

# *St. Mary's Cathedral*



## *Wedding Guide*

**Wedding Date:**

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**Time:**

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**Bride & Groom:**

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**Celebrant:**

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Congratulations on your engagement. We are excited to help you prepare for the sacramental blessing that God desires to share with you through your wedding.

Preparing for your wedding day is an exciting and wonderful time in the life of a man and woman in love. The Church shares your excitement and looks forward to helping you. Our faith teaches that it is an even more profound joy to prepare for your married life by entering into the Sacrament of Marriage. Our theological perspective tells us that the Sacrament of Matrimony is a living reflection of God's love, and that you, the bride and groom, "mirror" that reflection of love to each other, as well as to all God's people as you live this Sacrament for the rest of your lives. Couples preparing for this vocation need a clear vision of this Sacrament. That is why the Church is happy to cooperate with you in the celebration of your wedding day which is the beginning of the rest of your lives as a couple married in Christ.

St. Mary's Cathedral Parish is particularly happy that you will be celebrating your wedding here. St. Mary's Cathedral is both a local parish community of faith, as well as the "Mother Church" of the Diocese of Grand Island. In both capacities, St. Mary's Cathedral is a church where many services are celebrated every year.

Those who are registered members of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish in good standing have an automatic right to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage here.

Catholics from any other part of the Diocese of Grand Island also are welcome to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage here but will need to make their own arrangements with a priest. (The priests of the Cathedral are principally responsible for those who belong to the Cathedral parish. While they may be available to officiate at other weddings, that cannot be assumed.

For the sake of definition, an "active registered member of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish" is understood to be a practicing Catholic who has been registered, involved, and a contributing member of the Parish for **at least 1 year prior to the reservation of a date for a wedding.**

A "non-parishioner" is understood to be a Catholic who is not registered nor a contributing member of St. Mary's Cathedral.

The Diocese of Grand Island requires that those wishing to be married allow a minimum of 4 months for the preparation and assessment of the engaged couple to be completed. St. Mary's Cathedral requires at least 6 months prior to the desired date due to the busy schedule of our priests and high demand of the Cathedral.

Inquiries as to dates and times for weddings at St. Mary's Cathedral are to be made through the priest, at which time preliminary questions will be asked to determine your freedom to marry. Requests for dates are handled in the order that they are received.

## I. Documents Required

- Baptism
- First Communion
- Confirmation
- Marriage License from the State of Nebraska
- Previous Marriages

(Civil Marriage, Decree of Nullity from Catholic Marriage Tribunal, Death Certificate of former spouse)

A recent baptism certificate with all notations and other sacraments is required from each catholic to be married. **It must be requested from their Church of Baptism and must be no older than 1 year,** indicating that the couple is canonically free to marry.

## II. Marriage Preparation

Marriage preparation is done with the priest, he will discuss (FOCCUS) the Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study. He will address the faith, spiritual and moral issues of marriage, and will complete other pastoral and canon law requirements for the marriage. It is the couple's responsibility to contact the priest 6 months before the wedding date to begin this process.

### **III. For Non-Parishioners**

The Cathedral can provide a priest or deacon for the wedding of non-parishioners. But if another priest is desired it is the responsibility of the couple to select and notify the Catholic priest if from another parish, and make sure he will be able to take care of all aspects of marriage preparation and the celebration of the marriage.

He agrees to be responsible for ensuring the required marriage instructions are taken care of; that the required marriage papers are completed, including obtaining any necessary permissions or dispensations; that he will obtain necessary delegation; and that he will conduct the rehearsal and be present to celebrate the wedding mass.

That he brings all papers to the Cathedral after the wedding so they may be recorded in the Sacramental Book, and where also the notification to the Church of Baptism will be completed for him.

The couple agrees to a non-parishioner's stipend for the Cathedral once the date is set as mentioned in the STIPENDS section of this booklet. This does not include the priest's stipend.

## **IV. Stipends**

### Active Registered Parishioners:

For active registered contributing members of the Cathedral, a stipend of \$300 is asked to cover any related expenses for the use of the Cathedral, and helps cover the normal maintenance and utilities of the Cathedral building. It is also a fitting way to thank the Church for assisting you with this important sacrament. The musician's fee is separate and can be arranged with the Music Director during your wedding music consultation.

This does not include an honorarium stipend for the priest as a thank you for officiating the marriage.

### Non-Parishioners:

The couple agrees to a stipend of \$500 to cover any related expenses for the use of the Cathedral, and helps cover the normal maintenance and utilities of the Cathedral building. We ask for more from non-parishioners because our parishioners are financially supporting the Cathedral throughout the year whereas visitors do not. The musician's fee is separate and can be arranged with the Music Director during your wedding music consultation.

This does not include an honorarium stipend for the priest as a thank you for officiating the marriage.

## **V. Wedding Days and Times**

The times for weddings to be celebrated at St. Mary's Cathedral on Saturdays are either 10 a.m., 1:00 p.m., or 2:00 p.m. The latest we can start a wedding on a Saturday is 2:00 p.m. This is because the Cathedral has evening mass at 5:00 p.m. Also, no weddings are scheduled on Saturdays at 11 a.m. because Confessions are offered at this time. The latest that we can begin a wedding on a Friday is 2:00 p.m. since we have confessions at 4:45 p.m. and evening mass at 5:15 p.m.

By Diocesan law, no weddings are permitted on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

Because the Cathedral's schedule is very full, every couple must be aware that there are time limitations. Generally, you are able to use the worship space of the Cathedral from 12 noon until 4:00 p.m.

## **VI. The Wedding Rehearsal**

Rehearsals are generally scheduled the evening before the wedding. Since multiple weddings occur on a given day, a period of 45 minutes will be reserved for this purpose. It is most important that all arrive on time. If a wedding is scheduled for Saturday – the rehearsal is scheduled for the Friday prior at 6:00 p.m.

The priest who is to officiate at the wedding is expected to be present to conduct the rehearsal.



The wedding rehearsal is not the rehearsal for musicians. Any necessary music rehearsals should take place at a separate time arranged through the music office.

## **VII. Church Decorations**

Those who you have organize and/or decorate for your wedding are also responsible for cleaning up after. This clean up should be done promptly after the completion of the ceremony so that the Cathedral can be clean and ready for the next scheduled event.

Do not use nails, tacks or any adhesives for decoration, as they can damage the finish of the church pews. Florist's wire and fishing line work well to hold pew bows.

Candelabras are optional. If you use them they should be placed so as not to restrict movement around the altar. Plastic runners must be utilized underneath them to protect the floors of the sanctuary. Also, processions should not be prolonged or interrupted by wagons, stroller etc.

The throwing of flower petals, rice, birdseed, or anything else of that nature as well as the release of balloons, butterflies, doves etc. **is not permitted unless approved by the priest beforehand.**

We ask that you neither move nor rearrange anything in the church without permission. No movement of altar furniture or furnishings without permission.

Nothing is to be placed on the altar except the Eucharist bread and wine. Flower decorations may be placed to the side of the altar or in front of the lectern but may not extend above the altar or lectern.

### **VIII. Unity Candle** (Unity Sand, Unity Cross, etc.)

Although the use of a Unity Candle is not an official part of the Marriage Rite, one may be used. (Some couples choose to have the unity candle ceremony at their wedding reception). If one is to be used, the couple shall be responsible for providing these candles and they should be brought to the Cathedral at the time of the rehearsal. (Please note: If the couple wishes to keep their unity candle after the ceremony, they should designate someone to retrieve it before leaving the Cathedral. We are not responsible for any items left behind.)

### **IX. Programs/Worship Aids**

If you are preparing a program to be handed to your guests, it should be reviewed by the priest officiating the wedding before it is printed.

### **X. Music**

Arrangements for all aspects of the music for the wedding liturgy must be made through consultation with the Music Director at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish. To arrange a meeting with the Music Director, please contact the parish office. The Director will assist you with music selections, and discuss other

possible fees for cantors or instrumentalists. A comprehensive outline of musical guidelines is available on request. It should be noted that no secular music (other than instrumentalists) will be allowed. The music director will make all final decisions concerning music.

## **XI. Making Selections for Your Wedding Liturgy**

The marriage ritual provides a wide variety of options and choices for the wedding liturgy, including Scripture readings, the exchange of consent, blessings, etc. These options should be discussed beforehand with the priest who is to officiate.

The use of readings which are not taken from Scripture or the use of so-called "original vows" composed by the couple is not permitted by Church law. Downloading Scripture from the Internet is not recommended, since often it brings up translations that are not officially approved for liturgical use.

The Old and New Testament readings, and the Prayer of the Faithful may be proclaimed only by a catholic lay reader (lector). Also, in choosing lectors, one should be mindful of the acoustics of St. Mary's Cathedral and select someone with a strong clear voice, and good enunciation. Anyone you select to serve as lector/cantor must be appropriately and modestly dressed.

Altar Servers are not required. If you have family members or friends who are altar servers, they are welcome to assist at the wedding.

If you are having a wedding with a Mass, then we generally need two or three people to assist as Eucharistic Ministers. If you have family members or friends who fulfill this role in their home parish they are welcome to assist at the wedding.

## **XII. Dressing Procedures**

For the sake of privacy, space, and time, it is highly recommended that the bride and her immediate attendants arrive already fully dressed in modest attire for the wedding.

A bridal and groom room is available for your use located on the basement level of the Cathedral. There is a bathroom attached. While the wedding party has the use of the Cathedral from 12 noon – 4:00 p.m. the bridal room can be available any time after 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning as long as there aren't other events in the church scheduled.

Due to safety concerns there is a camera in the bridal room. To automatically shut the camera off, the door connecting to the groom's room must be closed shut. For Any questions please contact the parish office.

### **XIII. Photographers/Videographers**

Those who take still photographs or make videotapes of the wedding ceremony must be aware of the sacred nature of this event. While photographers and videographers are permitted in the Vestibule (entrance) and Nave (main body) of the Cathedral, they are not to come into the sanctuary area (i.e. – above the steps). They must be discreet and respectful in all aspects of recording this sacred event.

The prudent use of flash is not regarded as objectionable; however, the use of additional temporary lighting (e.g. portable floodlights, reflective umbrellas) constitutes a serious distraction and cannot be allowed during the service. Videographers are welcome to make use of the choir loft or the area located in front of the center sections of pews, near the first set of columns.

## **XIV. Parking**

The Cathedral has very limited parking facilities. Extended use of the parking facilities, e.g. to attend the wedding reception cannot be allowed. Limos, trolleys, buses or other modes of transport should not block the driveway entrances of the Cathedral parking lot.

The physical address of St. Mary's Cathedral is:  
204 S. Cedar Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801

The mailing address of St. Mary's Cathedral is:  
112 S. Cedar Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801

## **XV. Alcohol/Drug Policy**

**Alcohol and drugs are prohibited on all grounds of the Cathedral including the Parking Lot.**

## **XVI. Proper Etiquette**

Due to the sacred nature of the Cathedral Church, please remember that no food, gum, smoking or refreshments should be brought into the worship area of the Cathedral. At any given time, the faithful community may be in the Cathedral to pray, please be respectful of their needs and refrain from loud conversations, running, or other inappropriate behavior. Anyone not observing this will be asked to leave immediately.

## **XVII. Food/Lunch for Wedding Party**

We understand that the wedding party may be present for a few hours prior to the wedding liturgy. You are allowed to bring in a simple lunch/snacks for the party. You are welcome to serve this in the bridal room in the basement or the north sacristy (located behind the musician's area of the church - above Mary's Closet Thrift Store). Please have someone responsible to clean up and properly dispose of all food and beverage remains. Again – please keep all food and beverages out of the worship area of the church.

Feel free to contact your priest or the parish office if you have any questions.

May God bless you in this time of preparation.

*Grand Island, NE*

