

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING LITURGY

(revised 7/14/17)

ST. MARY PARISH – Norway, MI
ST. BARBARA PARISH – Vulcan, MI

- 1. INTRODUCTION:** Weddings are special and joyful times for brides and grooms, for their families and friends, and for the parish community. The church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their marriage vows in the context of our prayer as Christians. So important is marriage in the Catholic Church that it is called a sacrament.

The parish, as a community of believers united in Christ, is the context that gives meaning and shape to the celebration of a Christian marriage. With this principle in mind, the following guidelines are provided to assist you in planning your wedding.

- 2. PLACE:** To celebrate your wedding liturgy in St. Mary or St. Barbara, either the bride or the groom must be a registered member of a Roman Catholic Parish. The wedding must be celebrated in the church building where the community regularly assembles for worship. Only with special permission from the bishop can a Catholic wedding be celebrated elsewhere. The bride or groom is expected to be an active member of his/her parish community. If neither the bride nor the groom belongs to St. Mary or St. Barbara, permission for being married in that church must be obtained from their pastors.
- 3. TIME:** Weddings will be scheduled on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. (or a weekday by request). Rehearsals are typically the night before at 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.
- 4. SYMBOLS:** Marriage is a Sacrament of unity and you are encouraged to prepare carefully, using the many signs and symbols of unity already available in the rite of marriage. Prime example of unity is the exchange of vows and rings; and especially the celebration of the Eucharist itself. The unity candle and colored sand are not permitted per the Bishop.
- 5. WITNESSES:** Everyone present at the wedding celebration is a witness to your exchange of vows. The official witnesses are the Presider and two others whom you designate, normally the maid of honor and best man. For legal purposes, the witnesses must be at least 16 years of age.

6. MINISTRIES DURING THE WEDDING MASS

a. ASSEMBLY: The fundamental ministry within the wedding Mass is the assembly of people who are present for the celebration. They gather to praise God, to celebrate with you, and to witness your marriage.

b. PRESIDERS: The priest normally is the Presider at the wedding liturgy. When a wedding is celebrated without a Mass, a deacon may preside. Priests or deacons from outside the parish may preside with permission and delegation from the pastor. ***Visiting priests or deacons shall celebrate the liturgy in accordance with parish customs and guidelines so that the entire community may participate.***

c. BRIDE AND GROOM: The ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage are the bride and groom. They minister the Sacrament to each other in the presence of the priest or deacon and at least two other persons.

d. MUSIC MINISTERS: The parish organist is the designated organist for all weddings. The ministry of the musicians is to lead the assembly in sung prayer.

All music played or sung at weddings, whether before or during the ceremony must be in accord with the GUIDELINES FOR THE DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE. All music in the wedding ceremonies must be expressive of Christian faith and values. Selections drawn from scriptural texts are most suitable. Music, which only celebrates the human secular values of love are more appropriate at the reception. Some secular music is allowed before the Mass; however, the parish organist will provide assistance in planning all music for the celebration and has final approval.

One of the cantors from St. Mary or St. Barbara Parishes will lead the people in the various responses and is professionally capable of singing a solo at an appropriate time before or during Mass.

Even though we provide the cantor, guest musicians, including soloists are allowed, and are expected to be professionally capable. A guest musician or soloist is also expected to practice with the parish organist prior to the wedding at a time agreeable to the organist. A soloist (and if necessary, his/her accompanist) may use the music area adjacent to the altar. However, this is the exception and the choir loft area is to be the usual place for music at weddings. ALL GROUPS must use the choir loft area. Pre-recorded music is NEVER be allowed during the Mass or wedding liturgy celebrated with a deacon.

e. READERS: The proclamation of the word of God is an integral part of the worship and therefore must be proclaimed well. We encourage you to choose readers who are already serving in this ministry in their parish, or choose a relative or friend who is willing to practice the readings in order to proclaim them well.

f. USHERS, MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY: Both men and women are encouraged to serve in this ministry. They greet people arriving at the church, give them a program, assist in seating them, and address other details associated with hospitality.

g. ALTAR SERVERS: one or two altar servers are recommended for the wedding liturgy. The parish will either provide servers or you may select a friend or relative who is active in this ministry.

7. FEES: The recommended stole fee for a priest is \$100; the organist - \$100.00, cantor - \$40.00; If the cantor also serves as soloist - \$50.00. It is also customary to give \$20 to the altar server. Other persons function in their ministries as a courtesy to the bride and groom.

8. WEDDING ENTRANCE PROCESSION: The bride and groom have the option to be escorted by their parent(s). The procession is as follows:

*Cross bearer
Priest (& Deacon)
Groom escorted by his parent(s)
Couples of the wedding party
Maid of honor & best man
Ring bear
Flower girl
Bride escorted by her parent(s)*

- 9. SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEDDING PARTY:** Marriage is a sacrament of unity which is celebrated during Mass or during a Liturgy of the Word. Seating for the principal members of the wedding party should reflect this unity.

Seating in the church is “open” to all guests and a “Bride’s side or a “Groom’s side is discouraged. Although, the wedding party and immediate family have assigned pews. The bridesmaids sit on the front left with immediate family behind and the groomsmen side on the front right with immediate family behind.

- 10. WEDDING FLOWERS:** In addition to corsages, boutonnieres, and bouquets, floral arrangements are encouraged. Flowers, plants, etc. should be natural or of quality silk. They should be tastefully designed. Floral decoration should not impede the ritual movement and action. A floral arrangement may be placed in front of (but not on) or extending above the altar. One may be placed in front of the lectern.

The entire church is considered an area of decoration. If flowers, etc., are used to decorate the ends of pews, they should be placed at regular intervals along the entire length of the aisles.

We welcome any floral arrangements you may wish to leave in the church after the wedding. However, we also respect your plans to bring them to the reception hall. All flower peddles must be cleaned up after the wedding as we have weekend masses beginning at 4 p.m. at St. Mary’s and 6 p.m. at St. Barbara.

- 11. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING:** The liturgy during which you and the entire community celebrate your marriage is a sacred moment of rejoicing in prayer, song, and gesture. Photograph taking and videotaping should not detract from the sacred ritual. Flash photography is not allowed after the liturgy of the Eucharist has begun.

Photographers and videographers are not permitted to roam about the church once the liturgy has begun. However, they may take pictures from the choir loft or another agreed upon stationary position.

Only the lighting already available in the church may be used. No additional lighting may be brought into the church. After the wedding, and provided there is time which will not conflict with another scheduled liturgy, picture taking (including flash) is permitted.

12. OTHER:

- A. “White Carpet” (runner) is optional.
- B. The members of the wedding party are expected to conduct themselves in a respectable manner. Do not consume alcohol prior to the wedding. Practical jokes and “funny” props are not permitted.
- C. Throwing rice, bird seed, confetti, etc. outside the church following the wedding is not permitted.
- D. The wedding party must ensure the church and its hall, if used, are restored to original cleanliness.