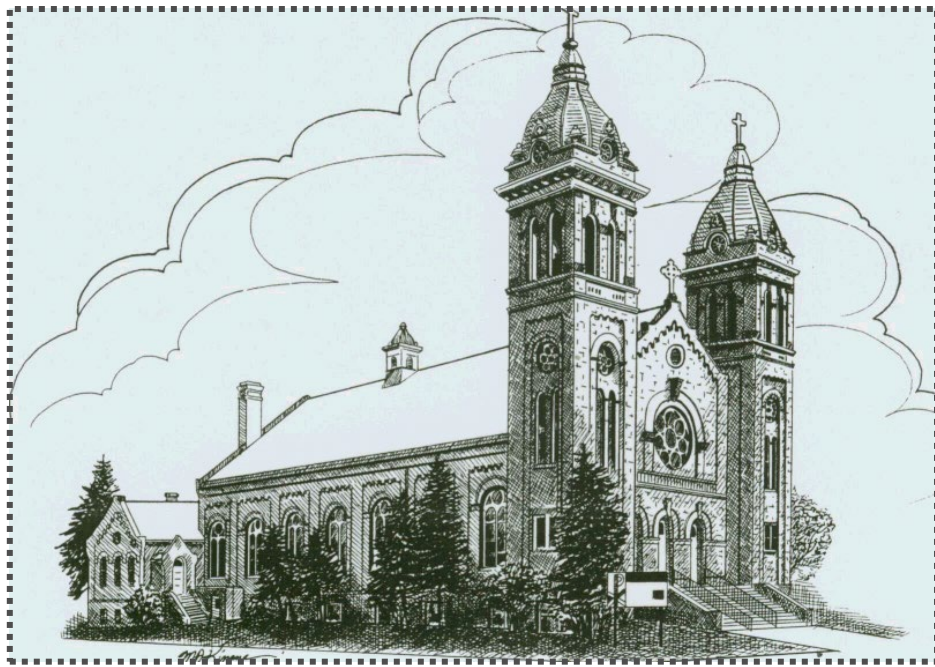


ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH



MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

TIMES FOR WEDDINGS

The usual times for Wedding Liturgies are:

Friday from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Saturday from 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM

No Weddings on Sundays,
Holy Days of Obligation or during Lent.

The wedding date, rehearsal date and time must be
scheduled with a priest.

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When a man and a woman decide to enter into marriage, the Catholic Church regards it as an event worth celebrating. In fact, this event is viewed as an event worthy of the name **sacrament**. Through the words, action and rituals surrounding marriage, a couple enters into God's love by vowing their lives to each other.

The Church teaches that the sacrament of marriage is directed towards the salvation of others. It is at the "service of communion." It is a sacrament of communion because it serves to build up the People of God through the witness of love. It is proper that the sacrament be celebrated where the People of God gather for worship of God – in a Church building. By placing the sacrament of marriage within the Church building and within Catholic Christian worship in the Mass, the Church honor marriage as a sacred event.

Please read through this entire booklet before you begin planning your wedding ceremony. Please also keep in mind that this booklet will only help you prepare for your wedding day. Your preparation with the priest over the next 6 months will help lay a foundation for the rest of your life together. The sacrament you are celebrating will be a source of grace for your whole life long – and so it deserves pride of place. The guidelines and policies of St. Michael's Church are set forth on the following pages. Please write down any questions you have and bring them to your next meeting with the priest. Thank you.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Priests

Fr. Raymond Courtright 701.772.2624 x 110
Fr. Jered Grossman 701.772.2624 x 112

If the priest is not in, please leave a message and he will return your call.

Liturgy & Music Coordinator

Jeff McGee 701.772-2624 x 130

E-mail – liturgystmichaels@gmail.com

*Must meet no later than 2 months prior to wedding date.

Altar Society President – Contact if you would like to

have your wedding reception in the Church Basement

Bernie Altendorf 701.772.5463

Natural Family Planning \$135

Sympto-Thermal Method: Register online at

www.ccli.org

-go to class schedule, then search by state and choose the instructor

Questions about registration: contact Cheryl Granger 701.847.3093

Billings Method: Erin Perronteau 701.740.1030

Pre-Marriage Weekend Seminar \$135

Kathy Call, Program Coordinator 701.772.8025

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Church Stipends

Parishioners* \$150
Non-Parishioners \$350

*"Parishioners" are those who have been registered in our parish for one year or more prior to the time they contact the priest to schedule the wedding.

Church stipends express an understanding that you are offering your financial support to the church and its ministry. It also indicates your intent to celebrate your wedding at St. Michael's and reserves the date for you.

FOCCUS Survey - \$20 one-time fee

Musicians*

Accompanist & Cantor (Song Leader)
Wedding Rite Alone - \$100 for each
Wedding Rite with Mass - \$150 for each

*paid directly to Accompanist and Cantor prior to the wedding date.

Servers – Wedding Rite with Mass - \$25 per Server (2 Required)

Priest Gratuity*

\$150-\$200

*given directly to Priest prior to the wedding date.

PREPARING FOR THE LITURGY



Planning together (couple and priest) will help create a most memorable life-giving experience for you. Begin planning your wedding liturgy by choosing the Scripture readings to be proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word.

Honor your parents, godparents and other significant people by involving them in the liturgy. Invite them to take part in the proclaiming, blessing, praying, and sharing of Eucharist. Out of these significant people choose two who will be your witnesses (best man and maid/matron of honor). Having numerous attendants can detract attention from the bride and groom, who are the ministers of the sacrament. It is far more important to include friends and relatives as ushers and other ministers of hospitality, to welcome and assist those unfamiliar with the church building and Catholic traditions.

Finally, consider your role. You are the ministers of this sacrament. You bestow the sacrament of marriage upon each other. The priest or deacon is the official witness of the Church. The assembly (led by the priest) are your witnesses. As people of prayer; your demeanor at the liturgy sets the tone for the worshipping community.

A printed program including music (chosen in cooperation with the Liturgy & Music Coordinator), prayers and responses encourages participation. An announcement promoting participation also can be stated in the program or stated verbally right before the celebration begins. Copyright permission to reproduce the words of songs can easily be obtained for one-time use by writing to the publishers.

There are three types of wedding liturgies:

1. When two Catholics marry, the liturgy customarily includes the Eucharist.
2. When a Catholic marries a non-Catholic Christian, the liturgy is encouraged to have the Eucharist. However, we do not share full communion. All non-Catholic Christians can be invited to come forward for a blessing. The minister of the non-Catholic party is invited to participate in the wedding if they wish. Discuss the participation of the assisting minister with the priest.
3. When a Catholic marries a non-Christian, the liturgy is much like that of a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic Christian, with the texts of some prayers altered.

Each of the wedding liturgies can be divided into its basic components:

- I. The Gathering Rite
- II. The Liturgy of the Word
- III. The Marriage Rite
- IV. The Liturgy of the Eucharist
- V. The Dismissal Rite

A description of each is found beginning on page 8.

LIVING THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

To live the sacrament of marriage, couples need to continue to grow in their adult faith. Regular participation at Mass on Sunday and personal prayer are essential. Further, St. Michael's offers many opportunities including Bible studies and retreats, to aid members in growing in their faith. For interfaith marriages, it is important that the non-Catholic party begin to grow in his or her understanding of Catholicism, for example, through an RCIA class. See the Church bulletin or website for events being offered.

Couple's Checklist for Marriage Preparation

The following are the Diocese of Fargo requirements that must be met by the couple prior to the wedding. This checklist will help ensure that all areas of preparation are completed prior to the wedding date. The order as listed should be viewed as a guide rather than a rule. (For example, it is alright to register for the Pre-Marriage Seminar prior to registering for Natural Family Planning courses.)

1. ___ **Meet with priest to reserve wedding date by paying St. Michael's Church stipend (must be at least 6 months prior to the desired wedding date)**
2. ___ **Complete Pre-Marriage Focus Inventory and Feedback Sessions with priest**
(\$20 One-Time Fee for Survey)
3. ___ **Complete feedback sessions with sponsoring couple (if applicable)**
4. ___ **Secure a copy of the following documents to give to priest:**
___ **Recently issued Baptismal certificates for both bride and groom**
___ **Confirmation certificates**
Note: These can be obtained by contacting the church in which you were baptized and confirmed and asking for the appropriate certificates. Please have them sent directly to St. Michael's Church.
5. ___ **Register for Natural Family Planning (NFP) classes**
___ **Turn in certificate of attendance to priest**
6. ___ **Register for a Pre-Marriage Weekend Seminar—must be completed 2-3 months prior to the wedding**
___ **Turn in certificate of attendance to priest**
7. ___ **Set up an appointment with the Liturgy & Music Coordinator to select and approve music for ceremony and review guidelines for use of parish facilities. Must take place at least 2 months prior to wedding date.**
8. ___ **Set up rehearsal time with priest.**
9. ___ **Purchase Civil Wedding License** obtained from a county courthouse in North Dakota.
___ **Turn in to the parish office 3 days prior with court return envelope**
10. ___ **Bring a copy of the completed wedding program to the Rehearsal**

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS HELD AT ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

- ☞ You are responsible for making sure the church is left just as clean as it was before you used it. We ask that you assign someone to tidy and clean up the spaces you use immediately after the wedding is over (ie. The pews, church entrance, basement and all rooms that were used.) Ushers or the host couple could fill this role. Please have at least one person in mind for your meeting with the Music & Liturgy Coordinator, as they will take down a name and number to be contacted should something be left behind.

Contact Person Name: _____ **Phone#** _____

- ☞ Schedule your **wedding date and rehearsal time** in advance with the priest in order to avoid calendar scheduling problems. Stipends must be paid at time of scheduling the wedding to secure your date.
- ☞ Throughout the time of pictures, during and after the wedding, **no food or beverages** may be brought into the church. Please be respectful of the sacredness of this space.
- ☞ Arrangements for holding a **wedding reception** at St. Michael's must be made with the Altar Society President. No outside catering is allowed.
- ☞ *You are permitted **no more than five attendants** each: specifically, this means the best man, the maid/matron of honor, four groomsmen and four bridesmaids. Attendants need not be Catholic.*
- ☞ Unity candles are not an original part of the wedding liturgy, and are not allowed. We encourage couples to make use of them at the wedding banquet as part of the opening prayer before the meal.
- ☞ St. Michael's has rooms in the church basement in which the wedding party may dress.
- ☞ Photography and videotaping must be done with discretion. The technicians must stay out of the sanctuary during the ceremony.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment is an important part of the liturgy. If you have questions, consult the Music & Liturgy Coordinator. St. Michael's is a beautiful church, so a minimum of decorations is best. You may add elements to the environment, but you may not remove anything. If you do choose to add flowers, real ones must always be used. Bridal bouquets should also be made of real flowers. Real flowers speak of the beauty of God's creation in the natural world. N.B. There are 27 pews on each side of the main aisle in the church.

The following are NOT allowed at St. Michael's Church:

- Glitter or any glitter decorated items/clothing
- Aisle runners
- Candelabras
- Rice or birdseed
- Wire or candles attached to pews (Rubber bands may be used for bows, etc.)



MUSIC



“A cry from deep within our being, music is a way for God to lead us to the realm of higher things. As St. Augustine says, “Singing is for the one who loves.” Music is therefore a sign of God’s love for us and of our love for him . . . By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people. (Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship, USCCB, 2007)

Regardless of the choice of the accompanist, cantor (song leader), vocalist, or other musicians, every bride and groom must meet with the Liturgy & Music Coordinator to select and approve music for the wedding liturgy and discuss musicians for hire. The Liturgy & Music Coordinator will also give a tour of the facilities for use on the wedding day (bride’s room, groom’s room, etc.).

At least one music minister (ie., cantor, vocalist, or accompanist) hired for the liturgy must be a current music minister at St. Michael’s. Any outside musicians must be approved by the Liturgy & Music Coordinator.

The Church’s understanding of marriage is reflected in your selection of wedding music. The meaning of a sacramental marriage transcends the legal and romantic to focus on the profound meaning of covenant, commitment, and love. Similarly, the music must go beyond love songs to an expression of God’s love for us.

Consider the texts of your songs. Do they narrow, or rather widen, your vision of Christian married love? Do the words manifest what Christ brings to human love? Do they help the gathered community pray and worship together? Do they uphold the beauty of human love? Whatever the source of your songs, study the words.

Similarly, consider the music, and ask for the musicians’ judgments. Much music, such as the theme from *Lohengrin* (“Here Comes the Bride”), was used for a dramatic purpose in direct opposition to Christian values. For this reason, Catholic churches do not allow such music to be used.

Appropriateness is the key when choosing your music. All music must be commonly understood to be sacred. Since your wedding celebration is a religious event, secular music is not appropriate within the liturgy itself. Those secular songs which have meaning for you as a couple could be incorporated into your reception. **The final judgment on allowed music is made by the Liturgy & Music Coordinator.**

When hiring musicians, remember that they are trained people who have spent time and money developing their skills. Out of justice, they should be adequately paid for their services. If you determine their fee when you hire them, you will avoid misunderstandings later.

We require the hiring of at least on parish cantor or musician as they are most familiar with liturgy in your parish. An experienced cantor will be an invaluable aid in inviting people to full participation in the wedding liturgy and help to guide them through it. Having a cantor would not preclude having a friend or family member sing a special song, and allow them to concentrate on that rather than all the other music, including the responses and the psalm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Your wedding pictures are an important consideration. Through them you will be able to look back on this important day. They also become a very important part of the family archives. When choosing a photographer, professional or amateur, begin early.

If choosing a professional photographer, consider their professional reputation. If you decide to use a family friend or relative, be sure that you can trust this person to give you good results and show respect for the dignity of the occasion. The photographer should not step into or crawl up the aisles, go into the sanctuary, or otherwise disrupt the wedding liturgy. The photographer should be suitably dressed and neither smoke nor drink during the liturgy. The photographer must respect the integrity and sanctity of the church and its furnishings: nothing must be moved.

During the liturgy itself there should be no photography by anyone. This includes the members of the assembly who may have cameras. You must mention this in your program; perhaps a statement (which also addresses another disruption) such as:

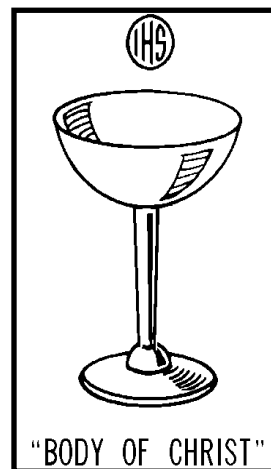
The parish of St. Michael's requests that you respect the sanctity of our wedding liturgy by refraining from flash photography and turning off cell phones.

Photographs may be taken before and after the liturgy. Arrange the starting time with the priest. It should generally begin about two hours before the liturgy and end at least 45 minutes before the liturgy begins. After the liturgy, photographs must be completed by 4:00 p.m. for Saturday weddings, when celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation begins. It is also possible to arrange other times for photos in consultation with the priest.

Video-taping of the wedding ceremony must be done in a sensitive manner so as not to ruin the reverent atmosphere of the occasion. The camera must be stationary in an unobtrusive place, and only available light may be used.

Beautiful indeed

Is the marriage of two Christians,
Two who are one in hope,
And one in love,
One in the manner of life they live,
One in the Religion they keep.
Neither in the flesh nor in the spirit
Does anything divide them.
It is to these Christ gives His peace.



THE WEDDING LITURGY

Before the reception, dinner, and dance comes the most important part of the wedding day—the wedding liturgy. This is a sacramental moment, an event that sanctifies a couple’s love for each other, a love that is ultimately rooted in God’s love for them. It is obvious that such a precious event demands thoughtful planning.

For a sacramental moment to be meaningful and beautiful, it must be a sacred thing. If it consists of people of prayer, expressing their love for God and each other, the size and expense of the wedding is incidental. In fact, too many attendants and too much added to the liturgy can detract from the sacredness of the event. The Catholic wedding liturgy is already full of movement, music, scripture, and beautiful symbols. Let these speak for themselves.

Your wedding day is a special day for you, and for the community of faith. It is a celebration of your local church. The intent of this guide is to help make your wedding celebration more meaningful. A necessary starting place in planning your wedding is to understand what liturgy and marriage are.

There are many forces at work in our society which can detract couples from understanding the beauty of the Catholic liturgy and Church teachings. In meetings with the priest, he will help you to grow in your appreciation of your wedding as a religious event, and not merely a social gathering. Try to make covenant love the focal point of your wedding day.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

When talking about your wedding, be attentive to your use of words. Make them express the true meaning of marriage. The word “guest” denotes a non-participatory role, a spectator. There are no guests at a worship service. As people gather, ushers and other ministers of hospitality welcome and assist them. During this time, instrumental music and sometimes sacred vocal solos help to set a mood of hospitality.

As the host and hostess of this celebration it is your concern that everyone feel welcome and comfortable worshipping together. Ask your hospitality ministers to seat people close to one another. The old custom of "bride's side or groom's side" forces people to choose between you and discourages them from mixing. Seat them together.

You may ask your cantor/musician, priest or a parent to welcome the assembly before the liturgy. They could invite those gathered to introduce themselves to each other, just as you would in your home. This is also a good time to prepare the assembly for singing by going over a response or hymn that might be unfamiliar to them. In this way, they will know that you expect them to participate fully and actively.

The procession is very important. It reflects your beliefs about church, marriage and relationships. It may be led by incense (symbolizing our prayers rising to the Father and the presence of God permeating the space.) The cross, symbol of our Christian faith, is next. The lector may carry in the book of Scriptures followed by servers, priest and the wedding party. Placing the couple last will show their importance because they are the chief ministers in the wedding liturgy. If a minister of another faith helps with the liturgy, he or she precedes the priest. During the procession all rise.

It has become customary for the attendants to enter as couples. For attendants, you might consider married couples who can model and support married life by their example. Before you ask people to be attendants, please note that St. Michael's limits the number to five. It would be fitting to ask your godparents or sponsoring couple to be the canonically required witnesses to your marriage, (best man and maid/matron of honor).

The traditional custom of the father "giving away" the bride derives from the time when the bride was the property of her father. The groom bought her at the time of the wedding. Please remember the bride is not property to be "given away"; the old custom of the father giving away the bride does not speak well here. You, the couple, enter this marriage of your own free will and bring with it a mutuality and equality upon which your marriage will be based. Your actions in your marriage ceremony should be clear expressions of God's love for us and your commitment to each other. Talking with the priest about certain traditions can help the bride, groom, and parents understand the contradictory meaning behind those practices.

Both sets of parents may accompany their son and daughter to the altar, or the bride and groom may enter as a couple. This part of the procession makes an important statement and is very adaptable to all family circumstances. Other members of the family may be involved here.

The processional can be an instrumental, a song with a refrain that everyone may sing, or a gathering hymn. However, we have found that many assemblies do not sing well during this time. Therefore an instrumental processional followed by a gathering song is to be recommended. The gathering song brings the many into the one body of Christ. It is wise to use a hymn that is common to both faith traditions if it is an interfaith marriage.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



The first reading is from the Old Testament, or during the Easter Season, from the Acts of Apostles. After the first reading, and a period of shared silence, the assembly sings a biblical Psalm from the Old Testament, (known as the Responsorial Psalm) led by the cantor with the whole assembly repeating the refrain. The second reading is selected from the New Testament.

You will choose people to proclaim these first two readings. These could be members of the wedding party, family members, or friends of the couple. The reader should be a person of faith capable of proclaiming well with clarity and reverence.

The Gospel Acclamation ("Alleluia!") follows a period of silence after the second reading, in a manner similar to the responsorial psalm. The third reading (Gospel) is from one of the four Gospels and is always proclaimed by the deacon or priest.

THE MARRIAGE RITE

In your wedding celebration, you—the bride and groom—are the ministers of the sacrament. You are asking this assembly of God's people to witness, affirm and support your declaration. It is good to memorize your vows since they are the central element of the marriage rite. Memorizing them also encourages you to renew your vows every night as you pray together.

At this point in the liturgy, you are the focus as you exchange vows which include the elements of unity, faithfulness, permanency and the acceptance and nurturing of children. The program may state at the time of vows: *"as a covenant people let us all renew our vows in the prayer of the bride and groom."* However, emphasis on this recommitment prior to the exchange of vows is not appropriate.

The rite of marriage has three parts. The first part deals with your intent of marriage. The priest will ask each of you of your freedom to enter into this marriage, your willingness to enter into a life-long commitment and the openness of you, the couple, to have children.

The priest will then invite you to declare your consent. During this second part, as you recite your vows, you will make public a promise to each other, before God and the Church.

The last part of the marriage rite consists in the blessing and exchange of rings. Rings are exchanged as a symbol, which will extend in time the promises just made.

Within any liturgical action there are certain options that are available and certain elements of rite that cannot be changed. **The practice of lighting a unity candle has been a cultural adaptation which has never been part of the marriage rite.** One principle in the planning of liturgical environment is not to duplicate symbols already present in the liturgy. The couple themselves and the rings they exchange are the primary symbols, expressing the image of God and God's unconditional love. An alternative option for a unity candle would be to light it at the Wedding Banquet as part of the Grace before the meal.

The General Intercessions follow the exchange of rings. The intercessions may be spoken by a parent, a friend, a relative, your sponsoring couple or someone in your wedding party. Write your own or ask your family, wedding party, or priest to help. Models are available in the book of Suggested Readings. The intercessions pray that married love and commitment transform in holiness the church, the world, this community and the children born of this marriage. Ask for specific virtues, such as love, patience, communication, understanding and the wisdom to be good parents.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



At the preparation of the gifts, the bread and wine are brought forward by someone chosen by you, the married couple. Perhaps it is your sponsoring couple, your parents, or others who have helped to prepare you for this sacrament. The rite also asks that you bring a gift for the poor to symbolize marriage as a call to be bonded in service to others. As the closing blessing says: "may the afflicted and needy find in you generous friends." During this time, all present join in song, or, if desired, an instrumental solo can be played or a sacred song sung.

The Eucharistic acclamations are the most important in the entire liturgy and are to be sung. They are the "Holy, Holy," the Mystery of Faith and the "Great Amen." These are high points in our Eucharistic liturgy and nothing must overshadow them. Your parish musician will know which settings are known to the people.

The Lord's Prayer is the common prayer of all baptized Christians and is the one prayer at inter-religious marriages which everyone knows. It is not to be sung unless the whole congregation can sing a simple chant together. It certainly should never be sung as a solo. In keeping with the principle of non-duplication, the Lord's Prayer should only occur once during the celebration.

The usual prayer after the Lord's Prayer ("Deliver us, O Lord") is omitted, and the Nuptial Blessing said immediately. There are three alternatives. Study them closely, discuss them with the priest, and choose the one you prefer. Generally, when a Catholic marries a non-Christian, the third alternative is chosen.

Next, the community exchanges the sign of peace. At this time, it is appropriate for the newly married couples to exchange this peace with their wedding party and parents after exchanging with each other and the priest. This is the first liturgical act of the newly married couple. This is also a time when the couple could present flowers to their parents, if they desire. This is followed by the Lamb of God, which is generally sung.

All present who share the same Catholic tradition may receive Holy Communion. You are welcome to choose Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who could assist with distributing Communion. There are members of most communities who have been appointed to this ministry. Your liturgist will be able to direct you in this matter.

Because of the sad divisions in Christianity, Catholics cannot extend a general invitation to receive Communion to other Christians who are not fully united with us. "Catholics believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life and worship of the community. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist, and for which

we must all pray." (National Conference of Catholic Bishops statement on intercommunion, 1986).

During Communion all should sing the processional song. It is an important sign of the unity we experience in the Eucharist. It should have a short, simple, or familiar refrain which all can sing as they come forward. The verses are sung by the cantor or soloist. The Prayer after Communion follows a period of silence.

CONCLUDING RITE

The assembly responds "Amen" at the end of each section of the blessing by the priest. It is helpful for someone (e.g., the cantor) to lead these responses over the microphone. The final "May the almighty God bless you" is always said by the priest alone. The blessing is followed by the Introduction of the Couple after which the bride and groom begin the procession out, followed by their wedding party, parents and the rest of the congregation. Generally instrumental music is played throughout the recessional.

THE WEDDING DAY

Once the preparations are finished, it is time for the wedding liturgy to be celebrated. Be sure to review your wedding plans with the parish Music & Liturgy Coordinator before you print your program. Please send a rough draft of your program to the Music and Liturgy Coordinator before you print them!

The wedding liturgy has a civil legal aspect to it as well. **It is important that your marriage license be brought to the church office ahead of time so that we can prepare it to be forwarded to the courthouse.** The parish office will take care of assuring that the sacrament is recorded here at St. Michael's and in your parish[es] of baptism.

Remember, this a celebration gathering people who love and care for you. You have prepared to celebrate well. Allow yourselves to be open to the rich symbols that are reminders of God's great love for each of us, a love in which the two of you are participating in a very special way on your wedding day.

