



## St. Olaf Catholic Church Wedding Guidelines

### What must we do to be married at St. Olaf?

First: Contact the parish office 715-832-2504 ext. 100 to set your wedding date and confirm the availability of the presider. A Reservation Form will be provided and must be returned promptly to the parish.

Second: FOCCUS Inventory information will be provided. Upon completion of FOCCUS Inventory a FOCCUS Inventory couple will be assigned to each engaged couple.

Third: schedule an appointment with the Director of Sacred Music to discuss the role of music and other elements of the marriage liturgy.

Fourth: the couple will complete the Two Becoming One, marriage preparation weekend currently held at St Olaf Parish.

Fifth: Obtain a copy of Baptismal Certificate. If Catholic, the Baptismal Certificate will have all required information. Other than Catholic Baptisms please obtain Communion and Confirmation information as well as Baptismal Certificate. For individuals baptized at St Olaf, we will already have the information.

Sixth: After having obtained the Baptismal Certificate (and related required documents) schedule an appointment with the presider for your wedding liturgy. This meeting should occur 90 days prior to the wedding ceremony.

Seventh: couples are encourage to attend Natural Family Planning (NFP) classes. Information for on-line or person-to-person presentations is available on the Diocese of La Crosse web page.

Eighth: at the marriage rehearsal, the couple will provide the marriage license and cover any unpaid fees/stipends.

Finally: since your plan for marriage is a response to God's will in your lives, it is important to remain spiritually connected to Him in your daily lives. It is important to pray regularly (and together). Christians are reminded of the Commandment to "Keep holy the Sabbath," particularly through weekly church attendance. Catholic Christians are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation before marriage and ideally would participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation near the time of their wedding.

### If one of us was married before, can we still get married in the Catholic Church?

That depends. While this is not a real complicated question to answer, no one can answer it without knowing the exact circumstances. The best way to find out is to ask a priest, deacon, or other pastoral minister in the parish or diocese in which you plan to be married.

### If my fiancé is not Catholic, is there anything special we have to do to be married in a Catholic Church?

No more than any other couple, except that the Catholic party must promise to do his/her best to see that any children born of the marriage will be raised Catholic. We encourage those planning an interfaith marriage to learn, appreciate and understand as much as possible about the faith background of the other partner. An interfaith marriage can be a truly beautiful relationship when both partners have faced the religious questions honestly right from the start. It can be very difficult and painful when this is not done.

### How do we decide whether or not to have Mass with our wedding?

You should make your decision in consultation with a member of the clergy. You will want to consider the following:

What is our relationship to the Sunday Eucharist?

Are we faithful to the Church's Sunday prayer?

Have we been away from the community's prayer?

Have we committed ourselves to returning?

If one of you is non Catholic, he/she will be unable to receive Holy Communion if the wedding is celebrated during Mass. Do you wish to include something in the celebration in which only one of you will be able to partake? It is for this reason that the Catholic Church encourages interfaith couples to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage within the Liturgy of the Word.

Is Mass or Liturgy of the Word the better context for the Sacrament of Marriage? Some people seem to think that a couple is not really married unless the sacrament occurs during Mass. This is simply not true. The sacrament is the sacrament regardless of the context. Be open and honest with the presider with whom you are preparing your wedding and make the decision which will provide for the most prayerful celebration.

### Can we have our wedding outdoors?

No, the marriage regulations for the Diocese of La Crosse require that priests and deacons who officiate at weddings in the diocese can only do so in a church. There are very good reasons for this policy and our diocese enforces it strictly.

### Is there a limit to the number of attendants we can have?

You, the bride and groom, are the focal point of the wedding, and an excessive number of attendants detracts from this focus and crowds the sanctuary. Therefore St. Olaf encourages a limit of five couples. Due to historical implications, children under the age of 12 will only be allowed in the processions and cannot stand with the wedding party during the ceremony.

### Are there any financial charges for the wedding?

The fee to the church is \$200.00. This offering is

used to aid the poor through the parish's "Fund for Works of Charity." It is not given to the minister, the musicians, or used for general parish use. Those who are not members of the parish or are inactive members will make an additional \$200.00 offering for the general operating of the parish.

Should you wish to give a monetary gift to the priest or deacon who presides at your wedding, the amount of \$100 is suggested.

Musicians have their own fees; arrangements need to be made with them. The Director of Sacred Music is able to help you with this.

#### How is the wedding service determined?

The celebration of the wedding is determined by the Ritual of Marriage of the Catholic Church. Recently, the practice of using a Unity Candle has been requested by couples as part of their church celebration. This element is not part of the Rite of Marriage and is not to be included in the church service. Couples may want to incorporate this element at their reception. The Mass schedule at St. Olaf requires that all weddings begin no later than 1:30 pm.

#### Music and Your Wedding Liturgy

Music is a basic and integral part of Catholic Worship, and so it should be for your wedding celebration, whether you decide to have Mass or Liturgy of the Word. It is not a frill, but an important and basic element that cannot be overlooked when planning your wedding ceremony. There are parts of the celebration that need to be done with music, and the most important times are those for congregational song. Unfortunately, this is usually the last type of music that couples consider. Allowing an organist or soloist to perform all of the music in your wedding is not compatible with Catholic Liturgy. Planning music in which the entire assembly can take part is a vital requirement when planning music for your celebration. To put it another way, the music must fit the context of faith and dignity of the occasion. The texts should speak to the Christian concept of marriage, not simply a romantic one. Every generation has its love songs, and some of them are great music. They may have a place in your wedding day, but not as part of your wedding liturgy.

It's also important to remember that your wedding belongs to more than just the two of you. Those who have come to share the day with you want and deserve the opportunity to help you celebrate by lifting their hearts and voices in song. They aren't there to be passive; let them celebrate with you. Select music to help them do that. Choose songs and refrains that they can sing. By doing this, you give them a sense that this is a celebration of joy where everyone can participate. They don't have to wait until the reception to express their joy!

We will also help you create the worship aid for your wedding. You can take it to the printer and make as many copies as you need.

#### Who may play and sing at our wedding?

St. Olaf has a strong tradition of faith-filled, talented and competent musicians who are specially trained to assist in planning and ministering the music for your wedding liturgy. Therefore you are expected to choose from St Olaf musicians who have been trained for this ministry. They will negotiate their fees with you as you determine your needs. You may have friends or family members who wish to sing for your wedding as well. Please consult with our Director of Sacred Music at 715-832-2504 ext 105.