

10755 N 124th St, Scottsdale, AZ 85259

## **WEDDING GUIDE**

*“You are embarking on a journey in Christ toward a union of heart and soul...now begins the preparations to fortify a sound foundation to build on for eternity.”*

Father Michael Straley

And

Father Simon Osuchukwu

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Dear future bride and groom,

Since you are reading this book, it becomes obvious that congratulations are in order. You are embarking on a journey in Christ toward a union of heart and soul. It is a tremendous step you are undertaking; and now begins the preparations to fortify a sound foundation to build on for eternity.

The journey you are beginning will be a winding road and you will be amazed at how quickly your wedding day will arrive. With proper attitude, the marriage preparation process can be as fulfilling as the festivities of the wedding day itself. Your personal outlook will play an important role in this fulfillment. Be serious, but relaxed and open. You stand on a threshold and will soon open the door to learning and understanding many new things about your future spouse, even if you think you know...all there is to know.

The celebration of marriage is a very special time for you, your family, and friends, as well as for this parish community. It is an occasion of great joy and we all look forward to your wedding day. You are not alone.

In the Catholic Church there is no such thing as a private liturgy; all liturgies are communal. Just as your lives touch and affect others, so will your wedding. As you prepare the liturgy, never underestimate the impact your wedding will have on those who gather to celebrate with you. Married couples will recall and, in some degree, renew their own commitment; couples experiencing a difficult marriage will be inspired to make a fresh commitment; and young people planning to marry will experience the dignity and sacredness of your liturgy and strive to model their own from yours. Your marriage liturgy will touch the lives of all present and invite them to a renewed and deepened faith.

We join with you in the celebration of your engagement and future wedding. This parish, your priests, and parish staff, are here to support and assist you as you prepare for your wedding day and for every day that follows as you continue the journey to live out your marriage covenant.

May the Lord, who has begun this good work in you, bring it to fulfillment!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael Straley & Fr. Simon Osuchukwu

## **Prayer for the Engaged Couple:**

May almighty God bless you.

May he keep you close to him and to one another.

May he make you generous in giving and humble in receiving. May he enable you to communicate your joys, sufferings, desires and hopes.

May he give you a love that will forget self and live for each other.

May he grant you love and happiness, peace and joy, and strength in trials, all the days of your life together.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## **The First Steps:**

**Initial Meeting:**

The first step in your marriage preparation is to meet with Ryan Ayala for an initial interview. You can schedule this appointment directly with Ryan by calling the parish office. Please note that St. Bernard of Clairvaux requires that this initial meeting take place at least nine months prior to any proposed wedding date. This is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete all of the marriage preparation requirements.

We are excited to help you prepare for your upcoming marriage. In this initial meeting Ryan will begin getting to know you and maybe a little bit about “the story” of how you have discerned that God is calling you to marriage. In addition, this first meeting also involves getting started on the paperwork required for marriage. You can help this process along if you bring with you the following:

**Baptism Certificates** – For Catholics you will need to obtain a recent certificate from the church where you were baptized. Please be prepared to provide the name of the church and the approximate date of your baptism. For baptized non-Catholics, we will need a copy of your baptismal record as well. This can be a copy of the original or one newly issued by the church where the baptism took place.

**Previous Marriage Information** – If previously married you will need to bring previous marriage license(s) and divorce decree(s) as well as any Catholic annulment decree(s). Death certificates for any deceased former spouse(s) are also needed.

Please do not set a definite wedding date until after this initial meeting. Only after the approval of the priest can your wedding date be added to the parish calendar.

**FOCCUS Inventory:**

Ryan will arrange for you to take an inventory known as FOCCUS, which stands for Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study. The point of FOCCUS is to help you as a couple discuss issues related to your future marriage such as communication skills, problem solving, finances, extended family issues, sexuality, religion, children, etc. Most couples really enjoy this process and say that it gives them a lot to talk about. Ryan will give you instructions for taking the FOCCUS Inventory online, and will review the results at a future meeting or meetings.

**Follow-up Meeting:**

At the end of your initial meeting, Ryan will schedule a time for a follow-up meeting. This meeting will be spent going over the results of the FOCCUS inventory. Depending on the length of the discussion, sometimes a second follow-up meeting is scheduled.

**The People Involved:**

There are several people who will be involved in various aspects of your marriage preparation.

**\*Marriage and Family-** Ryan Ayala will assist you in reserving the church for the date of your wedding at the time of your 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>n</sup> meeting, as well as questions relating to your marriage preparation classes.

**\*Priests** – You will meet probably 1-2 times with the priest preparing you for marriage. However, you are always free to schedule an appointment, either together or individually, to speak with him.

**\*Wedding Coordinator** — Mrs. Mary Stevens will assist you with questions relating to your rehearsal and wedding and will also assist you and the priest in planning the details of your wedding. Our wedding coordinator is familiar with all the policies regarding weddings at St. Bernard of Clairvaux as well as with the requirements of the Catholic Church regarding the marriage ceremony. She will be present at the rehearsal and on the wedding day to make sure that everything runs smoothly. Please contact her as soon as possible after your initial meeting with the priest and consult with her regarding the details of planning your wedding.

**\*Music Director** – Mr. Kent Campbell will assist you in making arrangements for your wedding music. All music chosen for the wedding liturgy must meet the criteria set forth later in this book and receive approval of the Music Director.

**\*Personal Wedding Consultants** – From time to time a couple will hire their own wedding consultant to assist in the planning of their wedding day. The Wedding Coordinator here at St. Bernard of Clairvaux is normally more than adequate to assist you. However, if you do choose to hire an additional consultant on your own, please note that the Priest and Wedding Coordinator here will conduct the rehearsal and are in charge of everything that happens at the church.

\*\*\*We've got a great team here at St. Bernard of Clairvaux to assist you in preparing for the special day of your wedding. Also, remember that you, the bride and groom, are the ones getting married. **It is only fitting that all correspondence, in person visits, phone calls, emails, etc. come from you, not family, friends, or wedding consultants.**

## **Preparing for Marriage:**

As you begin the “marriage preparation” process you might automatically think of “wedding planning” and all the details of the ceremony. However, there are really two things that you need to prepare for at this time. Yes, you are preparing for your wedding day, but you are also preparing for marriage itself, the lifetime commitment you are about to make. Only when you understand what marriage is in the Church will you be able to understand what the wedding liturgy is all about. For that reason, we will first look at preparing for marriage and then consider preparing for a wedding.

Marriage is a Sacrament. Marriage is one of the seven sacraments given to the Church by Jesus Christ. A sacrament is a sacred ritual instituted by Christ in which the grace of God is given to us in a special way. In the sacrament of marriage, the bride and the groom freely enter into a lifetime commitment of fidelity to each other and to the raising of children. When this commitment is made publicly before a priest and two witnesses, God creates a permanent bond between the spouses such that they are no longer two but one. Through the sacramental grace of marriage God strengthens the spouses to aid them in living out this commitment.

Given that marriage is a sacrament, one of the most important things you can do to prepare for marriage is to be living a sacramental life in the Church. If you are Catholic then you should have already received the following sacraments:

- Baptism

- Penance/Confession
- First Communion
- Confirmation

Are you missing any of these? If so, then now is the time to talk with the priest about completing your initiation in the Church

Living a sacramental life in the Church also means receiving the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance on a regular basis. Catholics are bound under a serious obligation to attend Mass every Sunday (or Saturday evening) and on Holy Days of Obligation. If you want to set your marriage on a firm foundation for you and your children, then it is critical that you are first faithful to the commitments you have to God as a Catholic.

#### “Mixed Marriage”

The Church recognizes the marriage between a Catholic and another baptized Christian as being a celebration of the sacrament of marriage. For a Catholic to marry a Christian baptized in another denomination, permission is needed from the Bishop. The priest will request this permission for you.

Catholics are not allowed to marry non-Christians without an exception (called a dispensation) being granted by the Bishop. The priest will request the necessary dispensation for you.

In either case, there are certain conditions that must be met before the Church will allow a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic:

The Catholic party must swear under oath that he or she realizes the serious obligations he or she has regarding the faith and that he or she intends to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church. He or she promises to do all in his or her power to have his or her children baptized and raised as Catholics. The non-Catholic party must be made aware of the oath sworn by the Catholic party.

The primary responsibility that each of you will have as spouses is to help ensure that both you and your children are one day in heaven together. At a minimum, before any permission or dispensation is sought for a mixed marriage, the priest must be certain that this marriage does not present a temptation for the Catholic to abandon the practice of the faith. While this is the minimum, the truth is that a mixed marriage presents great challenges to both parties. Children notice very quickly if one spouse goes to Mass and the other doesn't. Be sure to discuss these issues and any concerns you have with the priest.

For those not Catholic who would like to learn more about the Catholic faith of your future spouse, you may consider attending the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.). The R.C.I.A. is attended by those non-Catholics wanting to learn more about the Catholic faith, as well as those who are interested in becoming Catholic.

#### **Regional Marriage Preparation Classes:**

In order to help couples prepare for marriage from both the spiritual and the practical side. These classes are led by a trained married couple and will normally have around five or six other engaged couples participating. The classes are interactive and very practical.

**Natural Family Planning Orientation:**

Human sexuality is sacred and holy. It is through the gift of sexuality that a couple speaks the truth of their wedding vows with their bodies. Conjugal love expresses total self-gift, faithfulness and commitment, and openness to life and procreation.

Contraception, however, closes off the openness to life and prevents a couple from speaking the truth of their wedding vows. For this reason, the Catholic Church teaches, as all Christian churches have always taught until very recently, that the use of contraception within marriage is immoral. Your fertility is a gift from God and not a disease to be treated with potentially dangerous chemicals. While society has almost completely separated the natural connection between sexual intercourse and children, the Church continues to recognize the gift of children as God's crowning glory of marriage.

With that being said, the Church does not teach that a couple must have as many children as they are physically capable of producing. Through careful prayer and discernment, a couple may come to believe that God is not calling them to have any more children either temporarily or for the remainder of their marriage. They may also discern that there is a serious reason to avoid a pregnancy. This is where Natural Family Planning can be useful.

Natural Family Planning is a term used to describe several methods of pinpointing when a woman is fertile each month. It has nothing to do with the old "rhythm method" or timing a woman's cycle. This is new technology that teaches couples how to observe symptoms in the wife's body to determine fertility. When this information is used to avoid a pregnancy, it is over 99% effective (just as good as with the common contraceptive pill). However, NFP is also over 75% effective at achieving pregnancy when used for that purpose. Unlike with contraception, couples that practice NFP actually enhance their marriage and their communication as a couple and avoid all the other harmful spiritual and physical side effects of contraception. It's also free!

Sadly, most couples today have never heard of NFP or know little about it. The best way to begin learning about NFP is to attend a class taught by a certified instructor. At St. Bernard of Clairvaux we require all couples preparing for marriage to receive instruction in Natural Family Planning.

**Cohabitation:**

Cohabitation means living together prior to marriage. Studies by sociologists have shown this is harmful to marriage. In fact, couples that live together prior to marriage have a 50% higher rate of divorce.

Moving in with your fiancé means surrendering your independence and freedom and jeopardizing your ability to have a true courtship. What happens if one party begins to have reservations or doubts prior to marriage? If you have moved in together, it's not so easy to step back and look at things objectively. In addition, cohabiting can increase pressure on a couple to go through with marriage when one or both parties may not be ready. It's easy to think, "We are already living as a married couple, why not make it official?" Likewise, since you are living together, outside pressures can increase as other people presume that you will get married.

For a marriage to be valid, it must be entered into freely by both parties. Living together before marriage can seriously jeopardize your ability to validly enter marriage.



## Preparing for a Wedding

### **A Wedding is Sacred Worship:**

As you begin to plan your wedding ceremony you no doubt have many ideas. Perhaps you've envisioned what this day will look like and how everything will go for quite some time. We want you to be very involved in the planning of this celebration. However, we also want you to realize right from the beginning that this is not just "your" wedding. The celebration of the sacrament of marriage is a sacred celebration of the entire Church and is fundamentally an act of sacred worship offered to God.

The Catholic Church worships in a public way that is carefully regulated. Many of our traditional rites have come down to us nearly unchanged over thousands of years. While the Rite of Marriage allows for certain cultural adaptations, you may find that what you have seen at other weddings or on TV does not match what the Church asks for in the celebration of marriage.

Remember that your wedding ceremony is not meant so much to be a celebration of you but rather a celebration of God. Any appearance of a "show" is to be strictly avoided. In the wedding liturgy we praise God for what he has done in creating man and woman and we ask his blessings as he makes the two of you one in marriage.

## The Three Forms of the Rite of Marriage

**The Rite of Marriage Within Mass** – For two Catholics entering into marriage the normal context for the celebration of marriage is within Mass.

\* As the two of you become one in your exchange of consent, so you share together in the one bread and the one cup of the Eucharist as Jesus strengthens you with His Body and Blood.

**The Rite of Marriage Outside Mass** – When a Catholic marries another baptized Christian this is the normal form of marriage. It resembles very much the Liturgy of the Word at Mass with readings from Sacred Scripture followed by the exchange of consent. There is no celebration of the Eucharist or distribution of Communion.

**The Rite of Marriage Between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person** – This rite is essentially the same as the Rite of Marriage Outside Mass except that the prayers are sensitive to the fact that one party is not Christian and this is not a sacrament being celebrated.

When you have your initial meeting with the Wedding Liturgy Coordinator she will explain which form of marriage will be used for the celebration of your wedding. Please be sure to clarify this detail before proceeding with planning the wedding liturgy.

### **Convalidation:**

A convalidation means that a civil marriage is validated in the Catholic Church. This occurs when a Catholic person or couple did not follow the law of the church that requires every Catholic person to receive permission and preparation to be married in the Church. A convalidation is necessary for a

Catholic to be in full union with the church and receive Sacraments. A civil marriage may occur for several reasons:

- 1) lack of knowledge,
- 2) apathy, or
- 3) a prior union requiring a declaration of nullity or a death certificate.

In any case, the marriage may be validated, when both persons are free to marry in the Church no sooner than one year from the date of the civil union. Because a union has already existed, the name “con-validation” is used for this type of ceremony. The ceremony must therefore be in keeping with the reality of the present condition. The ceremony may be celebrated:

- 1) after the sacramental confession of the Catholic party(s),
- 2) any day of the week, at any hour convenient to the couple, the church, pastor
- 3) usually outside of Mass, involving only a Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Marriage
- 4) with only family and close friends in attendance,
- 5) with attire that can be formal, but that should not include a white or ivory dress or veil, and
- 6) with the couple approach the Altar together (as opposed to the bride being “given.”)

#### **Ministries of the Liturgy:**

The word “ministry” may be unfamiliar to you, yet if you look at a Sunday Mass you will notice that many people are involved, greeting, leading the assembly in prayer and song, reading, and distributing Communion. Many of the same ministries are needed for the wedding liturgy.

#### **The Couple:**

In the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, the bride and groom are the ministers of marriage. The presiding priest serves as the Church’s official witness. It is the couple who gives themselves in God, one to another, in marriage.

Since you will be very visible during the wedding liturgy, your behavior, attitudes and clothing help to set the sacred tone for the entire assembly. Your participation in the prayers and sacred music will greatly assist all gathered to feel comfortable and at ease in taking an active role in the Church’s wedding liturgy.

#### **The Witnesses:**

While the entire assembly is a witness to your marriage, three individuals have special roles as witnesses in the Catholic Church’s liturgy and official records. The priest is the Church’s official witness. In addition, two designated individuals (commonly referred to as the “Best Man” and “Maid/Matron of Honor”) stand with you to fulfill the requirements of witnesses who formally attest to the fact that the wedding took place.

#### **The Wedding Party:**

In addition to the two official witnesses, couples often choose to have additional attendants accompany and stand with them (commonly referred to as groomsmen and bridesmaids). Their standing with the

couple on the day of the wedding indicates their willingness to stand with them for the rest of their lives and to aid the bride and groom in living out their commitment to marriage.

If you include children in the wedding party, we recommend that they be at least 5 years old. Children may not stand with the wedding party during the ceremony. The wedding party should be kept to a maximum of 6 couples.

**The Assembly:**

You should begin thinking about the people who will be at your wedding. From the perspective of worship, those present are not seen merely as guests, but as a community of witnesses who join you in prayer on this occasion. These people represent the local faith community, family, and friends. Together they become the voice of the Church, which speaks its word of faith and points you to a future life together.

If you think of the community in this way, you will want to invite their participation and hear their words of wisdom and support. In turn, you will enrich the community by your exchange of vows in which you freely accept one another in an intimate union and promise to nourish and develop your marriage with undivided affection. This promise of fidelity encourages the members of the community who are married in their own lives.

**Lectors:**

People who fulfill this liturgical ministry, proclaiming the Word of God, are not invited to this role by the bride and groom based simply on friendship. The invitation for this liturgical ministry should be offered to people who are trained and experienced in this area, to ensure that the roles will be fulfilled comfortably and competently.

Lectors MUST be Catholic and should be experienced serving in this ministry at their parish.

**Altar Servers:**

Altar Servers assist the presiding priest. The presiding priest will determine whether or not altar servers are needed. (at this time, the church does not use altar servers for weddings)

**Ushers and Hospitality Ministers:**

As people enter the Church, ushers who are warm and pleasant will help make the guests feel welcomed. They serve as ministers of hospitality who greet, distribute printed programs, and escort people to their seats.

## **The Order of the Liturgy**

**The Entrance Procession:**

Catholics should be familiar with the entrance procession that they witness every Sunday at Mass. Normally the altar servers lead the way (if needed), perhaps carrying a cross and candles. The entrance procession at a wedding is supposed to look very similar. The ritual describes it as follows: "If there is a procession to the altar, the ministers [altar servers] go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and bridegroom. According to local custom, they may be escorted by at least their parents and the two witnesses.

The wedding coordinator will assist you in planning the opening procession for your wedding. The Catholic Rite of Marriage suggests some different options from what is popularly seen. You should consider the following in planning your wedding procession:

- Both the bride and the groom in the procession. As mentioned above, the bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament, not the priest. It is therefore proper that both are in the procession. In fact, they could come in together, arm in arm, at the end of the procession.
- The bride and the groom can process in accompanied by both of their parents. This symbolizes the support of the families for the bride and groom who come together to begin a new family. It is appropriate that both the parents of the bride, as well as both parents of the groom, accompany them in the procession. Please note that the parents are not giving their children away in marriage. Sometimes we often hear, for instance, that the "father gives the bride away." In reality, the bride and groom freely give themselves to each other.
- The procession is a line, not a series of entrances. A procession is meant to show the unity of those involved. Therefore, in the Catholic Rite of Marriage, everyone in the procession comes in together rather than waiting for one group to reach the front before the next enters. If the bridesmaids and groomsmen enter in the procession then they can come as couples in front of the bride and groom or all the men can precede the groom and all the women precede the bride. Whatever arrangement is chosen, all those in the procession follow behind the priest and servers together in one joyous bunch.
- An entrance hymn may be sung. In the popular form of the wedding entrance couples typically enter the church while some kind of instrumental music is played. This means that all present in the assembly simply stand (or sit) and watch. Again, the Church envisions something closer to what we see at Sunday Mass. It can be truly joyous to have everyone join in singing an entrance hymn as all participate in this wonderful celebration.

### **The Liturgy of the Word:**

After the people have been called to prayer, a selection of Scripture readings is proclaimed. These readings represent the Bible's story of marriage, but the story is not told simply for you as the bride and groom; it is addressed to all. In selecting the readings, therefore, you should try to be aware of the broader community who will be listening.

The normal pattern is:

1. A first reading from the Old Testament
2. A Responsorial Psalm (sung)
3. A second reading from the New Testament
4. The Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)
5. A selection from one of the Gospels

**A homily** by the priest follows the readings. Only readings from the ritual Mass for marriage found in the approved Catholic Lectionary may be used. Readings from sources other than scripture are not allowed during the Liturgy of the Word. The complete selection of readings for the celebration of marriage can be found in the Together for Life booklet, which you will receive at your Wedding Liturgy Meeting.

**The Rite of Marriage:**

The focus of the Rite of Marriage is the exchange of consent between the bride and groom. The priest will question the couple about their intentions to enter marriage. Specifically, he will ask if you have come freely to give yourselves to each other in marriage, if you intend to be faithful to your spouse and if you are open to God's gift of children. He will then lead them in exchanging their consent.

**The Blessing and Exchange of Rings follows.** The Rite of Marriage may end with the General Intercessions which are prayers for the Church, the world, for all married couples, and for the two of you.

While not a part of the official Rite of Marriage in the Catholic Church, the following cultural adaptations have been allowed. Since they are not integral to the wedding liturgy, these gestures are optional, and there may be good reasons not to include them:

- Bouquet to the Blessed Mother – You may wish to place a bouquet of flowers and spend a quiet moment of prayer at the statue of the Blessed Mother. It was Mary who interceded to her Son on behalf of a newly married couple at their wedding feast in Cana (may follow the exchange of rings, or may occur after Communion). This devotional practice should be considered **ONLY** if the bride and/ or groom have an authentic devotion to Our Lady. It **should not be done** for show or even to merely provide an occasion for a desired piece of music (i.e. "Ave Maria.) or a photo moment.

**Liturgy of the Eucharist:**

When both the bride and groom are Catholic the liturgy normally continues with the celebration of the Eucharist. If one spouse is not Catholic, the wedding rite continues with the Lord's Prayer.

**The Lord's Prayer:**

This is one of the prayers in which the entire assembly participates. Catholic tradition and practice holds that the Lord's Prayer should be spoken.

**The Nuptial Blessing:**

This is a special prayer of blessing said by the priest asking God to bless the newly married couple. The Nuptial Blessing has several forms and is prayed at different places within the wedding liturgy depending on which form is being celebrated. The texts are prayers of intercession as well as prayers of hope for the future.

**Dismissal:**

At the conclusion of the wedding liturgy, the priest blesses the newly married couple and the assembly. This conclusion creates a bridge between the celebration of the marriage liturgy and any celebration following.

**Flowers:**

The use of flowers and plants should enhance the liturgical celebration and not detract from the primary symbol of the marriage: the bride and groom. Flowers are a symbol of honor and thanksgiving to God.

- “Floral decoration should never impede any of the ritual movement and action, but there are places in most liturgical spaces where floral decoration is appropriate and where it can be enhancing.”

- Past experience has shown that flowers do not work:

- \* On the nave floor, because they impede the flow for Communion and are not visible.

- \* In front of the Altar, as they impede the movement of ministers.

The sanctuary floor plan on page 21 of this guide indicates several locations where arrangements may be placed. Asterisks represent floral arrangements

- \* Next to the altar, on the floor

- \* In front of the Ambo

- \* On the baptistry

- Flowers or bows used to decorate the ends of pews should be placed at regular intervals along the entire length of the aisles. (Only soft plastic or padded pew holders may be used when attaching flowers or bows.) Aisle floral arrangements taller than the pew are not permitted.

- During the Christmas and Easter seasons, the church already will be decorated beautifully with flowers and plants as befits the liturgical observance. These may not be removed or moved; therefore, the addition of wedding flowers will not be allowed.

- Seasonal flowers and other items of decoration in the church may not be moved or rearranged.

- Flower girls are not permitted to drop flower petals.

- Aisle runners are not allowed as they can slide easily on marble and cause an injury.

- Only one hour prior to the liturgy is guaranteed for the setup of flowers. However, whenever possible this limit will be extended by the Parish office. This time extension is never determined until the week of the wedding.

- The following list identifies some of the colors used in the church during specific times of the year:

- \* Easter (usually early to mid-March until early June): white and gold

- \* Pentecost (usually early June): red

- \* Ordinary Time (usually mid-June to December and early/mid-January until mid-February): green

- \* Advent (Thanksgiving until December 24): purple

- \* Christmas (Christmas day until early/mid-January): white and gold There are other feast days that will have special decorations, but most of them use white as the symbolic color.

- We welcome any floral arrangements you wish to leave in the church after your wedding. These flowers would continue to enhance Parish worship

### **Wedding Dress/Bridal Party Attire**

Remember that church is a sacred place and your wedding ceremony is a form of worship. Modesty, particularly when it comes to the bridal dress and wedding party attire, is a virtue and **MUST** be observed. The requirement for modesty extends to ALL Liturgical ministers (Lectors, Gift Bearers,

Ushers, etc.) What is NOT allowed when looking for a bridal gown or bridal party dresses: Low cut front; low cut back, exposed cleavage, sheer bodice, or high slit dresses. Coverings like a shawl, wedding jacket, or bridal wrap can be used for the ceremony/mass and removed for the reception. Discretion and modesty must be observed at all times while in the church.

### **Music:**

We wish for you to have music at your wedding that will lend dignity, respect, and joy to your ceremony. The music — before, during, or after the ceremony — should serve to direct the people's attention to the sacredness of the event. The general policy to keep in mind as you plan your music: liturgical or classical music is the only music permitted before, during, and after the ceremony while in church. Secular music is best used at the reception. The parish music director who will help you make your choices, arrange an organist and cantor for you, and can provide names and contact information for additional musicians if you desire someone specific.

All music performed in the church and all guest musicians must be approved by the parish music director, Kent Campbell.

After meeting with parish wedding coordinator, you will next meet with the parish music director. Music is a very important part of a wedding celebration. As with any liturgical celebration, congregational singing is encouraged for those parts of the liturgy familiar to the participants. Appropriate music also sets the mood and creates an atmosphere for the wedding celebration. Sacred music — rather than non-religious (secular) or theatrical music — is required for the wedding liturgy. There are many beautiful songs written for the marriage ceremony, and the music director can recommend them to you. Favorite secular music may be more appropriate at the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception. Background music or instrumental accompaniment by tape or CD is not allowed in the church.

Additional vocal or instrumental soloists or ensembles also may provide music to enhance the celebration upon approval by the music director. The parish music director will be able to make recommendations of additional musicians, who are normally contracted and paid independently by the couple.

The parish music director normally rehearses with visiting musicians one hour before the wedding liturgy. Supplementary fees will be required if visiting musicians requested by the couple require additional rehearsal or assistance learning music for the wedding.

Musicians are not present for the wedding rehearsal, since the rehearsal is the chance for members of the wedding party to rehearse their parts in the liturgy.

### **Photographers:**

Photographers and the wedding party should keep in mind that the church is not a studio but a sacred space. **All are expected to keep their voices soft and to be reverent and respectful.** No sanctuary furnishings are to be moved or removed under any circumstances.

The following are our church's guidelines for taking pictures or video at your wedding celebration:

- The attached diagram indicates several locations from which professional photographers may take non-flash pictures and in which un-attended videotaping equipment may be set up. A stationary video camera on a tripod (un-attended) may be used. You may set up your cameras in these locations one hour prior to the wedding.
- There should be no standing on the pews or on chairs. You may take photos from the designated areas ONLY, please arrive no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the wedding for instructions.
- Flash photography is not allowed. Only the lighting already available in the church may be used for pictures taken during the wedding liturgy; no additional lighting may be used.
- Any pre-wedding pictures MUST conclude no later than 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony in keeping with church policy.
- After the wedding, pictures (with or without flash) may be taken. For Saturday weddings, pictures MUST conclude by 3p.m. when the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confessions) begins.
- The steps up to the Altar of Reservation are sacred space and no pictures may be taken on these steps. You may take group photos on steps leading to the sanctuary.
- If you're having a printed program for your wedding, please include a note asking the guests to refrain from taking pictures during the liturgy. Guests taking pictures can get in the way of your paid photographer and can distract and annoy other guests.
- The photographer/videographer should consult with our parish wedding coordinator at least one week prior to the wedding if necessary. There are no exceptions to these guidelines and the coordinator will confirm where they may be during the wedding.
- If there are last minute questions, please consult the wedding liturgy coordinator before the wedding. Bear in mind that all of these rules are the result of vast experience and serve the sole purpose of ensuring the beauty and dignity of your wedding celebration, which is also a public celebration of our parish church.

**Wedding Liturgy Guide (program):**

Some couples choose to print a wedding liturgy guide inviting all guests to fully participate in the liturgy. The information in the wedding liturgy guide must be coordinated with the wedding liturgy coordinator, but need not be approved by the celebrating priest. Outlines for the Rite of Marriage within Mass and the Rite of Marriage outside of Mass are found in this booklet.

**Other Key Considerations:**

Please advise the appropriate people of the following guidelines:

- It is best to have the guest book at the reception. If you choose otherwise, the guest book should be placed in the Narthex and closed five minutes prior to the wedding time. The guest book attendant may invite remaining guests to sign at the reception.
- Hospitality/Ushers should let guest remaining the narthex know to be seated as soon as they arrive, this is required to allow the ceremony begin on time. This means the family/guests must be seated a minimum 15 minutes prior to the start. To assure the prompt start of the wedding procession, it is recommended that parents and persons in the wedding party cease greeting guests in the vestibule/narthex at least fifteen minutes before the announced time of the wedding.
- No additional (outside) statuary is allowed in the church and nothing in the church may be moved.
- Large decorative archways are not permitted.



- No aisle runners allowed.
- Rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. are not permitted to be thrown in the church or on the property. Bubbles may be blown outside.

## **Rehearsal and Wedding Day**

### **Wedding Times:**

The church is available on Friday for weddings beginning between the hours of 11:00am and 3pm, and on Saturday at start times of 11:00 am and 1:00 pm ONLY. If marrying on a Friday, the church will be open one-and-a-half (1 1/2) hours prior to the ceremony for pictures. If pictures are taken after the ceremony, the church is available for one and a half hours after the start of the wedding. On Saturday, the church is available at 10:30 am for the 11:00am wedding and 12:00 pm for the 1:00 pm wedding. The ceremony, pictures, and clean up must be completed no later than 3:00 pm. **Note: A Saturday wedding does not fulfill the Sunday Mass obligation.**

Nuptial Masses are not celebrated on Sunday. In addition, weddings are not celebrated on Holy Days of Obligation, All Souls Day (Nov. 2), nor during Lent.

### **The Rehearsal:**

You should invite only those persons directly involved in the wedding ceremony. The rehearsal is the time to review and rehearse the ritual about to take place while focusing on the sacredness of the wedding day.

- Rehearsals normally take place the day before the wedding. Available rehearsal times depend upon the church's liturgical schedule, and will be arranged by the Wedding Coordinator in consultation with you and the presiding Priest.
- Rehearsals generally takes no more than one hour and begin promptly at the appointed time.
- Given the many Masses, Baptisms, and activities of the Parish, every wedding and rehearsal must begin at the assigned times. Changes may only be made in advance with mutual agreement of the Wedding Coordinator, and only if the times/dates are available on the church calendar.

### **The Wedding Day:**

- The parish has a wedding coordinator who is in charge of rehearsals and ceremonies in the church. She will prepare the altar, assist the families, and ensure that things move smoothly. If you hire an outside wedding consultant, they are welcome at St. Bernard's; however the parish wedding coordinator is responsible for the liturgy and all things occurring on the church property. If your wedding consultant is here for the ceremony, her/his function is to personally assist the bride and must not interfere with the rehearsal, wedding day preparation or ceremony.
- Consumption of alcohol or other such substances, by members of the wedding party, to include the bride and groom, is not permitted either before the rehearsal or the wedding. Evidence to the contrary will result in the person consuming the alcohol not participating in the wedding, or the wedding being canceled. Smoking is not permitted in or around the church building.
- Bridal Dressing Room: The bride and her attendants get ready in the Bride's Room on the south side of the Narthex. They may use the restroom in the hall. Note: All NO food allowed and beverages must be confined to the area and be cleaned up following the ceremony.

- Groom's Dressing Room/Priest Dressing Sacristy: The groom and his groomsmen may get ready Note: NO food and beverages (water only) must be confined to the area and be cleaned up following the ceremony.

Bride's Personal Assistant: It is helpful to you and the wedding coordinator if you select a friend (or two) as your "personal attendant(s)". This person should not have any other major role to play in the ceremony, as he/she needs to be free to run errands, communicate with the wedding coordinator, photographer, etc., and most importantly to see that food items, personal items, boxes, paper, floral arrangements, etc., are removed from the church, bride & groom's rooms immediately following the ceremony. We ask that you leave the facility as clean as you found it.

- Guest/Parking: Wedding guests may park in the north or south parking lots.
- We do have a Parish Hall available for receptions. Please contact the parish office for information on renting the space.

#### **Financial Considerations:**

Money can never be an obstacle to the celebration of the sacraments of the Church. There are nevertheless direct costs involved in celebrating a wedding that are normally borne by the couple. The parish office will assist you in providing the wedding fees. All fees are subject to change without notice. All fees MUST be paid 30 days in advance of the wedding date. An invoice will be provided to the bride and groom 30-45 days prior to the wedding date by the parish office.

#### **Final Thoughts:**

We hope this booklet has assisted you in beginning your preparation for marriage and for the planning or your wedding liturgy. The Church is here to help you during this special time and will be here to help you throughout your married lives. May God continue to bless the good work he has begun in you.

For lots of great information on marriage and more in-depth articles on the topics addressed in this book, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has created a website specifically devoted to marriage. You can find details about the wedding ceremony and other marriage preparation topics at the following address:

[www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)

## **Outline of the Celebration of Marriage within Mass**

Prelude (during seating of guests)

## **INTRODUCTORY RITES**

Procession (music)  
Entrance Song (sung)  
Greeting Gloria (sung)  
Collect (prayer)

## **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

First Reading  
Responsorial Psalm (sung)  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation (sung)  
Gospel  
Homily

## **SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Declaration of Intentions  
Exchange of Vows  
Blessing and Exchange of Rings  
Prayer of the Couple  
Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

## **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

Preparation of the Altar and Gifts  
Offertory Song (sung)  
Eucharistic Prayer; Sanctus (sung)  
Mystery of Faith (sung)  
Amen (sung)  
Communion Rite  
Our Father  
Nuptial Blessing  
Sign of Peace  
Agnus Dei (sung)  
Communion Song (sung)  
Prayer after Communion  
Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary (optional) (music)

## **CONCLUDING RITE**

Blessing and Dismissal  
Postlude (during the procession from the church and exit of worshippers)

## **Outline of the Celebration of Marriage Outside of Mass**

Prelude (during seating of guests)

## **INTRODUCTORY RITES**

Procession (music)  
Entrance Song (sung)  
Greeting Collect (prayer)

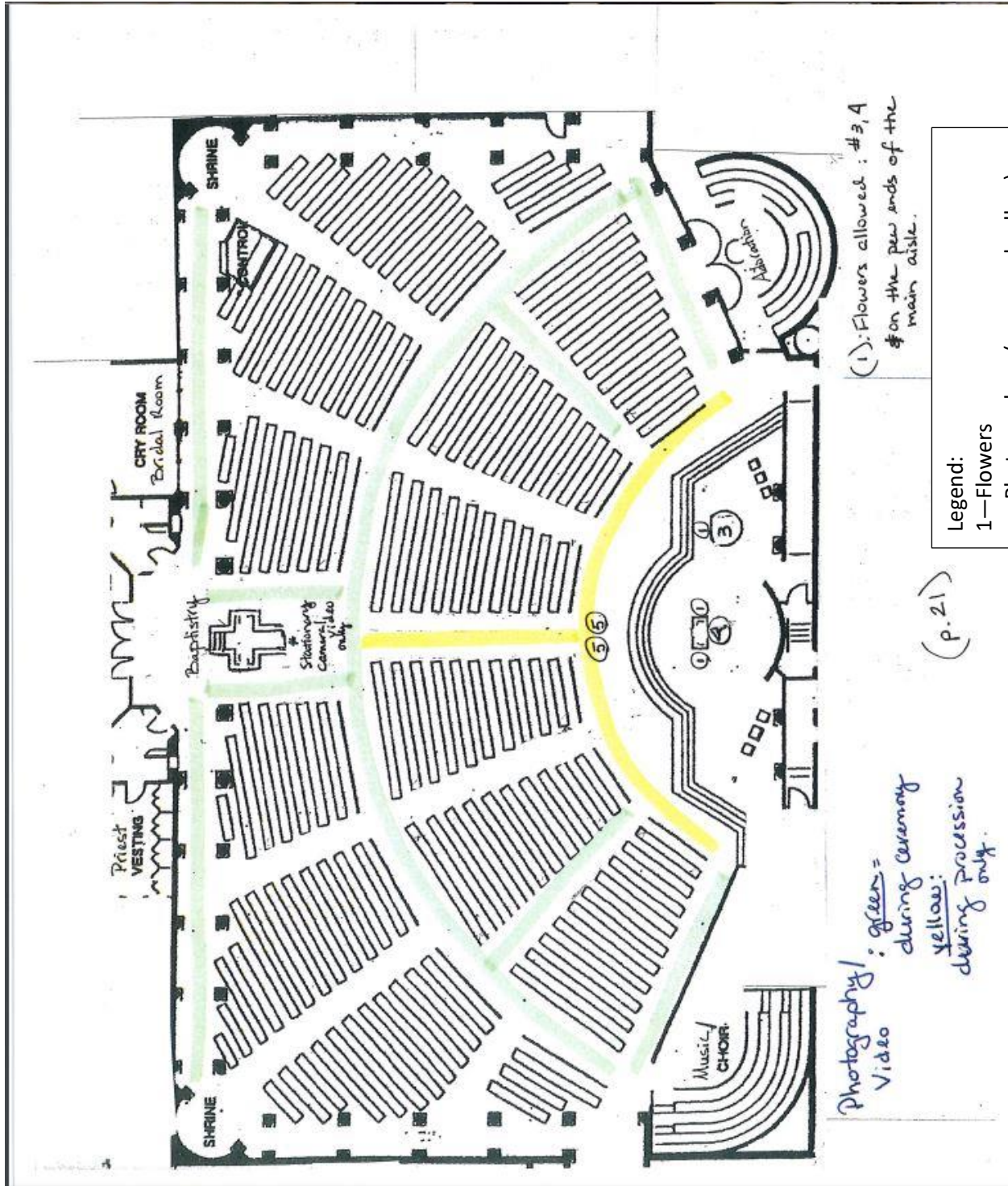
## **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

First Reading  
Responsorial Psalm (sung)  
Second Reading  
Gospel  
Acclamation (sung)  
Gospel  
Homily

## **SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Declaration of Intentions  
Exchange of Vows  
Blessing and Exchange of Rings  
Prayer of the Couple  
Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)  
Nuptial Blessing  
The Lord's Prayer  
Blessing Postlude (during the procession from the church and exit of worshippers)

Floor Plan Diagram and Layout-



- Legend:
- 1—Flowers
  - Photographers (green and yellow)
  - 3—Ambo
  - 4—Altar
  - 5—Wedding Kneelers

Photography / Video  
 greens = during ceremony  
 yellow = during procession only.

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**Important Phone Numbers:**

Father Michael Straley (Parish Priest) ..... (480) 661-9843  
Father Simon Osuchukwu (Parish Associate Priest) ..... (480) 661-9843  
Ryan Ayala (Director of Marriage and Family) ..... (480) 661-9843 x 309  
Parish Office Main Number..... (480) 661-9843  
Kent Campbell (Parish Music Director) ..... (480) 540-8850  
Mary Stevens (Wedding Liturgy Coordinator) ..... (480)221-3864

Mrs. Mary Stevens is the Parish Wedding Coordinator and represents the parish at all weddings. She is the parish office contact for all questions regarding directly related to your wedding liturgy and wedding day. She will meet with you to discuss your ceremony no later than three months prior to the wedding. However, you may contact her any time after your wedding date has been approved. She will assist in conducting the rehearsal and will coordinate the ceremony on the day of the wedding.