

*Community of St. Ludmila
2107 J Street SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404*



*Preparing for the Sacrament
of Holy Matrimony*

*Bride:*_____

*Groom:*_____

*Wedding Date:*_____

Wedding Policy Statement

Celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a special and joyful time for brides and grooms, for their families and friends and for the parish community. The new beginning, the love, the promise and the hope that weddings are for us make of their celebration a special and grace-filled time in our lives.

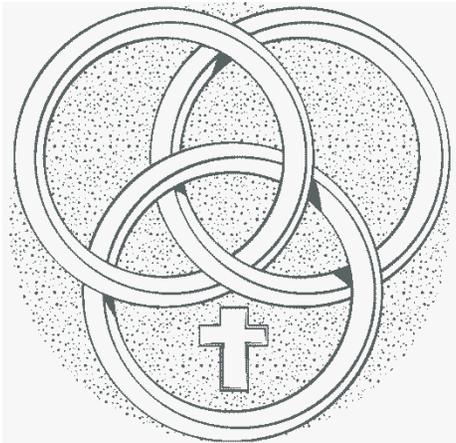
The church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their weddings in the context of our prayer as Christians. Indeed, so important is marriage in Christian life that it is called a Sacrament. Great care is taken to see that the prayer for this special moment is reverent, graceful, beautiful, faithful to the tradition of the church, and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us.

Our celebration of the Sacraments, holy matrimony included, are always rooted in listening to the scriptures so that we can be nourished and strengthened by God's word. We always celebrate the Sacraments as a community. We gather our brothers and sisters in faith, and ask for their prayerful support.

These celebrations are incomplete unless they are filled with song, with prayerful gestures and with the silence in which we hear the voice of God in our lives. In this context, we begin with this important principle: the celebration of a wedding is an expression of the faith of the Christian Community and as such must express the best act of worship the community can provide. Therefore, the parish weekend liturgy is the model to follow in planning a wedding.

In this spirit, St. Ludmila parish provides the following guidelines for celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the building which shelters the prayer of our community.

2



Who May Marry in Our Parish Church?

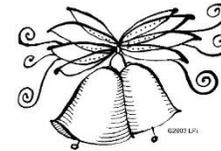
The answer to this question is governed, in part, by the Code of Canon law of the Roman Catholic Church. Generally speaking, *members of our parish* may celebrate their weddings at St. Ludmila church.

Roman Catholics who live within the bounds of the parish but who have no formal relationship with the parish community may speak to someone on the parish staff about establishing a relationship with the parish - with an eye towards celebrating a wedding in the future.

Former members of the parish need to speak both to their present priest and to the pastor of St. Ludmila parish if they wish to solemnize their marriage in this church. Thus, a written letter of delegation from the pastor of the parish in which you are now a participating member is required. Weddings must always take place in a parish church.

3

Setting the Date of the Wedding



Couples are expected to contact a member of the parish staff *at least* six months in advance of the date on which they hope to celebrate their wedding, a year is preferable.

Scheduling the Time of the Celebration

Weddings are scheduled with respect to the couple's wishes, and the availability of the church building and pastor. Weddings are usually scheduled on Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. through 1:30 p.m. To allow sufficient time to prepare for the Saturday evening mass and the sacrament of Reconciliation the wedding party is expected to have the church cleaned up and to be out of the church by 3:00 p.m. Pictures are not allowed in the Church after the ceremony.

Weddings may be celebrated on a Friday evening or another night of the week. They may also be celebrated at the Saturday evening or Sunday morning parish liturgy.

There are some times in the church year when the liturgical calendar discourages or prohibits the celebration of weddings. For example, the season of Lent is a time of penance in the life of the church community, and that spirit touches and colors all parish liturgies between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. Weddings are also discouraged during the Advent season, four weeks prior to Christmas.

A Gathering of Ministries

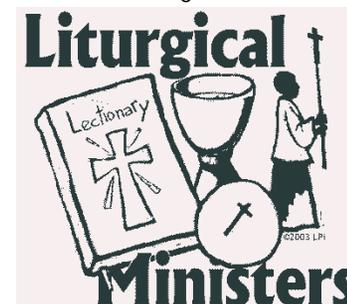
A wedding is, like any celebration of the liturgy, a gathering of several ministries within the faith community. The celebration you are preparing is an opportunity for everyone - your faith community, your families, your friends and yourselves - to offer thanks and praise for God's love always manifest in our lives, and in a special way incarnate now in the love and promise of you and your fiancé.

The Ministers of the Celebration

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the *bride and groom* minister the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony to one another; a priest and/or Deacon and at least two witnesses are also required to be present.

Presider

Ordinarily, the priest and/or deacon of the parish will preside at weddings celebrated in the parish. On occasion, a couple may have a friend or relative who is a priest or deacon they want to invite to preside at the wedding. In this case, the couple should mention this early in the process. The pastor of St. Ludmila will communicate to the visiting presider with regard to parish policy for celebration of liturgy in general and for weddings in particular. Visiting presiders are welcome, but will be asked to observe Archdiocesan and parish policy regarding the celebration of the sacraments. They must also request a celebrant to be sent to the Archdiocese of Dubuque *prior* to the celebration of the celebration.



Lectors

The proclamation of the word of God is a significant part of every wedding ceremony. The lector you choose should be a trained and regularly scheduled lector in the parish where they belong. It is unfair to expect someone with no experience or training to be comfortable and affective in this important role.

Ministers of the Eucharist

If the wedding is to be celebrated during Mass, there will be need for the service of a *minister of Eucharist* for the bread and for the cup. If friends or family members of the bride and groom are ministers of the Eucharist in their home parishes, they may be invited to serve at weddings celebrated here provided they attend the wedding rehearsal or arrive early so that they are familiar with the worship space and its demands. The bride and groom may also serve as Eucharistic ministers if trained.

Altar Servers

The responsibility of the acolyte, if you choose to have one, is to hold the book for the priest and to help prepare the table for Eucharist. Individuals should be familiar with serving Mass and be able to attend the rehearsal.

Cross Bearer

It is desired that the couple select an individual to lead the procession with the Processional Cross.

6

Ushers

Keep in mind that it is a primary role of the bride and groom who have invited their guests to greet their guests at their wedding. It is appropriate that the wedding couple be at the door to welcome their guests. The role of the usher is to facilitate the movement of the guests to and from their seats, to help guests with special needs, and to assist in preparing and cleaning up the church before and after the ceremony. The ushers are also a part of the worshiping community and should not leave your wedding ceremony to perform other duties.



Ring Bearers and Flower Girls

Ring bearers and flower girls are discouraged as they are not ministers, nor are their services required for the celebration of marriage. Couples will be asked to consider the age of children involved in these roles and whether their presence will add to or detract from the joyful solemnity of the celebration. Very young children tend to take the focus away from the bride and groom and the solemnity of the occasion. The rule of experience says that no one under 5 years of age should be asked.

Ring bearers will carry and present the rings for the ceremony.

7

Music Minister



The role of the music minister is to lead and engage the assembly in participating fully in your wedding liturgy. When choosing your music minister consider the following:

- * Someone to lead God's people in their song of faith-filled praise and thanksgiving.
- * Someone who not only has been blessed with musical talent, but who knows how to help God's people raise their voices in song.
- * Someone who is familiar with Catholic liturgy and the worship of this community? As a norm, the Gloria, the psalm, alleluia, holy, holy, and amen are to be sung if there is a Eucharistic liturgy, and an opening hymn, the psalm and alleluia are to be sung in Nuptial ceremony.
- * You are looking for music ministers who will follow Archdiocesan and parish policy in regard to music selection. There is an approved list to select from.
- * Your music must be approved by the St. Ludmila Director of Music
- * Non-St. Ludmila musicians can be used. They may request copies of the service music from our files.
- * St. Ludmila accompanists and cantors are available to provide music for your liturgy. Unless requested specifically, the Liturgical Music Director will assign musicians based on availability.
- * Accompanists are expected to attend the rehearsal.

- * The liturgy should follow the norm for a Sunday liturgy. Solos are not to be a part of the celebration.

8

Preparing the Wedding Celebration

Reconciliation:

Couples are encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. A great way to let go of the past and be filled with grace to begin this new journey.

The staff of St. Ludmila will be available to respond to particular requests the couple might make regarding the celebration of their wedding. In general and in particular, weddings celebrated at St. Ludmila parish are celebrated according to the worship books of the Roman Catholic Church: the Sacramentary, the Lectionary and the Rite of Marriage. In the case of weddings where ministers of other Christian denominations or other faiths are taking part, the appropriate adaptations will be made after consultation with that minister and the engaged couple.

Scripture:



passages are never used in place of the scripture.

Celebrating Marriage contains scripture readings most appropriate for use at weddings. The engaged couple will select from these options the scripture passages to be read at the wedding liturgy. Non-scripture

9

Procession:

The order for the procession at the beginning of the wedding celebration takes that form noted in the Rite of Marriage. The processional Cross, the priest and other ministers (acolytes, lectors) lead the procession into the church, followed by the groom and his parents, the wedding party, (not to exceed three attendants on either side) the bride and her parents.

Wedding vows:



The text for the consent (the "vows") is taken from one of the options provided in the Rite of Marriage. The chosen consent must be memorized by the couple and recited without interruption during the ceremony. It is expected that all who have

been invited to witness your vows be able to hear you pronounce them.



Worship aid:

In preparing the wedding liturgy, couples will be urged to incorporate elements which will encourage the active participation of those who gather for the celebration. This will include participation through sung and spoken prayer. Assistance will be provided from the parish staff so that the couple may prepare an appropriate worship aid (program) to help wedding guests in their participation. This is especially important when guests represent different faith backgrounds. Please include the number for each song in the program.

Environment:

As part of the preparation for the wedding, a staff member will discuss different seating arrangements available for the bride and groom, the two witnesses, attendants and parents.

Discussion involving the appropriate placement of flowers and greens will also take place. Couples will be asked to respect existing church decoration as well as appropriate placement as found in the liturgical documents. If extra decorations are brought in for the wedding liturgy, please keep in mind that the normal weekend liturgy will also be taking place and it is the families' responsibility to return the sanctuary to its typical setting for the weekend Mass. No adhesive material may be attached to pews or any woodwork.

The parish church is a truly sacred space for the members of the congregation, and should be respected by everything the wedding party says and does in its worship environment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should we get married at a Mass, or should we have a Nuptial ceremony?

First, let's understand the difference. Every celebration of Mass consists of a liturgy of the word (entrance rite, readings, homily, prayers of the faithful) and a liturgy of the Eucharist (presentation of bread and wine, the Eucharistic prayer, and Holy Communion). When a wedding is celebrated at Mass, the rite of marriage takes place after the homily and before the prayers of the faithful; the liturgy of the Eucharist then follows.

When a wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, it is celebrated in a liturgy of the word in which the rite of marriage takes place after the homily and before the prayers of the faithful. Both rites conclude with prayers and blessings.

When making your decision to celebrate your wedding in the context of Mass or a nuptial ceremony, consider the following:

- * What is your relationship to the Sunday Eucharist? Are you faithful to the Church's Sunday worship? Have you been away from the community's prayer? Have you committed yourselves to return?
- * Do you abide by the Church's teachings regarding cohabitation?
- * If one of you is not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church (and so will be unable to share Holy Communion if the wedding is celebrated during Mass), you may want to consider what this

means. Do you want to include something in this celebration in which only one of you will be able to take part?

12

- * Who will your guests be? Is the celebration of the Eucharist the best way to help them to be with you and pray with you at your wedding? If many of your guests are from outside the Catholic tradition, you may want to consider celebrating your wedding in a liturgy of the word.

Some people seem to think that a couple is not really married unless the wedding takes place at Mass. This is simply not true. Be open and honest with yourself and the parish staff, and make the decision which will provide the best context for prayer and celebration.

Regardless of your selection, if the wedding is before 4:00 PM, it does not count as your Sunday obligation. Consider joining the community Sunday morning. This is a powerful witness of your faith.

Should the bride and/or groom "make a visit" to the statue of the Blessed Virgin during the wedding liturgy?

Moments of personal piety should not be the focus of our attention at public worship. Therefore, such gestures during the wedding liturgy are discouraged. Anyone who have a personal devotion to Mary and wish to honor her in a special way at the time of their wedding are invited to do so as part of the prayer at the wedding rehearsal.

The wedding party may gather at the statue of the Blessed Virgin for the prayer at the end of the rehearsal if you would like to share that devotion with them. If desired, flowers may be left there at that time. Flowers

may also be placed at the Marian shrine before the wedding by your florist.

13

What is a "unity candle"? May we have one?

The so-called "unity candle" is a commercial product of which no mention is made in the liturgical books of the Catholic Church. The product is usually sold as a trio of candles, two small and one large with the expectation that the bride and groom share in lighting the larger candle with the light of the two smaller ones.

It has no real history or tradition behind it, and is viewed by the church as diminishing the real symbol of unity in the wedding ceremony - the blessing and exchange of the rings. For this reason, we do not include it in wedding celebrations in our parish.

We do encourage you to prepare carefully the many signs and symbols of unity already available in the rite of marriage:

- ❖ Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- ❖ Worship aids designed to encourage participation
- ❖ Musical selections that invite the participation of all present
- ❖ Genuine hospitality as guests are welcomed to your celebration
- ❖ Parents participate in the processional by presenting their children for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

- ❖ Careful preparation and rehearsal of the exchange of vows and rings so that all in attendance can hear them
- ❖ The celebration of the Eucharist itself

14

Rules for Photography

A wedding is first and foremost a sacred ritual. Photographing or videotaping the wedding celebration can contribute to the remembering and renewing of this special event, but should in no way interfere or detract from the worship experience. Avoid using cameras or camcorders that interfere with the prayerful atmosphere; flash photography should never be used during the ceremony. *You may want to make note of this in your wedding program.* There should be no movement in the sanctuary area during the service. All video recorders should be in a stationary position in the rear or side of the church. (A limit of two) The official photographer should contact the presider before the wedding for other details.

Pictures should be scheduled before the wedding. An hour is quite sufficient for a professional photographer to do a fine job of photographing your wedding party. Pictures should be completed no later than one hour before the start of your wedding.

After the processional, all photographers shall stay in the back of the Church. No walking around during the ceremony.

Other Thoughts

The superstition of “not seeing the bride before the wedding” is one the parish does not uphold.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to see that the wedding party conducts themselves properly while

pictures are taken. Children should not be allowed to run freely in the church at any time.

No alcohol will be tolerated before or after the ceremony on the church property.

15

What music may be played at our wedding?

You will need to meet with our music minister who will help you in selecting appropriate music for the celebration of your marriage. Music selections must fit the Archdiocesan guidelines already in place. Service music must always be sung (alleluia, holy, memorial acclamation, amen). Other choices reflect the fact the music at liturgy is sung prayer. Also keep in mind that the bride and groom come as equals to the wedding celebration, thus a separate bridal procession or march is discouraged.

Music at weddings is always live, no recordings are allowed.



What should we pay our musicians?

Again, this is a good way to keep perspective in your wedding expenses. You will probably hire a disk jockey or a band to play at your reception and dance. What will you pay them? The musicians you choose to lead music at your wedding ceremony are just as important. Keep in mind that the parish music ministers can be of great help to you in this area, but should be reimbursed the same as

any other music minister if they play or sing at your wedding.

Cantors: \$150
Accompanists: \$250
Combined Accompanist/Cantor \$300

16

What is the offering for the church?

A fee of \$300.00 for parishioners and \$500.00 for non-parishioners is expected at the time of the rehearsal. The fee for the use of the church should be seen as a sign of support and thanksgiving to the faith community. As such, your offering goes to the parish church and not to the priest. If you wish to offer the priest a gift in addition to the offering given to the church, you may do so. Given the cost of weddings these days, the bride and groom should consider the statement they make regarding their priorities in terms of their generosity toward the parish and the priest.

Smoking

Smoking is permitted on the Church property. Please be respectful by placing your butts and other garbage in the proper containers.

Is alcohol permitted before or after the wedding?

The use of alcohol in any form on the church property before or after a wedding is **absolutely** forbidden. Please

inform your family and friends of this policy. Noncompliance with this policy could result in the cancellation of the wedding.

17

What are the things I need to do for the Church prior to the wedding?

A meeting will be held in during the winter at which all the expectations and requirements for weddings at St. Ludmila will be explained. Your parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. At this meeting the FOCCUS Marriage Readiness Instrument will be administered and the required paperwork for the church will be filled out.

Attendance at this meeting is mandatory and will save you from making several other appointments and the parish staff from innumerable meetings.

Memorize your wedding vows:

“I, _____, take you, _____ to be my husband/wife. I promise to be faithful to you, in good times and in bad in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.”

“_____, receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Ways to Spiritually prepare for this Sacrament

- _____ Register as a member of St. Ludmila Parish
- _____ Pray as a couple
- _____ Attend Weekend Mass regularly
- _____ Become a trained liturgical minister
- _____ Assist as the various parish events
- _____ Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

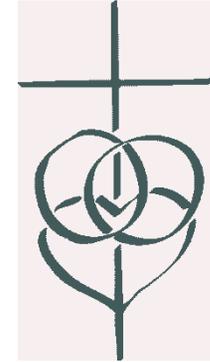


18

Required Marriage Preparation:

Couples preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at St. Ludmila Parish will complete the following requirements:

- Have an initial meeting with the Pastor and/or Deacon to set the date for your approaching wedding.
- Attend the winter meeting with parents
- Complete the FOCCUS Marriage Readiness Instrument
- Meet with assigned Sponsor Couple (Approximately 5 meetings)
- Attend a PreCana or an Engaged Encounter Weekend
Dates and times are available at <https://www.dbqarch.org/offices/family-life/marriage-preparation/pre-cana/>
- Optional: Learn more about Natural Family Planning. More information available at: <https://www.dbqarch.org/nfp/> or



19

Paperwork for the Church Records

_____ Completion of FOCCUS Marriage Readiness Instrument.

Pre-nuptial questionnaire for:

_____ Bride and _____ Groom

Affidavit concerning the freedom to marry:

_____ Bride (2 copies), _____ Groom (2 copies)

Required Dispensations and Delegations:

_____ For ecumenical marriages

_____ If one of the people to be married is not baptized

_____ A priest other than the pastor is asked to witness the ceremony

_____ If the wedding is not going to be in the Catholic Church

Baptismal Certificates issued within the last six months:

_____ for the Bride

_____ for the Groom

_____ Letter of delegation from your pastor if you
are not a member of the St. Ludmila Faith Community

_____ Wedding License (to be given to the priest at
the rehearsal)