

Guidelines for

The Sacrament of Marriage

St. Gerald Catholic Church

Congratulation on your decision to commit yourselves to each other in the Sacrament of Marriage. The opening prayer of the Marriage Ceremony states that marriage is holy, “a symbol of Christ’s love for his Church.” Your love for each other should reflect the unconditional love that Christ has for His People, the Church.

*Father, you have made the bond
of marriage a holy mystery,
a symbol of Christ’s love for his Church.
Hear our prayers for N. and N.
With faith in you and in each other
they pledge their love today.*

May their lives always bear witness to the reality of that love.

Marriage is a Sacrament

Two people, who by their love, bring the person of Christ into each other’s lives. A civil bond is a legal contract between two individuals, whereas, the sacrament of marriage is the union of two faith-filled people with and in the person of Christ.

Practically speaking then, that means each person is attending his/her church regularly. (Otherwise, one is simply USING Christ, church, religion, the sacrament, and the priest.) If one is Catholic, it means receiving the sacraments often. To desire to receive the presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Marriage while neglecting one’s faith practice is a contradiction.

Scheduling

All weddings must be scheduled through the Parish Office (402-331-1955).

Weddings are held either at

- St. Gerald Church at 9602 Q Street
- St. Gerald Lakeview Chapel at 7859 Lakeview Street

Saturday weddings are scheduled no later than 1:30. Friday evening weddings take precedence over wakes and nothing will be scheduled which would conflict with a Friday evening wedding.

Before beginning the marriage preparation process, couples must meet with one of the parish priests. Ordinarily, it is one of the parish priests or deacons who will preside at your marriage liturgy. Exception to this norm would include a priest or deacon who is a relative or friend of the bride or groom. Any exceptions need to be discussed with one of the parish priests very early in the preparation process.

St. Gerald's Marriage Formation process is a dynamic process for engaged couples. The overall outcomes desired through this process include:

- Strengthening relationships, primarily with God, the couple, and the parish community.
- Review of the FOCCUS inventory to facilitate the conversation with the couple to prepare them for the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- To provide a mentor couple to the engaged couple to lead them through the Witness to Love process and accompany them through their first year of marriage.
 - This evangelization process is founded upon classical principles of relational virtues.
 - Sacramental preparation and enrichment.
 - The focus creates an environment through the Mentors that draw couples closer to Christ and creates a connection to the Parish community.

For questions about the Marriage Formation process, please contact Deacon Steve Luna, Marriage Formation Coordinator, at sjluna@archomaha.org

Archdiocesan policy requires a minimum of 6 months for marriage preparation. It is recommended that you contact the parish as soon as you are engaged. For further information of Catholic Weddings in the Archdiocese of Omaha, please visit the Archdiocesan website at <https://archomaha.org/marriageprep/>.

After completing your FOCCUS sessions and formation retreat, additional wedding planning will be provided by the priest or deacon at your parish. This will include planning the Rite of Matrimony and finalizing any pastoral formation specific to the couple.

Contact the Director of Music Ministry as soon as your wedding is scheduled to reserve your wedding date on their calendar and arrange a meeting to plan the music for the Liturgy. Please do not engage other musicians until you have met with the Director of Music Ministry.

A Wedding Sacristan will be assigned to each couple. The Wedding Sacristan will provide information to make sure all goes smoothly on your wedding day. Please respect and follow their suggestions and requests. They will be present at the rehearsal and the day of the wedding to answer any questions and prepare the church for the wedding liturgy.

Liturgy and Music

Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. As such, the marriage ceremony must maintain the norms of good sacramental liturgy.

Unity candles, sand blending or other such additions are not part of the marriage liturgy and are not included in the marriage liturgy at St. Gerald.

Sacred Music is integral to the liturgical life of the Church's worship of God. Because Matrimony is a public act of liturgical worship of the Church, the parish is ultimately responsible for the music in the liturgy to assure that the music is sacred in nature and reflects the idea of joy, gratitude, and hope for the blessings of life, and fit the spirit of the liturgy. Secular music and love songs borrowed from the entertainment industry, however touching, may not express a spirit which fits a Catholic wedding liturgy or Christian marriage.

Please note the following guidelines when planning your wedding music:

- All couples are required to meet with the parish Director of Music Ministry, who will help you select appropriated music for your wedding.
- The Marriage celebration involves not only the bride and groom, but family, friends and the entire church community. Musical choices should reflect this and encourage the full participation of all who will be present at the wedding.
- It is customary to have at a minimum, one organist/pianist and one cantor for wedding celebrations. St. Gerald has fine musicians ready to fulfill that need. Musicians from outside St. Gerald are allowed at the discretion of the St. Gerald Director of Music Ministry.
- If music is to be worship it must be performed live. Pre-recorded music is not allowed during the wedding liturgies at St. Gerald's.
- You are encouraged to use the sample program as a model for your own wedding liturgy guide to assist those in attendance to participate fully.

The time of rehearsal will be scheduled when you meet with the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding. NOTE: A wake service, out of necessity, may be scheduled on the evening of your rehearsal. We appreciate your flexibility in accommodating a wake, should one be scheduled. The parish office will inform you if the rehearsal time should need to be adjusted.

Use of Alcohol/Drugs

No form of alcohol or illegal drugs will be tolerated before or during the wedding. If any of the wedding party smells of alcohol, they will not be allowed to participate in the wedding. If the bride or groom has been drinking before the wedding, the wedding will be postponed.

Facility Access and Care

In most cases, you have access to the church, Narthex, Family Room and Bride's Room (Multipurpose Room) two and half hours before the ceremony time. If an earlier time is needed, arrangements will need to be made with the Wedding Sacristan and additional hourly fee will be accessed.

Should a Saturday morning funeral be scheduled, the Wedding Sacristan or Parish Office will inform you as soon as possible. A funeral may affect your access to the facility the morning of the wedding.

For Saturday weddings the church and narthex must be cleared of decorations and guests, by 3:45. The Bride's Room by 4:00pm. A wedding held during the week is expected to have

the church cleared of decorations and guests one hour and fifteen minutes after the ceremony.

Ushers for the wedding are asked to remove programs, Kleenex and other items from the church after the wedding so the environment is prepared for the next liturgy. All trash is to be placed in the proper receptacles.

If an outside vendor is providing decorations, it is necessary to inform them that decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony. Please provide outside vendor contact information to the Wedding Sacristan.

All food and drink are to be kept in the Bride's room or Family room. No food or drink is allowed in the narthex or church.

Liturgical Environment

St. Gerald's is decorated to provide an appropriated environment based on the Church's liturgical year. The liturgical season dictates the color of the banners, fabric and decoration of the church. The Sacrament of Marriage liturgies are held within the context of this structure. Therefore, decoration placed by St. Gerald's Environment Committee must not be removed or rearranged. The area under or top of the altar may not be used for decorations.

Weddings during Lent or Advent Season should respect the special time of this liturgical season, they should refrain from too much pomp or display.

Discuss decorating plan with the Wedding Sacristan. Flower stands (pedestals) are available for use, which match the candle stands. Bows, ribbons or flowers may be attached to the pews, if attached with pew clips or ribbon. Please do not use wire, tape or any type of adhesive. Fabric wraps are available to reserve pews, inform Wedding Sacristan, if needed.

Rice, confetti/glitter and/or seeds of any kind may not be thrown/dropped inside or outside the church. It is preferred that the flower girl does not drop flower petals, but, if she is dropping flower petals, it will be necessary to assign someone to pick-up the petals after the ceremony. The use of bubbles outside is allowed, please do not open bottles inside the church.

Photography and Video

Please share these policies below with your photographer and/or videographer. Encourage them to check-in with the Wedding Sacristan on the day of the ceremony.

Remember to respect the fact that the church is a worship space, photos need to be appropriate. **The Eucharist is reserved in the tabernacle and therefore the actions of those in the church should be appropriate and reverent.** If you are wondering if the photo is appropriate, it probably isn't. No items may be moved in order to take pictures. The use of flash photography during the ceremony is prohibited. No photographers or videographers are allowed in the sanctuary, in front of the pews or center aisle during the liturgy. Movement of photographers is to be kept to a minimum.

On Saturday, photos are to be finished by 3:45pm and all equipment immediately taken from the church.

Only one video camera or iPad is allowed. After the videographer has videoed the entrance, the video camera or iPad is to be placed on a tripod or a surface and not moved again, until the end of the service for the recessional. The Wedding Coordinator can inform the videographer where the camera can be placed and how the ceremony is performed so that they can get a good angle. No photographers or cameras are allowed in the sanctuary.

General Reminders

- ✓ Send or bring the signed and notarized marriage license to the Parish Office two weeks before wedding day. You will need:
 - License from State of Nebraska that the Bride and Groom has signed in the presence of a Notary.

Rehearsal Reminders

- ✓ Starting the rehearsal on time is important.
- ✓ Rehearsal time should be arranged with your priest or deacon.
- ✓ Rehearsals usually take less than an hour. Make sure that everyone is on time and attentive.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Wedding Sacristan the time to unlock church doors.
- ✓ If an earlier access time is needed, special arrangements need to be made with the Wedding Sacristan.
- ✓ Lectors/Readers should attend the rehearsal.
- ✓ Altar servers, who are not St. Gerald servers, need to attend the rehearsal.
- ✓ Children are to be properly supervised.

Wedding Day Reminders

- ✓ Starting the wedding ceremony on time is important.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Wedding Sacristan the time to unlock church doors.
- ✓ Children are to be properly supervised.
- ✓ Deliveries of flowers/food should be coordinated with the Wedding Sacristan.
- ✓ Photographer – appropriate photos in the worship space.
- ✓ Food and drink, other than water, needs to remain in the Brides room or the Family room.

Fees

- \$100 - Deacon: (Marriage prep: several facilitated discussions on the results of the FOCCUS Inventory.)
- \$85 - For the *Witness to Love* workbook and videos.
- \$75 - Wedding Sacristan: (Facility preparation, rehearsal, wedding day)
- \$200/person – Musician: (Consultation, warm-up rehearsal with musicians, playing for the liturgy.)
- \$150/person - Soloist/Cantor
- Sound Tech Stipend: \$75. **NOTE:** A sound technician is required, at the discretion of the Director of Music Ministry, if outside musicians are allowed.

Optional Fee

- \$75 - Live-stream of liturgy.
- \$125 - Digital recording of liturgy, includes one thumb drive.
- \$16.00/hour - Wedding Sacristan, additional hours before 11:00am on wedding day.

If you would like to rent the Fellowship Hall for your reception, contact the Parish Office.

Rental Fee for Fellowship Hall (6:30pm - midnight) is \$750 which includes:

- \$350 Deposit due at time of scheduling.
- \$400 Balance due at least 2 weeks prior to scheduled wedding date.
- \$250 Refundable Damage/Lost Deposit will be mailed back to you within 2 weeks after the wedding date.

Music in Fellowship Hall must end at 11pm and should be kept at a volume level that does not interfere with other events taking place at the church.

If alcohol is served, a security guard must be hired. The parish office can provide a name to contact. The fee is usually \$45/hr. with a minimum of 4 hours.

All fees should be paid to the Parish Office at least 10 days prior to the wedding date.

Thank You Gifts: It is customary, but optional, to provide thank you gifts to the wedding party and the celebrant. \$100 to the celebrant is normative.

Conclusion

The Wedding celebration is an important moment in the lives of a husband and wife. The true celebration of Marriage unfolds with every new day. May your lives be blessed with God's abundant love, and may you always know, that the people of St. Gerald's are here to support you with our prayers.

The *Nuptial Blessing* of the Celebration of Marriage summarizes the reality of your new vocation:

*In happiness may they praise you, O Lord,
in sorrow may they seek you out,
may they have the joy of your presence
to assist them in their toil,
and know that you are near
to comfort them in their need,
let them pray to you in the holy assembly
and bear witness to you in the world,
and after a happy old age,
together with the circle of friends that surround them,
may they come to the Kingdom of Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen!*

Contact Information

Parish Office – 402-331-1955

Marriage Formation Coordinator, Deacon Steve Luna – sluna@archomaha.org

Resources

Archdiocese of Omaha - <https://archomaha.org/marriageprep/>

For Your Marriage - <https://www.foryourmarriage.org/readings/>

USCCB - <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/matrimony>

**ST GERALD CHURCH
Music Ministry Office**

Recommended Music for Wedding Celebrations

Prelude

Gathered in the Love of Christ	Haugen
The Prayer	Sager and Foster
How Beautiful	Paris
The Gift of Love	Traditional/arr. Hopson

Seating of Parents/Procession of Attendants

Canon in D	Pachelbel
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	Bach
Thanks be to Thee	Handel
Simple gifts	Shaker Tune

(Note – one processional piece may be used for both the attendants and the bridal procession)

Processional

Trumpet Voluntary	Purcell
Trumpet Tune.....	Clarke
Te Deum	Charpentier
Ave Maria.....	Arcadelt/Liszt
Christ is Made the Sure Foundation	with fanfare
Chorale from Third Organ Symphony Finale	Saint-Saens

Gathering Hymn (optional)

Glory and Praise to Our God	Schutte
Love Divine, All Love's Excelling	Hyfrydol
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father.....	Hyfrydol

Responsorial Psalm: Musical setting is determined by which lectionary responsorial psalm is chosen.

Gospel Acclamation Verse (choose one)

1. Everyone who loves is begotten of God and knows God.
2. God is love. Let us love one another, as God has loved us.
3. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is brought to perfection in us.
4. Whoever remains in love, remains in God and God in him.

Preparation of Gifts

When Love is Found	O Waly, Waly
Wherever You Go	Weston Priory
I Have Loved You.....	Joncas
Instrumental	

Eucharistic Acclamations

Communion

- Behold the Lamb Willett
- One Bread, One Body..... Foley
- Humbly Lord We Worship You.....
- Panis Angelicus..... Franck or Lambilotte

Presentation to the Blessed Virgin Mary (optional)

- Ave Maria Schubert
- Hail Mary, Gently Woman Landry
- Holy is His Name..... Talbot

Recessional

- Allegro Maestoso Handel
- The Rejoicing Handel
- Psalm 19 The Heavens Declare the Glory of God Marcello
- With Gladness.....Bach
- Trumpet Tune..... Clarke

General Hymns which might be used as prelude, preparation or communion:

- These Alone Are Enough
- The Summons.....