

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

524 East Lawrence Avenue, Springfield, Illinois, 62703

217.522.3342

Dear Friends,

Congratulations on your engagement! This information packet is being sent to you in response to your inquiry about celebrating your wedding at the Cathedral. As you consider your options in planning for your wedding, we invite you to read the enclosed material, which describes in part, the perspective and teaching of the Catholic Church in regard to the celebration of matrimony.

After having read and reflected upon the information included in this mailing, you will notice that Cathedral has a rather challenging marriage preparation program. This program is not intended to make your life difficult, but to make your marriage lasting and holy. We understand that you might not be ready to embrace what we have to offer, but we have an obligation to you, to society, to the Church and to God to uphold the seriousness and sacredness of this permanent choice in your life. We want your desire to be married at Cathedral to be a decision to follow Christ and his Church with all your hearts. If you are ready to make this decision, we will look forward to celebrating your wedding with you.

If you have any questions, or if you are prepared to formally inquire about the possibility of celebrating your wedding at Cathedral, please contact the Parish Office, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM until 3:30 PM. Please do not fill out any of the paperwork contained in this packet at this time, but bring it with you to be signed in your meeting with the priest or deacon.

Again, congratulations during this exciting time in your lives. We look forward to being a part of this joyful and spiritual journey with you!

Peace & Blessings,

Very Reverend John H. Nolan, VF
Pastor

Reverend Zachary Edgar
Parochial Vicar

Deacon Larry Smith
Deacon

Enclosures (2) – Guidelines and Covenant
(Rev: 02/2014)

GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

BEFORE THE WEDDING

1. You must contact the parish at least 6 months before the date of the wedding. If the marriage preparation work was provided at another parish, proof of its completion is needed.
2. Find out what dates are open for your marriage before confirming halls or other services in order to avoid conflicting celebrations.
3. Marriage is not celebrated during the season of Lent and discouraged during the season of Advent.
4. Documents needed for both Catholic and non-Catholic parties:
 - A. Baptism/Confirmation certificates: Must be obtained by the couple (unless these occurred here at Cathedral) Write or call the church where you were baptized and have the certificates sent to Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 524 East Lawrence Ave, Springfield, IL 62703. The Catholic baptismal certificate must be validated no more than 6 months prior to the wedding.
 - B. Pre-nuptial Questionnaire: Both the bride and groom need two witnesses to attest to their respective baptism and freedom for the marriage. The witnesses should know the couple well (parents are the preferred witnesses.)
 - C. Civil Marriage Document: The couple needs to obtain a marriage license from the State of Illinois, Sangamon County. You should bring this to our office at least one week before the wedding day. This will be signed at your wedding.
 - D. Marriage Preparation Program Certificate – This is required by the church for all couples. This involves either an all day program called “Pre-Cana” or an Engaged Encounter Weekend. There are several dates and locations available for this. You will be given information about the dates and times of these sessions.
5. The couple needs to invite two official witnesses for the wedding (the best man and maid or matron of honor.) After the ceremony, these need to sign the county marriage document.
6. For couples who are ESTABLISHED members of this parish, the offering for the wedding ceremony is \$200, payable to Cathedral. This \$200 is non-refundable and is to be paid at the time the wedding date is set. Belonging to the parish implies consistent weekly attendance and weekly contribution to the collection. Newly registered and/or inactive couples must pay the fees applicable to non-parishioners (see #7 below). After a date is reserved for your wedding, any changes to the schedule will require payment of an additional \$50.

7. Couples who belong to another parish normally complete marriage preparation and documentation in their parish. To be married at Cathedral, non-parishioners need permission/delegation from their pastor in writing. The fee for the wedding ceremony for non-parishioners is \$500. Of this fee \$150 is non-refundable and is to be paid at the time the wedding date is set. The balance of the rental fee (\$350) is due one month prior to the wedding. After a date is reserved for your wedding, any changes to the schedule will require payment of an additional \$50.
8. An additional deposit of \$100 is to be paid by all couples one month prior to the date of the wedding. This deposit will be refunded if the church is left clean.
9. The Sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of God. For all Catholics who are not in the state of grace, the Sacrament of Penance is required before receiving the Sacrament of marriage. It is also strongly encouraged that the wedding party and relatives receive the sacrament of Penance to prepare for this holy occasion. You may make an appointment with the pastor or come at the scheduled times: Thursdays 3:30-4:30 PM, Saturdays 10:00-11:00 AM and 2:30- 3:30 PM

ON THE WEDDING DAY:

1. The church is a sacred place where the people of God gather to worship and invoke His blessing. Therefore, an attitude of respect and reverence is appropriate in the church during the rehearsal, and before, during and after the ceremony. Therefore, food and drinks are not to be brought into the Church. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises.
2. The bride's room should be left in the same condition in which it was found.
3. Please limit the number of attendants at your wedding to no more than five for the bride and five for the groom; this does not include ushers. While we understand that you want people to be a part of your special day we also must remember that we are celebrating a sacrament and we do not wish to make a spectacle of it.
4. You may have a ring bearer and/or flower girl, but they are to be no younger than five years old. It can be very frightening to have to be in front of a room of strangers and experience teaches us that this is sometimes too much for extremely young children.
5. Decorations for the church must be put up and taken down conveniently before and immediately after the ceremony. Decorations that will leave a mark after their use will not be allowed. For safety reasons an isle runner is not permitted.
6. The use of the unity candle is found no where in the Roman Catholic rite for the celebration of marriage and is not to be done during the marriage rites. You may choose to use this custom at your reception.
7. Photographs and video cameras are permitted. However, the photographers or videotape operators are to be discreet in their work. They are not allowed in the

sanctuary. Pictures may be taken only 1 hour before and/or for 1 hour after the ceremony.

8. The receiving line and reception of guests is to be done at the reception and not in the church or vestibule. The same applies also for the signing of a guest book.
9. Throwing of rice, bird seed or other items is not allowed; nor is anything non-liturgical to be used inside the Church: balloons, bubbles, etc.

MUSIC GUIDELINES:

Couples need to contact our parish director of liturgy and music, Nichol Del Giorno, concerning the music; this may be done through the parish office. Payment for the services rendered by her (\$150) is handled directly by the couple, and is due within two weeks of the wedding. This fee includes one rehearsal with prepared musicians/soloist. Additional rehearsals will require an additional fee.

All couples getting married at Cathedral need to follow the section on appropriate music in the **DIOCESAN GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**. Highlights are listed below, as well as specifics that refer to the Cathedral parish.

1. Music heard in other Catholic and non-Catholic churches are not automatically accepted here at Cathedral. They may have different guidelines, but we follow those set up by the diocese.
2. The music during the celebration must be sacred, that is expressing faith. Favorite or popular songs should be reserved for the reception hall.
3. The director of liturgy and music should be contacted as soon as the wedding day is secure, and before the music is planned—securing the date for the Church does not automatically secure it with musicians.
4. Do not feel that you have to have your music selected when you meet with the organist. They can suggest appropriate music to use. Also, we can suggest soloists if you so desire. Other musicians/soloists must be approved by the director of liturgy and music to facilitate a smooth celebration of the wedding.
5. Pre-recorded tapes or cd's cannot be used for wedding ceremonies.

The most important purpose of music in the ceremony is to help people to pray. If you keep this in mind, it will make the music selection process easier.

Covenant Agreement with Cathedral Parish

- 1) I agree and accept that for a Catholic to be married at Cathedral he or she must:
 - a) be a registered and practicing member of Cathedral, or
 - b) have received delegation from the pastor of the Catholic Church at which he or she is a registered and practicing member. *(Please note this includes parishioners' children who have moved away from home and have established their own permanent residence elsewhere)*

The desire to have your wedding in the Catholic Church must not reflect merely the practice or belief of your family, but your own personal faith and desire to deepen in relationship with God in and through the Church by regular attendance at Mass and the celebration of the Sacraments. A wedding is not a personal and private event, but one that affects the whole community. The Church urges all Catholics to be married in the parish of either the bride or groom, that is to say, in the parish in which one or both are registered and practicing members. To be married in any other church, one must begin by contacting the parish at which either or both are registered and practicing members.

- 2) I understand that, at Cathedral Parish, couples seeking a *public* celebration in the church agree to *publicly* accept the challenge of the Gospel to live chastely and apart (or to separate if they have already been living together) until after the wedding.

I further understand that Cathedral Parish invites couples who choose to continue to live together to receive the Sacrament of Marriage through the celebration of a simple ceremony outside of Mass on a weekday (Monday-Friday) with only two attendants and immediate family present.

To live together prior to marriage, or even to “spend the night” with your fiancée is wrong. This has been the consistent teaching of the Church of God. If a couple expects us to rejoice with them before God on their wedding day, we expect that couple to accept God’s teaching and Commandments and to strive to live them fully. The public celebration of your wedding should reflect the true importance of God in your life. If a couple chooses to live together prior to marriage, that couple is choosing to diminish the importance of God and the Church in their marriage.

In addition to Church teaching, documented experience demonstrates that living together before marriage is not a successful way to “prepare” for married life. Statistically, those who live together before marriage are much more prone to divorce, and prone to it earlier in marriage.

We realize, however, that following the way of Jesus is not always easy. We are here to help you to live the Commandments and to discover the joy of following Jesus. We urge you to seek the strength and grace of God through personal prayer, frequent Confession, and worthy reception of the Eucharist. We believe that God abundantly blesses those who strive to walk in His ways.

- 3) I agree to complete/provide all applicable documents and fees in a timely fashion.
(See Guidelines)
- 4) I agree to attend all meetings with the pastor and a weekend for the engaged or Pre-Cana session.
- 5) I understand and accept that Cathedral will not tolerate any alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises, such that:
 - a) *Any* member of the wedding party bringing such substances onto Church property, or arriving intoxicated or impaired for either the wedding rehearsal or the wedding, will be asked to leave immediately.
 - b) Should either the bride or groom arrive intoxicated or impaired on the day of the wedding, the wedding will be cancelled.

Everyone understands that a wedding is a joyous occasion that should be celebrated. A church, however, is a sacred place set apart for the praise and worship of God. Any member of the wedding party, therefore, who conducts him/herself in an inappropriate manner, or who arrives intoxicated or impaired, or who brings any amount of alcohol or illegal drugs onto church property will be obliged to leave before the rehearsal or wedding begins. There will be no exceptions. Because the free and deliberate consent of both the bride and groom is an indispensable element in the celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church, should either the bride or groom arrive intoxicated or impaired, or bring alcohol or drugs onto church property, the wedding will be immediately cancelled.

- 6) I agree to accept and abide by all the policies of Cathedral Parish regarding the sacred nature of the Church ceremony including the choice of appropriate, religious music, discreet photography, and decorations. (See Guidelines.)
- 7) I understand and accept that willful misrepresentation, or failure to fulfill any of the requirements of this covenant agreement – at any time – will release Cathedral Parish and its clergy of any obligation to celebrate the wedding.

Please clarify any questions you have before signing this agreement. Some examples of things that would lead to the cancellation of the wedding would include failure to obtain a valid marriage license from the State of Illinois, arriving intoxicated, or misrepresenting one's living arrangement. If the priest / deacon preparing the couple deems that you have not been forthright in dealing with him or in keeping the terms of this agreement, he has the right to cancel or delay the wedding, or to relegate the wedding to a small private ceremony.

We have read and accept this Covenant Agreement in full: (to be signed in the presence of the priest or deacon)

Bride

Groom

Priest /Deacon

Date

