

## Confession

As you prepare to celebrate your wedding day, it would be a good idea for anyone who is Catholic to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If a priest is the celebrant at your wedding, he may encourage you to go to confession the night of the rehearsal. If a deacon is presiding at your wedding, you are encouraged to either go to confession at the normally scheduled times at any parish or make arrangements to meet with a priest.

## Wedding Coordinator

Sometimes the priest may enlist the assistance of a wedding coordinator. The primary function of the wedding coordinator is to provide support to both the priest and to the wedding families.

The wedding coordinator will contact the bride/groom several weeks before the wedding to see if they have any questions or concerns. He/she will not only attend the wedding, but will also attend the entire wedding rehearsal. This will be the time to get any last minute questions answered. The coordinator will show you where you will be getting dressed before the wedding and how to use the air conditioning if needed.

# Marriage Prep and Wedding Guidelines



[www.MidtownCatholic.Church](http://www.MidtownCatholic.Church)

402-556-1456

St. Joan of Arc  
7430 Hascall St  
Omaha, NE 68124

St. Thomas More  
4804 Grover St  
Omaha, NE 68106

*The following guidelines have been gathered to help you prepare for your wedding day at St. Thomas More or St. Joan of Arc.*

## **Scheduling the Wedding**

The Wedding will need to be scheduled through the priest/deacon. It will need to find its way onto the main church calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts. Due to the nature of Advent and Lent, the Church traditionally has not encouraged weddings at these times, but they are permitted. Do not change the time of your wedding without first consulting the priest/deacon. Before you book your hall for the reception, please inquire with the parish about open dates available. The latest time we can have weddings on Saturdays is 2:00pm. Friday evening weddings are becoming more popular. The time on Fridays is more flexible.

### **Rehearsal**

The Rehearsal for your wedding usually takes place the evening before the ceremony. The time will be set when your wedding date and time are set. Remind everyone participating to be on time or arrive early.

## **Planning the Ceremony**

Please refer to the *Celebration of Matrimony Workbook* as you begin planning your ceremony. Many of your questions will be answered there. You will have time with your priest/deacon to go through, step by step, the details of the ceremony. However, please feel free to ask as many questions as you need to at any time.

### **Attendants**

While not a hard and fast rule, 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.

These arrangements need to be made beforehand with the priest who is instructing you.

## **Livestream**

St. Thomas More has the capability to livestream the wedding. However, we are dependent on a limited number of volunteers who know how to run the equipment and they are not always available. If you desire it to be livestreamed or recorded using the church's equipment, you should consider making an extra donation. See fees below. Please inform the priest/deacon several months in advance about your desire to have the wedding livestreamed.

## **Fees**

We do not charge a fee for weddings at St. Thomas More or St. Joan of Arc. That said, we hope your experience is a good one and you would consider a donation to your respective parish. The normal donation amount is \$250.

Sometimes the parish will provide a wedding coordinator to provide support to both the priest and to the wedding families. Your donation to the parish would also be used to give a \$50 stipend to the wedding coordinator.

If you plan to have your wedding livestreamed, please consider a \$30 donation for that person as well.

Your musicians are paid separately and their fee is arranged with them.

## **Clean Up**

A reminder that the dressing areas must be cleaned up before the wedding. After the ceremony please have someone appointed to clean up the cry room, the entry of the church, and the pews for any wedding paraphernalia, wedding programs, Kleenex, etc. that is left behind. The ushers can be especially helpful in this regard.

## Documentation

### Baptismal Certificates

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.

### Marriage License

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 or deacon who will be the celebrant for your marriage.**

## Bride's Dressing Room

For both parishes, rooms for dressing before the ceremony can be provided upon request for both the men and the women. We ask that the you appoint someone to make sure the place is clean and tidy when you leave. All garbage should be placed in the garbage container. If it is a Friday wedding during the school year, be aware that we may not be able to accommodate you with a room until 5pm. The Wedding Coordinator will ensure these rooms are available and will also lock up after the ceremony.

## Visiting Priests

Any priest who is a friend or relative of bride or groom is welcome to celebrate the wedding Mass and to witness the exchange of vows and rings.

## Children

Small children oftentimes are not good choices as attendants even though they may be “cute as 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 hazard than help and may even be disruptive to the ceremony.

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 lectors. We will not use altar servers.

## Decorations

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 like bows or adornments are allowed on the pews, but discouraged. Aisle runners are not allowed and the scattering of flower petals on the floors is not permitted. The custom of throwing rice, bird seed, confetti, balloons, or anything else is not permitted inside or outside the buildings. It can cause a cleaning problem and become a safety issue for those who are not sure-footed.

## Lectors

Readers must be Catholic and be comfortable proclaiming to a large group of people. Make sure the lector has a copy of the readings beforehand so that the necessary practice can take place.

## Liturgical Ceremony

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. There is a liturgy checklist contained in the booklet entitled *Celebration of Matrimony Workbook*. This list should be filled out and approved by the priest /deacon officiating at the ceremony. This will be completed along with your wedding program during the final sessions with the priest/deacon assisting you.

### Music

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.

We ask that couples contact Rachel Bielstein from our office at least 3 months prior to the wedding date. Rachel will help pick your music and the musicians who best fit your music preferences. Musicians are paid separately.

[Rachel Bielstein](#)

Phone - 402-556-1456

Email - [rjbielstein@midtowncatholic.church](mailto:rjbielstein@midtowncatholic.church)

### Mass or No Mass

When deciding whether or not to have a wedding with a Mass, the primary consideration is the religious preference of the couple being married. If both parties are baptized Catholics, it is preferred that your marriage take place within a Mass. If one of the parties is a baptized non-Catholic or a non-Christian, the typical preference is to celebrate the rite without a Mass.

If you are a Catholic and intend to marry a non-Catholic and wish

to do so within a Mass, you should be aware that your non-Catholic spouse will still not be allowed to receive communion.

Non-Catholic attendees at a wedding are also asked not to receive communion. This may be an additional consideration as you make your decision if large numbers of family and/or friends are not Catholic.

## Photography/Videography

It has become common to have a photographer and/or videographer capture various moments of the marriage celebration. It is very important, however, for those taking pictures to be aware of the sacred space and the sacred rites taking place.

1. We encourage bridal couples to have pictures taken before the ceremony begins. If it is necessary to take some pictures after the ceremony, time is very limited because of other activities occurring in church.
2. Please discourage loud and boisterous behavior during the picture taking.
3. Photos may be taken on the steps of the sanctuary, but not in the sanctuary area itself (behind the altar area).
4. No furniture is to be moved in the sanctuary without consulting the Wedding Coordinator or priest/deacon who is officiating.
5. No flash is to be used during the ceremony. However, flash photos may be taken during the processional and recessional.
6. Photographers are not to be in the sanctuary space during the ceremony. Cameras for video may be set up at appropriate spots. Consult the Wedding Coordinator or priest.

## Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

Absolutely no alcohol, food, drink (with the exception of water), gum, or tobacco products are allowed anywhere in the church and school facilities, including the dressing rooms and bathrooms. If your priest/deacon suspects you or your wedding party are in any way impaired, he is obligated to delay or cancel the wedding.

All use of tobacco products and vaping should be restricted to designated areas.