church. If you would like to have a String or Brass Ensemble, choir, or solo instrumentalists those fees will be in addition to those included in the parish fees. Those arrangements will be made when you meet with the Director of Music and Liturgy.

Fee Overview

The fees below are all inclusive – including staff musician's fees.

Some definitions:

Registered: You have registered as a member at St. Francis. Membership through your Parents, grandparents or another family member does not qualify.

Tithing: Giving weekly (or monthly if you're on auto-debit) to the general offertory collection. A tithe given by your parents, grandparents or another family member does not qualify.

Registered Parishioner	Tithing	Church or Chapel	\$400
	Non-Tithing	Church	\$700
	Non-Tithing	Chapel (Capacity 50)	\$550
Those not currently attending St. Francis	\$1500		

Parish Membership Requirements

For your wedding to take place at St. Francis de Sales, either the bride or groom must show signs of being a believing, participating, registered member of the St. Francis de Sales community.

- Registration can be made on the parish website, www.stfranchisholland.org, after mass at the Information Desk, or during the week, Monday through Friday at the Parish Office located at 195 W. 13th St.
- You are expected to attend Mass faithfully on the weekends, and offer yourselves for service in the parish community.
- Weddings for persons who are not parishioners of St. Francis will only take place in exceptional circumstances and require permission of St. Francis and the pastor of the bride or groom.

Necessary Documents

Both the bride and the groom must submit newly-issued copies of their baptism certificates if they did not receive those sacraments here at St. Francis.

The couple must procure and submit to the parish office a State of Michigan Marriage License, no later than one week before the wedding. *Please refer to Appendix 1 in the back of this booklet, "Obtaining a State of Michigan Marriage License".*

The Wedding Liturgy

Wedding celebrations within the Catholic Church are much like Sunday Mass. As on Sundays, we gather at church for a wedding to express our love and faith. The communal atmosphere of prayer colors all aspects of the wedding celebration. Because we want those you have invited to experience God's presence in your wedding celebration and your marriage, we offer you some guidelines to help you make choices about ministries, music and the worship environment.

Wedding Rite Within Mass, or Outside of Mass?

Eucharist is a sign and source of unity for Catholics. Therefore, a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic (baptized or non-baptized) is normally celebrated outside the context of Eucharist. A wedding liturgy outside of Mass begins just like Mass, but concludes soon after the Rite of Marriage part of the liturgy. (See the outlines in Appendix 4.)

The People in your Wedding Liturgy

Who does what? This question is a reasonable concern of any engaged couple as they prepare their wedding liturgy. You have probably considered the people you would like to participate in the wedding with you. As you know from Sunday Mass, there are a variety of ministry roles in the liturgy. Since secular wedding planners and etiquette books are not the best guides in this area, this information will help you get an overall picture of the various ministries involved.

The Assembly

Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations belonging to the Church community. At any liturgy, the primary ministry is that of the assembly of people who gather to celebrate. **The goal of your liturgy preparation** is to encourage the full and active participation of all who will gather to celebrate your marriage. When this is overlooked, the majority of the people at a wedding may feel like spectators at a show.

How can we encourage everyone to participate? Many things contribute to people's participation. Hospitality and well-chosen, familiar music for all to sing are some of the ways that help people to feel welcome and a part of the celebration. The way that you and the other people with special roles in the liturgy conduct themselves is also a key influence.

The Couple

In the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, **the two of you are the ministers of the sacrament.** The priest or deacon serves as the Church's official witness, but does not "pronounce you husband and wife." Since a great deal of attention is focused on you during the wedding, you also set the tone for the assembly by your own attitudes and behavior. If, for example, you are at ease before the liturgy and taking the time to greet people as they arrive, people will feel welcome and relaxed. If you enter into the prayers and singing during the liturgy, others in the assembly will be inclined to follow your lead.

The Wedding Party

Two witnesses are required to be present for the legality of the wedding according to the laws of both the State of Michigan and the Catholic Church. They must have attained the age of reason and be competent to attest to the events as they have transpired.

The size and makeup of the wedding party is a personal decision of the couple. It is our experience that smaller wedding parties contribute to a smoother, more elegant, and less confusing celebration.

Hospitality is a wonderful way to show people how much you appreciate their presence at your wedding. It also encourages their active participation in the liturgy. The members of your wedding party (men *and* women) can be of tremendous help here as greeters and ushers. Ask them to cordially greet people arriving at the church, give them the printed program for the wedding, and lead them to a seat near other worshippers. Both the men and women in your wedding party are encouraged to assist with this hospitality.

Designating one side of the church “for the bride” and the other “for the groom” is a counter-productive practice. Beyond seating immediate family together, the assembly should be seated equally and indiscriminately starting on both sides of the main aisle. Designating sides only divides the assembly at a time when unity is a primary symbol.

Children in the Wedding Party?

Traditionally, **caution** is necessary if you are considering the inclusion of children in your wedding party. They should be old enough to rehearse, remember and carry out their roles in a respectful and reverent manner. We strongly discourage the inclusion of children too young to meet these basic expectations. The sometimes seen social roles of “flower girl” or “ring bearer” are not essential roles.

Assistants

You will do well to assign one or more people of hospitality to act as assistants. (The title “master of ceremonies” doesn’t really reflect their role.) By helping with setup and cleanup, gathering people together for the photographer, distributing corsages and boutonnieres and assisting as needed with anything and everything, they perform a valuable service.

Lectors (Readers)

You will want to select readers from among the people who will be at the wedding. One or two people may be asked to proclaim the scriptures. One of these readers might lead the General Intercessions. People who serve as lectors at St. Francis or in their home parishes are good choices because of their familiarity with the role. Otherwise, look for people with good public speaking skills. The reading options are provided in Appendix 6 of this document.

Cross Bearer

This person carries the processional cross in the entrance procession, and final procession of the liturgy. This person should be a Christian, and because of the particular cross that we have at St. Francis, we recommend someone taller than 5’5” for this role. The cross is not heavy, but it does have most of its weight up high, which is why we recommend that.

Weddings Within Mass only:

Gift Bearers

If your wedding will be celebrated within Mass, you will need to assign at least two people to be gift bearers, to bring the bread and the wine for the Eucharist forward to the altar.

The wedding couple may also choose to present gifts for the poor at this time. Friends and relatives are often exceedingly generous at weddings. You may already be overwhelmed by the outpouring of gifts. Some couples choose to express their gratitude to this outpouring of gifts by making a gift of their own to the needy in their area, perhaps in the form of a basket of food items that can be brought up with the bread and wine and placed before the altar.

Special Ministers of the Eucharist

These ministers (two people) assist the priest with the distribution of the Eucharist (in the form of both bread and wine). As with lectors, ministers from St. Francis are the logical first choice since they are familiar with the procedures. Otherwise, think of people who will be at your wedding who are eucharistic ministers in their home parishes. Finally, with the permission of the parish pastor, Catholic members of the assembly who are not commissioned may be asked to serve in this role for this special event.

Wedding Music and Musicians

Music is a key and integral element of any liturgy! The Director of Music and Liturgy is responsible for all music and musician selections for wedding liturgies. The couple will meet with the Director of Music and Liturgy to prepare the music for the wedding. There are a minimum of 5 annual wedding planning workshops, both the bride and groom must choose one to attend, other family members and/or professional wedding planners are suitable for use in planning the reception and other activities, but not in planning the wedding itself. You can register on the parish website (www.stfrancisholland.org/weddings) for this workshop. In this workshop you will have an opportunity to ask questions, explore options and listen to appropriate examples. A well meaning family member may be a fine singer or instrumentalist, but without adequate training in liturgy, and without being familiar with the procedures and policies of St. Francis, it is a better situation to have them play or sing during special times at the reception. St. Francis staff musicians will provide the music for your ceremony, they are well trained professionals and have decades of experience.

Please note that most popular/secular music is not suitable for liturgy, and will not be permitted, before, during or after the ceremony in the church building. Specific songs can be discussed with the Director of Music and Liturgy.

Restrictions and Other Information

The couple to be married is responsible for communicating this information to their family, wedding party photographer, florist and guests.

Use of the Church

The possession or consumption of alcohol is not permitted on the church grounds by anyone before, during or after the rehearsal and wedding liturgy. If alcohol use is found, your wedding may be cancelled. The church building of St. Francis is an entirely no-smoking area. No food or drinks except water are allowed in the sanctuary due to the prevalence of various life threatening food allergies.

We ask that you arrive for the celebration dressed since we do not have changing areas available. There is a small brides room with mirror for last minute adjustments. **Do not leave any valuable items (purses, cameras, etc.) unattended in any room of the church.** There are no dressing facilities available for the men of the wedding party.

Long gone are the days when a groom met his bride for perhaps the first time at the wedding. In our time, to pretend that they are meeting each other for the first time as the bride enters the church contradicts the work that goes into a relationship to prepare for marriage. The common practice of of “hiding” the bride from the groom before the wedding liturgy is not possible given the design of the church and how our liturgy begins and on the practical side, it creates unneeded difficulties on the day of the wedding, for the church was not built with such things in mind.

St. Francis is air conditioned, and the church seats up to about 850 people comfortably, so for most weddings there is plenty of room for guests to be comfortable.

The Wedding Rehearsal

Except for the musicians and the presider, **anyone who has a special role to play in your wedding liturgy must attend the rehearsal.** This includes ushers, groomsmen, bridesmaids, witnesses, readers/lectors, special ministers of the Eucharist, assistants (M/M of ceremony), people bringing up the gifts of bread and wine, altar servers, etc. This will allow them to receive instructions, ask questions and familiarize themselves with what they will be doing at the liturgy. **It is very important** that these people participate in the rehearsal. **All padrinos involved in the ceremony must attend!!**

Photography / Videography

Copies of this page are available from the parish office to share with your photographer/ videographer.

The use of the church for pictures is a privilege, not a right of either the couple or the photographer. All photography or video before, during or after the liturgy must respect the sacredness of the sacrament and of the church. Most simply stated, we expect photographers and videographers to be reverent and discreet.

If you are using the services of a photographer, please inform them that the building is open 1½ hours before the wedding liturgy. Plan accordingly!

As a guest of our parish, do not move any existing flowers, furnishings, candles, plants, seasonal decorations, etc. Photo sessions may be held before the liturgy and immediately after, within the set time limits. We strongly discourage the practice of “hiding” the bride from the groom before the wedding liturgy. Please keep this in mind when scheduling photographs.

During the liturgy, only non-flash photography is permitted. Our worship space predominately relies on natural light so if it is possible if the weather is overcast that the church will not be very brightly lit. Please plan ahead to bring appropriate film, cameras and lenses.

The music area (the area from the small podium on the floor to the priests chair is strictly off limits during the ceremony.

It is necessary to avoid any movement or action during the liturgy that will distract from or interrupt our worship. Photographers and video operators may not operate in or near the sanctuary or sacristies during the liturgy. Please remain behind the assembly and work as discretely as possible. Although there is a small space in front of the far left pews where a camera or video recorder may be discretely placed and operated, no cameras will be allowed between the other front pews and the sanctuary, or near the musicians.

Please be aware that there are times during the liturgy at which the assembly stands. During those times, the lines of sight are most clear from near the Eucharistic Chapel.

Every moment of our worship — word, song and silence — is intentional and significant. This fact is especially important to anyone recording the liturgy with video. If the liturgy will be recorded to video, consider continuous footage of the entire liturgy to honor the spirit of our service.

A sound feed from the house sound system is potentially available, though arrangements will need to be made with the videographer and Director of Music and Liturgy at least one week prior to the wedding. Please note that the microphone settings are set for the needs of the gathered assembly and may or may not be ideal for use as a video sound track.

The photographer may not use the sacristy for any reason.

Decoration Suggestions and Restrictions

Copies of this page are available from the parish office to share with your florist.

Because of the style of our church building, we encourage those responsible for flowers and decorations at weddings to strive for beauty in simple rather than extravagant ways. One should be able to sense something special (and nothing trivial) in everything that is seen, heard, touched, smelled and tasted in our liturgy. When this is overlooked, many people at a wedding liturgy may feel like spectators at a show.

The church environment, especially during the Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter seasons takes priority over any other décor. Since the church is the house of God and the place where the parish faith community worships, special church decorations for weekend worship may not be removed in favor of a wedding. As a guest of our parish, do not move any existing flowers, furnishings, candles, plants, seasonal decorations, etc. The Wedding Co-coordinator may help you with this. No decorations or arrangements may be placed on the main altar.

Aisle runners are a safety hazard and are not allowed.

No decorations may be so large as to obstruct the view of the sanctuary furnishings from anyone in the church, nor should they ever hinder any ritual movement and action. The use of arches, pillars, decorative fencing and/or extra candelabra are not allowed anywhere in the church. Arches may be used in the Gathering Space or outside the church only. Artificial flowers and plants are not allowed, only real flowers and plants are allowed. (As a general rule, *anything* artificial is rather inappropriate for worship.)

Possible decorations (flowers or bows) placed on the pews should be used to offer hospitality to the entire assembly, not to emphasize the aisle or to set apart special seating. If used, flowers or bows used on the center ends of the pews may also be matched by decorations on the outside ends of the pews. There are 12 pews and 1 row of chairs on each side of the main aisle, although placing decorations on each and every pew appears excessive in our space. **No tape, tacks, or wire are to be used.** We will allow you to borrow hangers for these items. Do not block the pews off for any reason.

For reasons of safety and cleanliness, we cannot allow balloon launches, or allow flower petals (fresh or artificial), rice, birdseed or confetti to be thrown or scattered. These all cause special problems best avoided.

If you are using the services of a florist, please inform them that the building is open 1½ hours before the wedding liturgy. Plan deliveries accordingly!

Appendix 1: Obtaining a State of Michigan Marriage License

How To Apply For a Marriage License

Apply in person at:

Ottawa County Clerk
12220 Fillmore Street, Room 130
P.O. Box 296 West Olive, MI 49460
www.ottawacountyclerk.com

- At least one applicant must be a resident of Ottawa County. An Application must be filled out at the County Clerk's Office. Both parties should be present if possible.
- Out of State residents must apply for a license in Ottawa County.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years old. However, a 16 or 17 year old can apply, but they must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian to sign a consent form. The parent or legal guardian must appear in person and provide photo identification.
- Each applicant must have a certified birth certificate and driver's license (original or copy) with their current address. A state ID is also acceptable if a driver's license is not available. A birth certificate provides the information necessary to complete the application.
- The application fee is \$20 cash, money order, MasterCard or Visa plus service fees.
- If either party has been married previously and the marriage was terminated by divorce, a Final Judgment of Divorce must be shown.
- There is a 3-day waiting period after applying for the license and the applicants must be married within 33 days of the application date. The marriage can take place anywhere in Michigan.
- As of July 1, 2005 the clerk's office will also require social security cards (originals or copies) from both parties. They will be entered into their computer system yet they will not print out onto the marriage license and will not be available to the public.

To save some time at the clerk's office – you may do your initial application online by visiting here: <https://www.miottawa.org/MLR/>

Picking up the License

- You may pickup your license at the
 - County Clerk's office in Grand Haven, Monday thru Friday from 8am to 5pm
 - County Clerk's branch office in Holland at 12251 James Street (in the Health Building) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8am until noon or 1pm until 5pm
 - County Clerk's Branch office at the Hudsonville City Hall at 3275 Central Blvd. on Tuesday mornings only from 8am until noon.
 - If time permits it may be mailed to you after the 3 day waiting period.

Appendix 2: The Catholic Wedding Procession

“The gathering and entrance rites of the liturgy are designed to transform the many individuals in the church into a unified assembly of worshippers, ready to celebrate and hear the scriptures.”

Catholic wedding processions do not look like TV wedding processions. The entrance procession is a liturgical action, described in the Rite of Marriage as the ritual entrance of the ministers for the liturgy. The couple, as the ministers for this sacrament of unity, are included in the procession. This unity is best expressed from the very beginning, which makes it important to discuss the wedding procession. Because there are options available to you, we provide this information to guide your decisions.

The entrance procession at a wedding is an extended form of the regular entrance of the priest and other ministers at Sunday Mass. The Rite of Marriage (1969) asks for a very different procession than the one to which some of us are accustomed: ***“If there is a procession to the altar, the ministers go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and the bridegroom. ... they may be escorted by at least their parents and the two witnesses. Meanwhile, the entrance song is sung.”***

This is too important to ignore, because weddings are very meaningful occasions in our worship life. While the Rite has been revised in 2016, and some of the language surrounding the procession did change, the intent remains the same.

Traditions There are many social customs involved with wedding processions. These customs are not necessarily religious, and they often don't reflect contemporary attitudes toward marriage. The Church does not require such social customs, and not all of them are appropriate for a Christian wedding. Rightfully, such *social* traditions are made secondary to our *religious* traditions as we celebrate this sacrament.

In a Catholic wedding, the bride & groom are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage. They enter the assembly from the same door, avoiding any visual suggestion that one is more important than the other. They are encouraged to enter together. Separation of the men & women (including the bride & groom!) in the procession sends mixed messages and clouds the symbolism of the moment. Such separation is artificial, it unnecessarily lengthens the procession and it may imply something of a fashion show.

The procession of former years loses much of its attractiveness when its original purpose is known, namely, one man handing over a woman to another man. It dates to a time when women were considered as property, and was indeed a father giving away his daughter. Even though that is not what is now intended, we have a challenge and a directive to do better. The way in which we worship both manifests our faith & affects our faith, although not always consciously. This puts a joyful responsibility on us.

If the bride and groom will not be walking in together, both the father and mother of each person will walk with them in the procession. What harm is there in having only the father walk the bride down the aisle? Rather than asking, “What harm is there in doing this?” we ask, “What benefit and meaning is there in doing this?” “What better expresses our faith, our unity, God's love for us, our membership in the body of Christ?”

The Order of Celebrating Matrimony was revised so that our worship may be enriched and invigorated. To embody the spirit of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, the procession will go as such:

Persons are listed in order from first to walk down the aisle to last:

Cross Bearer
Lector Carrying the Book of the Gospels
Presider
Wedding Party Members in pairs
Witnesses
Parents of the Groom - with the Groom
Parents of the Bride - with the Bride

In rare circumstances, such as if a parent is deceased, the arrangement may be altered slightly, but Any adaptations to the procession order need to be discussed with and approved by the Director of Music and Liturgy.

So what about the Opening Song?

At weddings, there is still the need for an opening song. Couples preparing their wedding liturgy may choose such a song to be sung during the processional, or immediately after it. An instrumental processional alone is beautiful and serves to accompany the procession, but fails to recognize the role and needs of the assembly. The assembly at a wedding is just as important as at any other liturgy.

The introductory rites of Catholic liturgies are there to bring the people together as a community and prepare them to listen to God's word. An opening song combines the voices of those assembled and intensifies the unity of those gathered. Together, we become more conscious of ourselves as a worshipping community, not just individuals. The Church teachings point out the importance of this simple but powerful action.

Appendix 3: Adding Elements to the Wedding Liturgy

Wedding Candle, Prayer to the Blessed Mother, Arras, Lazo, Cojines, etc.

Additional rituals and symbols, including ethnically derived traditions (including Candles, Arras, Lazo, and Cojines), may be admitted to the wedding liturgy after discussion with director of Music & Liturgy as to their appropriate inclusion. These customs have now been included in the revised Order of Celebrating Matrimony but are not required. These are secondary to the central ritual actions of the wedding liturgy. There may be a limit on the number of these traditions that are allowed at a particular liturgy to avoid duplicating the symbolism. Any such additions are generally placed in the liturgy after the exchange of rings, and before the general intercessions.

If used, the wedding candle is placed on a candelabra in the sanctuary in a location where it does not interfere with ritual movement and action. Two small, lighted candles, perhaps the baptismal candles, are symbolic of the separate families and histories of the bride and groom. They are commonly used to light central, larger candle that represents their oneness in Christ. (The parish does not provide the candles) The side candles are not extinguished, but left burning, as the families and histories of the couple do not cease to exist because of the marriage. Another option is to use a unity/wedding candle as the beginning prayer of the wedding reception.

If both the bride and the groom have a genuine devotion to Mary in their prayer life, it is possible for them to say a prayer together in front of the image of the blessed mother, offering flowers or a lit candle. This is a devotional prayer that is not a part of the liturgy, and may be done separately from the wedding liturgy itself.

Appendix 4: Printed Programs

It is very important to foster the active participation that is due the liturgy, the primary way of accomplishing that is to have an order of service to be distributed to guests at the wedding liturgy. St. Francis will provide for each wedding liturgy, a printed order of service, available in English, Spanish and Bilingual Formats. These will be printed at no charge and must be distributed for use during the ceremony. A worship aid can be a sign of hospitality extended to the assembly. This sign might be especially important when a significant number of the assembly will not be familiar with the Roman Catholic liturgy and the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. As a sign of hospitality, the prime purposes of such a program are to A.) Provide an overview/outline of the liturgy and B.) Serve as a record of the event.

St. Francis provides the worship aid in an 8.5x11 booklet format, it includes all extra music, texts responses, instructions for standing & sitting, brief explanations of some of the rites and rituals. This worship aid is standardized to assist all assemblies with the elements of the liturgy and as such cannot be customized to particular styles, reflect personal messages, or list the members of your wedding party.

What some have chosen to do (very successfully) is to print a small card, perhaps brochure size or larger, to insert in to the worship aid. You can work with your printer to make these memorable and fully customized. A sample is included below, the originals are 9"x4" but whatever size you choose to do is just fine.



Appendix 5: Checklist

This list is provided to help you organize the tasks that go into preparing for the wedding day. It is our experience that completing these tasks early allows the final weeks or months before the wedding far less stressful.

Six or more months ahead: (a full year is better!)

- ❑ If either of you (Catholic or not) have ever been married before, contact the parish as far in advance of the proposed wedding date as possible. **Dates cannot be held for couples waiting for a declaration of nullity from the Tribunal confirming their freedom to marry.** *Please refer to the "Reserving the Church" section of these guidelines.*
- ❑ You should wait to schedule other facilities or services until after your wedding date has been confirmed.
- ❑ Call the parish to request a wedding date and begin the marriage preparation process by setting an appointment with the parish priest.
- ❑ Register for a wedding planning meeting, there are usually 5 of these per year, so even though your wedding may be months off, its best to make sure you can attend one far enough before your wedding to be able to complete your program and line up the persons involved in the ceremony.
- ❑ Bring in your deposit and the signed back page of this document so that we may schedule your wedding date.
- ❑ Schedule a meeting with the person responsible for marriage preparation, to get started on the necessary preparations.

At least five months ahead:

- ❑ Acquire your baptismal and confirmation records. These must be issued (with notations) within the six months before the wedding date.
- ❑ Choose scripture readings for the wedding liturgy, preferably before meeting with the director of music ministries. Confirm the date and time of the wedding and rehearsal with the parish office.

At least four months ahead:

- ❑ Finalize the selection of liturgical ministers for the wedding liturgy (lector(s), ushers; possibly special ministers of the Eucharist, people bringing up the gifts of bread and wine, altar servers, etc.)

At least three months ahead:

- ❑ Participate in Parish Marriage Preparation Program and provide confirmation of involvement if prepared elsewhere.
- ❑ If necessary, finalize all music and liturgy details with the director of music ministries.
- ❑ If applicable, collect the information necessary to create a printed worship aid.

At least two months ahead:

- ❑ Complete Marriage Preparation meetings.

At least one month ahead:

- ❑ Be certain all paperwork and choices for the liturgy have been received by the parish office.
- ❑ Provide a copy of the Photography/Videography page of these guidelines to any photographer or videographer that will be recording your wedding. (PDF's are available to download and email on the parish website wedding page)
- ❑ Provide a copy of the Decoration Suggestions and Restrictions page of these guidelines to anyone who is preparing flowers or decorations for your wedding. (PDF's are available to download and email on the parish website wedding page).
- ❑ Confirm the rehearsal time and date with all people who have special roles in the wedding liturgy [ushers, groomsmen, bridesmaids, witnesses, readers/lectors, special ministers of the Eucharist, assistants (M/M of ceremony), people bringing up the gifts of bread and wine, altar servers, etc. Musicians are never involved in the wedding rehearsal.]
- ❑ Turn in any remaining **wedding fee** balance to the parish office no later than four weeks before the wedding.
- ❑ Meet with the parish priest.

Within the last month:

- ❑ Obtain the State of Michigan marriage license within 33 days of the wedding date.
- ❑ At least one week before the wedding, turn in the marriage license.

Appendix 6: Reading Selections for Weddings.

The choice of readings for your wedding liturgy is a very personal matter; below are provided all of the options available to you. Please select one reading from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament and one Gospel reading.

Old Testament Readings

OT-1 Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground. "God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

OT-2 Genesis 2:18-24

The LORD God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him. "So the LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

OT-3 Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

The servant of Abraham said to Laban: "I bowed down in worship to the LORD, blessing the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to obtain the daughter of my Master's kinsman for his son. If, therefore, you have in mind to show true loyalty to my master, let me know; but if not, let me know that, too. I can then proceed accordingly." Laban and his household said in reply: "This thing comes from the LORD; we can say nothing to you either for or against it. Here is Rebekah, ready for you; take her with you, that she may become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has said." So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Do you wish to go with this man?" She answered, "I do." At this they allowed their sister Rebekah and her nurse to take leave, along with Abraham's servant and his men.

Invoking a blessing on Rebekah, they said: "Sister, may

you grow into thousands of myriads; And may your descendants gain possession of the gates of their enemies!" Then Rebekah and her maids started out; they mounted their camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and went on his way. Meanwhile Isaac had gone from Beer-lahai-roi and was living in the region of the Negeb. One day toward evening he went out . . . in the field, and as he looked around, he noticed that camels were approaching. Rebekah, too, was looking about, and when she saw him, she alighted from her camel and asked the servant, "Who is the man out there, walking through the fields toward us?" "That is my master," replied the servant. Then she covered herself with her veil. The servant recounted to Isaac all the things he had done. Then Isaac took Rebekah into his tent; he married her, and thus she became his wife. In his love for her Isaac found solace after the death of his mother Sarah.

OT-4 Tobit 7:6-14

Raphael and Tobiah entered the house of Raguel and greeted him. Raguel sprang up and kissed Tobiah, shedding tears of joy. But when he heard that Tobit had lost his eyesight, he was grieved and wept aloud. He said to Tobiah: "My child, God bless you! You are the son of a noble and good father. But what a terrible misfortune that such a righteous and charitable man should be afflicted with blindness!" He continued to weep in the arms of his kinsman Tobiah. His wife Edna also wept for Tobit; and even their daughter Sarah began to weep. Afterward, Raguel slaughtered a ram from the flock and gave them a cordial reception. When they had bathed and reclined to eat, Tobiah said to Raphael, "Brother Azariah, ask Raguel to let me marry my kinswoman Sarah." Raguel overheard the words; so he said to the boy: "Eat and drink and be merry tonight, for no man is more entitled to marry my daughter Sarah than you, brother. Besides, not even I have the right to give her to anyone but you, because you are my closest relative. But I will explain the situation to you very frankly. I have given her in marriage to seven men, all of whom were kinsmen of ours, and all died on the very night they approached her. But now, son, eat and drink. I am sure the Lord will look after you both." Tobiah answered, "I will eat or drink nothing until you set aside what belongs to me." Raguel said to him: "I will do it. She is yours according to the decree of the Book of Moses. Your marriage to her has been decided in heaven! Take your kinswoman from now on you are her love, and she is your beloved. She is yours today and ever after. And tonight, son, may the Lord of heaven prosper you both.

May he grant you mercy and peace." Then Raguel called his daughter Sarah, and she came to him. He took her by the hand and gave her to Tobiah with the words: "Take her according to the law. According to the decree written in the Book of Moses she is your wife. Take her and bring her back safely to your father. And may the God of heaven grant both of you peace and prosperity." He then called her mother and told her to bring a scroll, so that he might draw up a marriage contract stating that he gave Sarah to Tobiah as his wife according to the decree of the Mosaic law. Her mother brought the scroll, and he drew up the contract, to which they affixed their seals. Afterward they began to eat and drink.

OT-5 Tobit 8:4b-8

On their wedding night Tobiah arose from bed and said to his wife, "Sister, get up. Let us pray and beg our Lord to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance." Sarah got up, and they started to pray and beg that deliverance might be theirs. They began with these words: "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers; praised be your name forever and ever. Let the heavens and all your creation praise you forever. You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve to be his help and support; and from these two the human race descended. You said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a partner like himself.' Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine not because of lust, but for a noble purpose. Call down your mercy on me and on her, and allow us to live together to a happy old age." They said together, "Amen, amen."

OT-6 Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

OT-7 Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

Hark! My lover—here he comes springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills. My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices. My lover speaks; he says to me, "Arise, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come!" "O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff, let me see you, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and you are lovely." My lover belongs to me and I to him. He says to me: "Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; for stern as death is love, relentless as the nether-world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away."

OT-8 Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

Blessed the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days; A worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life. A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the LORD; Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face. A gracious wife delights her husband, her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones; A gift from the LORD is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth. Choicest of blessings is the modest wife, priceless her chaste soul. A holy and decent woman adds grace upon grace; indeed, no price is worthy of her temperate soul. Like the sun rising in the LORD'S heavens, the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

OT-9 Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers: the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD.

New Testament Readings

NT-1 **Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39**

Brothers and sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things, we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NT-2 **Romans 12:1-2, 9-18** (longer form)

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

NT-3 **Romans 12:1-2, 9-13** (shorter form)

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

NT-4 **Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13**

Brothers and sisters: We ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves; let each of us please our neighbor for the good, for building up. For Christ did not please himself. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

NT-5 **1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20**

Brothers and sisters: The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body, God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

NT-6 **1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:8a**

Brothers and sisters: Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

NT-7 **Ephesians 4:1-6**

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: - one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**NT-8 Ephesians 5:2a, 21-33
(longer form)**

Brothers and sisters: Live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us. Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the Church, he himself the savior of the body. As the Church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the Church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his Body. *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

**NT-9 Ephesians 5:2a, 25-32
(shorter form)**

Brothers and sisters: Live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the Church in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his Body. *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church.

NT-10 Philippians 4:4-9

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise,

think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

NT-11 Colossians 3:12-17

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put-on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one Body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

NT-12 Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b

Brothers and sisters: Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body. Let marriage be honored among all and the marriage bed be kept undefiled. Let your life be free from love of money but be content with what you have, for he has said, *I will never forsake you or abandon you.* Thus we may say with confidence: *The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid.*

NT-13 1 Peter 3:1-9

Beloved: You wives should be subordinate to your husband's so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct when they observe your reverent and chaste behavior. Your adornment should not be an external one: braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or dressing in fine clothes, but rather the hidden character of the heart, expressed in the imperishable beauty of a gentle and calm disposition, which is precious in the sight of God. For this is also how the holy women who hoped in God once used to adorn themselves and were subordinate to their husbands; thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him "lord." You are her children when you do what is good and fear no intimidation.

Likewise, you husbands should live with your wives in understanding, showing honor to the weaker female sex, since we are joint heirs of the gift of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.

NT-14 1 John 3:18-24

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us.

NT-15 1 John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In

this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

NT-16 Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

I, John, heard what sounded like the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying: "Alleluia! Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God." A voice coming from the throne said: "Praise our God, all you his servants, and you who revere him, small and great." Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: "Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, our God, the almighty. let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment." (The linen represents the righteous deeds of the holy ones.) Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb."

Gospel Readings

G-1 Matthew 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

G-2 Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

G-3 Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (longer form)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined." When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

G-4 Matthew 7:21, 24-25 (shorter form)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock."

G-5 Matthew 19:3-6

Some Pharisees approached Jesus, and tested him, saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?" He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator *made them male and female* and

said, *For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?* So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate."

G-6 Matthew 22:35-40

One of the Pharisees, a scholar of the law, tested Jesus by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

G-7 Matthew 10:6-9

Jesus said: "From the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

G-8 John 2:1-11

There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

G-9 John 15:9-12

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

G-10 John 15:12-16

Jesus said to his disciples: "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you."

G-11 John 17:20-26 (longer form)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: "I pray not only for my disciples, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

G-13 John 17:20-23 (shorter form)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: "Holy Father, I pray not only for these, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me and that you loved them even as you loved me.

Appendix 7: Optional Texts for the Wedding Liturgy

The following are options that you may choose for the various parts of the liturgy. Please read through them and select options that best fit your situation. Bring these with you to the consultation with the director of music and liturgy.

Opening Prayer (Collect)

Here are the five possibilities for opening prayers.

1. **[This option cannot be used with Nuptial Blessing 1]**
O God, who consecrated the bond of Marriage by so great a mystery that in the wedding covenant you foreshadow the Sacrament of Christ and his Church, grant, we pray, to these your servants, that what they receive in faith they may live out in deeds.
2. God, who in creating the human race willed that man and wife should be one, join, we pray, in a bond of inseparable love these your servants who are to be united in the covenant of Marriage, so that, as you make their love fruitful, they may become, by your grace, witnesses to charity itself.
3. Grant, we pray, almighty God, that these your servants, now to be joined in the Sacrament of matrimony, may grow in the faith they profess and enrich your Church with faithful offspring.
4. Be attentive to our prayers, O Lord, and in your kindness uphold what you have established for the increase of the human race, so that the union you have created may be kept safe by your assistance.
5. O God, who since the beginning of the world have blessed the increase of offspring, show favor to our supplications and pour forth the help of your blessing on these your servants (N. and N.), so that in the union of Marriage they may be bound together in mutual affection, in likeness of mind, and in shared holiness.

Vows

These are the two options for your wedding vows. You may choose to memorize them, or the presider can prompt you sentence by sentence.

1. I, N. take you N. to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
2. I, N. take you N. for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

Blessing of Rings

Here are the three choices for the blessing of the rings.

1. May the Lord bless these rings which you give to each other as a sign of love and fidelity.
2. Bless, O Lord, these rings, which we bless in your name, so that those who wear them may remain entirely faithful to each other, abide in peace and in your will, and live always in mutual charity. Through Christ our Lord.
3. Bless and sanctify your servants in their love, O Lord, and let these rings, a sign of their faithfulness, remind them of their love for one another. Through Christ our Lord.

Nuptial Blessing

The following are the three options available to you for the nuptial blessing.

1. O God, who by your mighty power created all things out of nothing, and, when you had set in place the beginnings of the universe, formed man and woman in your own image, making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man, that they might no longer be two, but one flesh, and taught that what you were pleased to make one must never be divided; O God, who consecrated the bond of Marriage by so great a mystery that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed the Sacrament of Christ and his Church; O God, by whom woman is joined to man and the companionship they had in the beginning is endowed with the one blessing not forfeited by original sin nor washed away by the flood. Look now with favor on these your servants, joined together in Marriage, who ask to be strengthened by your blessing. Send down on them the grace of your Holy Spirit and pour your love into their hearts, that they may remain faithful in the Marriage covenant. May the grace of love and peace abide with your daughter N., and let her always follow the example of those holy women whose praises are sung in Scriptures. May her husband entrust his heart to her, so that, acknowledging her as his equal and his joint heir to the life of grace, he may show her due honor and cherish her always with the love that Christ has for his Church. And now, Lord, we implore you: may these your servants hold fast to the faith and keep your commandments; made one in the flesh, may they be blameless in all they do; and with the strength that comes from the Gospel, may they bear true witness to Christ before all; [May they be blessed with children, and prove themselves virtuous parents, who live to see their children's children]. And grant that, reaching at last together the fullness of years for which they hope, they may come to the life of the blessed in the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. Holy Father, who formed man in your own image, male and female you created them, so that as husband and wife, united in body and heart, they might fulfill their calling in the world; O God, who, to reveal the great design you formed in your love, willed that the love of spouses for each other should foreshadow the covenant you graciously made with your people so that, by fulfillment of the sacramental sign, the mystical marriage of Christ with his Church might become manifest in the union of husband and wife among your faithful; Graciously stretch out your right hand over these your servants (N. and N.), we pray, and pour into their hearts the power of the Holy Spirit. Grant, O Lord, that, as they enter upon this sacramental union, they may share with one another the gifts of your love, and, by being for each other a sign of your presence, become one heart and one mind. May they also sustain, O Lord, by their deeds the home they are forming (and prepare their children to become members of your heavenly household by raising them in the way of the Gospel). Graciously crown with your blessings your daughter N., so that, by being a good wife (and mother), she may bring warmth to her home with a love that is pure and adorn it with welcoming graciousness. Bestow a heavenly blessing also, O Lord, on N., your servant, that he may be a worthy, good and faithful husband (and a provident father). Grant, holy Father, that, desiring to approach your table as a couple joined in Marriage in your presence, they may one day have the joy of taking part in your great banquet in heaven.
3. Holy Father, maker of the whole world, who created man and woman in your own image and willed that their union be crowned with your blessing, we humbly beseech you for these your servants, who are joined today in the Sacrament of Matrimony. May your abundant blessings, Lord, come down upon this bride, N., and upon N., her companion for life, and may the power of your Holy Spirit set their hearts aflame from on high, so that, living out together the gift of Matrimony, they may (adorn their family with children and) enrich the church. In happiness may they praise you, O Lord, in sorrow may they seek you out; may they have the joy of your presence to assist them in their toil, and know that you are near to comfort them in their need; let them pray to you in the holy assembly and bear witness to you in the world, and after a happy old age, together with the circle of friends that surrounds them, may they come to the Kingdom of Heaven.

General Intercessions (Petitions)

Here are a set of sample intercessions. Please feel free to either use these as they are, or edit them. If you edit them, they need to be submitted to the Director of Music for approval no later than one month before the wedding.

Priest: Gathered in joyful hope, we offer our prayers to God, who creates our hearts to love.

Lector: For **N.** and **N.**, that their love for each other reflect the Lord's Love for them, let us pray to the Lord.

For the Family, relatives and friends of **N.** and **N.** that they continue to support this couple by their loving care, let us pray to the Lord.

For all families in need, that they receive abundant material and spiritual assistance for their well-being, let us pray to the Lord.

For this assembly that we find in today's celebration a foretaste of the joy in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who have died, especially **N.** and **N.**, (*insert names of deceased family members in place of the Ns*) that they be welcomed to the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb, let us pray to the Lord.

Priest: God our Creator, guardian of our homes and source of all blessings, you delight in the happiness of your people. Hear the prayers this church offers for **N.** and **N.**, for all your people and for the world. Fulfill our needs and guide our actions toward the building up of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Final Blessing

There are three options for the final blessing

1. May God the eternal Father keep you of one heart in love for one another, that the peace of Christ may dwell in you and abide always in your home. **R. Amen** May you be blessed in your children, have solace in your friends and enjoy true peace with everyone. **R. Amen** May you be witness in the world to God's charity, so that the afflicted and needy who have known your kindness may one day receive you thankfully into the eternal dwelling of God. **R. Amen** And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. May God the all-powerful Father grant you his joy and bless you in your children. **R. Amen** May the Only Begotten Son of God stand by you with compassion in good times and in bad. **R. Amen** May the Holy Spirit of God always pour forth his love into your hearts. **R. Amen** And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3. May the Lord Jesus, who graced the marriage at Cana by his presence, bless you and your loved ones. **R. Amen** May he, who loved the Church to the end, unceasingly pour his love into your hearts. **R. Amen** May the Lord grant that, bearing witness to faith in his Resurrection, you may await with joy the blessed hope to come. **R. Amen** And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Resources:

The following resources were used in the creation of these guidelines. Some of them (especially the first one listed) may be of interest for your further reading.

Celebrating Marriage: Preparing the Wedding Liturgy — a Workbook for Engaged Couples, revised edition, Paul Covino, ed., Pastoral Press, Laurel, MD, 1994, especially pp. 2, 23-28, 89-90.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Second Vatican Council, 1963.

Fleming, Austin, *Parish Weddings*, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, Illinois, 1987.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Congregation for Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002.

Guidelines for the Liturgical Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, Province of Michigan, 1999, esp. p.4.

Huck, Gabe, *Preaching About the Mass*, Liturgy Training Publications, Archdiocese of Chicago, 1992.

Lectionary (Introduction), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Rite of Marriage, Congregation for Divine Worship, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1969.

The Order of Celebrating Matrimony, Congregation for Divine Worship, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016.

Sacramental Handbook, Diocese of Grand Rapids, 2001.

Champlin, Joseph, *Together for Life* (revised edition), Ave Maria Press, 2002.

Wedding policies of the Diocese of San Diego, Texas, 2000.

Wedding policies of Holy Family Parish, Sparta, 2002.

Wedding policies of St. Anthony Parish, Grand Rapids.

Wedding policies of St. Clement Church, Chicago, Illinois.

Wedding policies of St. James Parish, Grand Rapids.

Wedding policies of St. Patrick Church, Troy, Ohio.

Contract page

To have your wedding date placed on the calendar you must bring this page to the parish office with a check in the amount of \$100. Any remaining fees are due one month prior to your wedding.

Bride's Name: _____

Groom's Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone: (____)____-_____

Home Phone: (____)____-_____

Work Phone (____)____-_____

Work Phone (____)____-_____

Cell Phone (____)____-_____

Cell Phone (____)____-_____

By signing below I certify that I have read and agree to follow all of the regulations and responsibilities contained in this document.

Bride's signature

Groom's signature

Church representative's signature

Wedding Date: _____

Wedding Time: _____

Wedding Fee: _____

Deposit: _____

Balance: _____