

CONGRATULATIONS

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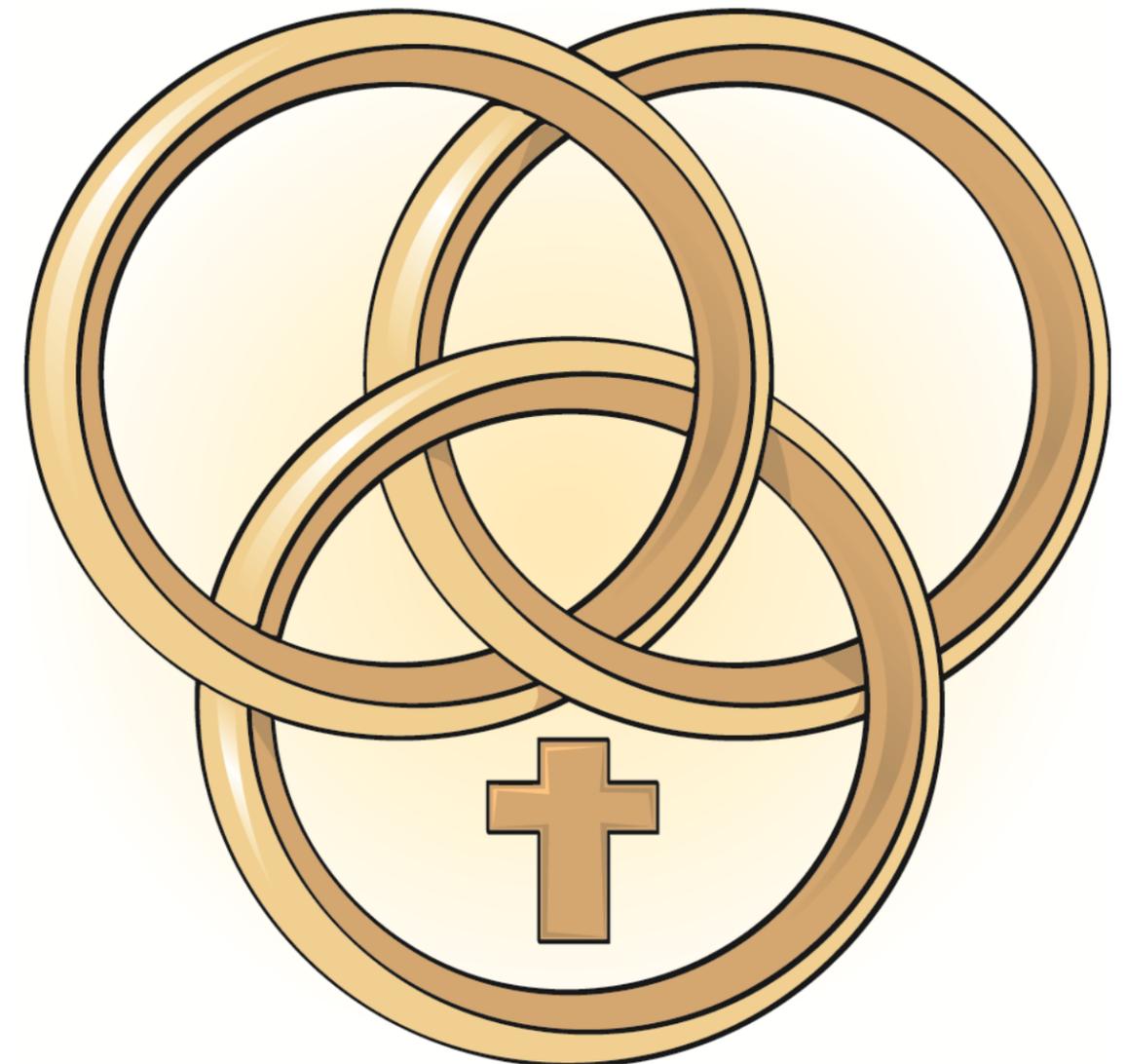
BEST WISHES



ST. CHARLES BORROMEO

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OMAHA

MARRIAGE PREPARATION



PHONE: 402-916-9730 FAX: 402-916-9740
ADDRESS: ST. CHARLES BORROMEO CATHOLIC CHURCH
7790 SOUTH 192ND STREET, GRETNA, NEBRASKA 68028
WEBSITE: WWW.STCHARLESOMAHA.ORG

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations to you as you announce your engagement to marry. Your marriage within the context of the Catholic Church is much more than a civil ceremony that happens to take place in a church building. Your marriage is a very specific vocation through which you live out your baptismal commitment to love as the Lord loves you. The Church understands your vocation as one of the seven sacraments of the Church, the Sacrament of Christian Marriage. As husband and wife in the Lord you reveal the Lord's love to the Church and to the world by the way you love each other. Of course, this does not happen all at once. For many couples it can take fifty years, and for others that is just a starting point. Your preparation for marriage is not just something you do in the few short months before your wedding day. Hopefully, what happens during your engagement will continue throughout your marriage, namely, learning how to love each other more day after day.

The practice of living together before marriage is strongly discouraged since it disrupts the courting and engagement processes. Cohabitation contradicts the Gospel of Christ and does not set a good example for the rest of the Christian community. Your priest will work with you if this is your situation, helping you to understand why the Church teaches as she does.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE AND WEDDING CEREMONY

PARISH PROCESS

During your initial meeting with the priest you will set the date and time of your wedding.

- **It is our archdiocesan policy that there be at least a six-month time period between the first contact with a priest and the date of the wedding.**

Six months is the minimum time; a longer period is recommended and may be necessary so that the preparation is not unduly hastened. The usual days for weddings are Fridays and Saturdays. Friday evening times vary according to the wishes of the couple. Our Saturday times are 10:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, and 2:00 p.m. The latest time possible for a wedding on Saturday in this archdiocese is 2:00 p.m.

- **The Marriage Prep Pre-Session is a mandatory meeting required for every couple anticipating marriage in this archdiocese.**

Please refer to the brochure, "6 Steps in Preparing for a Successful Sacramental Marriage", for detailed information on Archdiocesan marriage preparation including the process, dates, places, and times for these sessions. At the Pre-Session there will be a presentation of educational options available to engaged couples, and the administration of an inventory known as FOCCUS.

- **Following the Pre-Session, each couple will meet with their priest to discuss results.**

Most likely you will meet for several sessions as you walk through the FOCCUS.

- **All couples are required to attend at least one of the educational options relating to married life.**

Among the educational options are the following: "Remarriage", "When Families Marry", and "Catholic engaged Encounter". The dates and times of these sessions are listed in the back flap of the folder. The "Natural Family Planning and FertilityCare" is an optional educational session that may be taken in addition to one of the first three educational sessions. There is also the opportunity to work with one of our parish families who will introduce you to this Church-approved way of planning your family.

NOTES

RESOURCES

USCCB "For Your Marriage Website"
<http://forourmarriage.org>

USCCB "FAQ's about Catholic Marriage"
<http://www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/marriagefaqs.shtml>

IMPORTANT CHECKOFF LIST

- _____ Consult with Judy Ashmore for musical choices. Contact her several months before the wedding.
- _____ Provide baptismal certificates.
- _____ Remind all members of the wedding party to be on time for both the rehearsal and the wedding.
- _____ Make sure the lector has a copy of the readings beforehand so that the necessary practice may take place.
- _____ Bring the Marriage License to the rehearsal or give to the priest beforehand.
- _____ Remind wedding party not to throw rice or anything else after the wedding.
- _____ Make sure that fees and offerings have been provided.
- _____ Make sure doors are locked, especially if valuables are inside.
- _____ Do not leave purses, cameras or gifts unguarded in the church or sacristy at any time.
- _____ No food, alcohol, tobacco, gum, or water bottles in the church at any time.
- _____ Drinking of alcoholic beverages by the wedding party before the wedding ceremony is reason for cancellation of the wedding.
- _____ Make sure arrangements have been made to clean and clear the bridal preparation area (kitchen).
- _____ Make sure arrangements have been made to tidy church area immediately after wedding ceremony, i.e., removing wedding programs, Kleenex, and other assorted wedding paraphernalia left behind. The ushers can be especially helpful in this regard.

ECUMENICAL MARRIAGES

- **Ecumenical marriages (marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic) require permission from the Chancery.**

When engaged couples share common attitudes, they will be more able to adjust and work together to build their marriage. Common attitudes regarding permanence of commitment, children, material goods, religion, prayer, and worship make it easier for them to be one in approaching many situations. While the church will encourage Catholics to marry those with the same religious background, the priest working with you will do all in his power to help couples with different religious backgrounds to grow together in understanding and awareness of their differences and unity in faith. The Catholic must promise in writing to baptize and to raise all children Catholic. Marriage with a person who is not baptized requires a dispensation from the Chancery.

- **It is recommended that a marriage between a Catholic and one who is not catholic be celebrated in the context of a nuptial service rather than a nuptial Mass.**

In a Mass it is difficult to expect full participation when a good percentage of the guests are not Catholic. In a nuptial service it is easier to invite a fuller ecumenical participation. The length of a nuptial service is a bit shorter than a nuptial Mass because there is no Eucharistic prayer or Holy Communion.

DOCUMENTATION

- **The Catholic person(s) in the marriage is to present a baptismal certificate issued from the church of baptism and dated within six months of the marriage.**

This is obtained by contacting the parish or church in which you were baptized. A baptized Christian of any denomination is asked to present any valid copy of his or her baptism certificate, even if it is the one issued at the time of the baptism itself.

- **Apply for the Marriage License at least one month before your wedding date.**

The process of procuring a Marriage License is the responsibility of the couple. Either of the couple can apply for the marriage license at the County Court House. You will need to bring a birth certificate, which will serve as proof of your age. According to Nebraska law the minimum age for marriage is seventeen with parental consent and nineteen without parental consent. **The marriage license is to be brought to the rehearsal and given to the priest who will be the celebrant for your marriage.**

PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- **It is necessary that there be two witnesses who serve as the best man and the maid (or matron) of honor for a valid marriage.**

It is recommended that you keep the number of additional attendants to a minimum rather than a multitude. Normally, more than three or four couples takes away from the simplicity of the wedding and seems to place more emphasis on the procession and number of people rather than on the Sacrament itself. Small children oftentimes are not good choices as attendants even though they may be "cute at a button". The awesome and unusual nature of the event can be intimidating for a very young child and places huge expectations on both the young child and his or her parents. Children under seven years of age are very unpredictable and their participation may be more hazardous than helpful and may even be disruptive to the ceremony.

The priest will help you to plan your wedding ceremony. You will find very helpful information in the wedding material in the booklet, "Supplemental Materials for Catholic Marriage Preparation".

Another way you can invite your family and friends to participate is to include them as gift bearers at the preparation of the gifts. Normally two or three people are sufficient for this. Family and friends who are practicing Catholics may participate at your wedding as altar servers or lectors. This is especially appealing to younger men and women who serve in this capacity at their home parishes. Altar servers are not necessary at a nuptial Mass or service.

LITURGICAL MUSIC

Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. As marriage is a sacrament, the ceremony must follow the norms of a sacramental liturgy. As an important aspect of good liturgy, the music should be prayerfully considered, should be an expression of faith in Jesus Christ, and should celebrate the Christian love manifest in the marriage ceremony. Secular or profane music (popular love songs, songs from musicals, etc.) is not appropriate for such an occasion.

- **All couples are to contact Judy Ashmore, Music Ministry Coordinator (402-502-2454), several months prior to the wedding date. She will guide you through the planning process and will be your consultant regarding musical choices.**

THE ENTRANCE PROCESSION

- **Be cautious in selecting the procession for the wedding.**

This procession sets the tone for your wedding celebration and, therefore, should be both dignified and joyful. It is best to avoid anything that resembles a fashion show or an opportunity to impress people. And, ideally, it incorporates both sets of parents.

PHOTOGRAPHIC POLICIES

- **Photographers are guaranteed only one hour, maximum, before the wedding for pictures.**

(See attached document)

BRIDE'S DRESSING ROOM

Here at St. Charles Borromeo we do not have a room that would qualify as a bride's room. We have determined that our kitchen area serves the purpose since it is a large space with easy access to sinks and bathroom. We do ask that if there are small children in the room they be carefully supervised since there are stoves and other dangerous appliances in this location. We also ask that the bride appoint someone to make sure the place is clean and tidy when you leave. There are bins just outside the kitchen for garbage and recycled items. You may use these, making sure you put garbage in the garbage bin and recyclable items in the recycle bin.

ATTIRE

Because a wedding is a solemn celebration of Christ's chaste love for his church, the attire chosen for the wedding should reflect Christian values of modesty and decency. All dresses should be appropriate for this ceremony.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

FOOD

Absolutely no alcohol, food, drink, gum, or tobacco products are allowed anywhere in the church facility, including the dressing rooms and bathrooms.

RESPECTFUL QUIET

Out of consideration for those praying and the setting of the occasion, a respectful quiet should be observed by all when in the church space.

VISITING PRIESTS

A priest who is a brother or uncle of the bride or groom is welcome to concelebrate the wedding Mass and to witness the exchange of vows and rings. Priests who are cousins or close friends of the bride and groom are welcome to concelebrate the nuptial Mass with the pastor. These arrangements need to be made beforehand with the priest who is instructing you.

AISLE RUNNERS

Aisle runners are hazardous (they are slippery and tend not to stay in place), costly and for these reasons not allowed here at St. Charles Borromeo.

RICE, BALLOONS, ETC.

The custom of throwing rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons, or anything else is completely out of place inside or outside the building. It causes a cleaning problem, especially for the elderly and others who are not sure-footed.

DÉCOR

Every effort is made to have appropriate floral and other decorations in the church according to the various liturgical seasons. Further flower arrangements, therefore, are oftentimes neither necessary nor desirable. If you do choose additional flowers or greenery, please keep in mind that you may not move what is presently displayed and must work within that framework. In addition, freestanding candelabra are never permitted because of the common occurrence of dripped wax on the floor. Decorations and adornments are not allowed on the pews. And, finally, the scattering of flower petals on the floor is not permitted.

FEES

The fee for a wedding here at St. Charles Borromeo is \$450. This includes the fee for the church, the priest, the organist, and the cantor. The cantor serves as the leader of music at your wedding and may also serve as a soloist. Couples being prepared for marriage at St. Charles Borromeo but who are being married elsewhere are asked to contribute \$100 for the preparation. Your check should be made out to St. Charles Borromeo.