

# Planning the Ceremony

## **CEREMONY WITH MASS OR NOT**

Weddings between two practicing Catholics are ordinarily celebrated within Mass, for the Eucharist is the central prayer and worship of the Church. If one is not Catholic or unbaptized, the wedding ceremony is usually celebrated within a service of Scripture readings and prayers with no Eucharist.

## **MAKING A CONFESSION**

Each Catholic preparing to be married is encouraged to go to Confession sometime within a month of the Wedding to be spiritually prepared for the Sacrament of Marriage. Confessions are heard at St. Clare Church every Saturday afternoon from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Special arrangements can be made by contacting the officiating priest.

## **PLACE**

For your invitations, please note the church of St. Clare of Assisi is located at 1411 Cross Street, O'Fallon, Illinois 62269

## **TIME**

1. You may choose to have your wedding at one of the Sunday Masses.
2. Saturday's: No later than 2:00 p.m. or evening after 6:30p.m. (after 5:00p.m. Mass).

Weddings may be celebrated on weekday evenings (provided there is no conflict with other scheduled events).

Weddings are never scheduled on Sundays, Holyday's, or during Holy Week. Couples who wish to be married during Advent or Lent must keep in mind the penitential nature of these seasons. Weddings are discouraged during the Lenten season. The ceremony will begin promptly at the scheduled time.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

A marriage license must be obtained at least 60 days before your wedding date through the St. Clair County Courthouse/Clerks Office located at 10 Public Square, Belleville, IL 62220. Couples are to bring their marriage license with them to the rehearsal.

## **THE REHEARSAL**

Rehearsals are usually held the evening before the wedding, depending on the availability of the Church and the schedule of the officiating priest. Arrangements for the date and time of the rehearsal are to be made at the time of your first meeting with the priest.

## **CHURCH BEHAVIOR/ETIQUETTE**

St. Clare Church is, like every Catholic Church, a sacred place wherein God meets His people. Therefore, both at your rehearsal and before, during and after your wedding:

Proper behavior and etiquette must be observed in Church and on the church grounds. This includes: no alcoholic beverages, food, drink or smoking in or on St. Clare property. Respectful, prayerful behavior during your photo sessions, at the rehearsal and all other times is expected.

Attire at the Wedding and rehearsal that is appropriate in a Catholic church.

No rice (or anything else) is to be thrown.

The Church must be completely cleaned and empty by 3:10 p.m. on Saturdays, as Confessions begin at 3:30 p.m.

Finally, members of your bridal party, especially your ushers, should make certain that all paper, flower wrappers, programs, film boxes, etc. are removed from Church. The Church must be left litter free after your wedding or rehearsal.

## **WORSHIP AID PROGRAM**

The Wedding Ceremony is planned by you with the priest and the consultation of the Director of Liturgy and Music at St. Clare (see music section). There is a ceremony workshop to help plan your music. Family and friends are encouraged to be involved in the liturgy as readers, gift bearers, etc. In order for the congregation to better follow the ceremony, you may wish to have printed programs distributed by family members at the entrance of Church.

Arranging for both the printing and distribution of programs is your responsibility. You can contact the parish office for a sample program.

## **DECORATIONS**

You are responsible for flowers and other decorations for your wedding. An aisle runner is not allowed for safety purposes. Floral arrangements may be placed near the altar or near the podiums. **No floral arrangements are to be placed on the altar itself. All flowers and plants must be live**, not silk or plastic. You may choose to present flowers to your parents during the ceremony sign of peace. Flowers to the Blessed Virgin may be placed there before or after the ceremony and are not done during the ceremony. Unity candles are meant for the reception and not at church. The Church must be completely cleaned and empty by 3:10 p.m. on Saturdays, as Confessions begin at 3:30 p.m.

St. Clare is decorated according to the liturgical seasons. For questions about church decorations, contact Leslie Goldberg, St. Clare Art & Environment Chair at 616-9222.

## **MUSIC**

Stephen Eros, Director of Liturgy & Music, has first right of refusal for all weddings. Guest organists are welcomed to play for weddings, provided they have experience playing in a Catholic church. Please consult with Stephen immediately if you plan on using a guest organist.

**Vocalists:** A cantor is required for all weddings. If you have a friend or family member who has experience cantoring in the Catholic church, s/he is welcomed to cantor for the liturgy. If your friend or family member is an experienced singer, but not an experienced cantor, s/he is still permitted to sing a selection(s). In this case, you will still need to have a cantor for the liturgy. All cantors are booked through Stephen Eros.

**Instrumentalists:** Instrumental soloists or groups are a great way to make your wedding liturgy memorable for you and your guests. Please consult with Stephen if you are interested in adding this special touch to the liturgy.

Your selection of Music must follow and is to be determined by the Music and Liturgical Guidelines for Weddings. Wedding hymn suggestions are included in the wedding binder.

Only sacred music is appropriate during the ceremony. You are responsible for making payments to an organist, vocalist and other instrumentalists. All payments must be dropped by the parish office the week before the wedding. No recorded music (tapes or CD's) is allowed in Catholic liturgies.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photos and videotaping are permitted during the ceremony as long as the photographer proceeds unobtrusively. (See photographer guidelines sheet in folder and deliver to photographer ahead of time.) A limited number of photos may be taken after the ceremony.

## **STIPENDS**

A suggested offering for use of the church is \$250.00 made payable to St. Clare Parish. Please bring this payment on the night of rehearsal or bring to the parish office. If you request altar servers, a suggested gift is \$5.00 each. The organist and vocalist have their own fees. Any gift to the priest is based on your own choice since the \$250.00 fee is for the church and does not go to the priest. These amounts are not intended to limit your generosity, since it is hoped that your offering to the Church will be in proportion to the splendor of your wedding.

The fee for the use of St. Clare Church when both parties are non-parishioners is \$1,000.00.