

St. Clare Parish
8535 SW 19th Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
(503) 244-1037

CONGRATULATIONS!

First, let us express to you, on behalf of the people of St. Clare Parish our joyful and hearty congratulations on your decision to exchange your vows within our Catholic Church community! We wish you much happiness and many blessings as you begin now to prepare for what will undoubtedly be one of the most important and solemn events of your lives: the public exchange of your vows of love and mutual and lasting faithfulness.

Because we want to help you get ready for your married life as well as your wedding day, our parish has set forth the enclosed guidelines for use in our parish.

I. THE PREPARATION POLICY

A. The Sacrament of Matrimony

Christians have always believed marriage to be a special and unique sharing in the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. The marrying couple publicly proclaims by their vows before God and in the midst of the community of faith that they intend their life together to mirror the kind of self-giving love that Jesus Christ has for his people, the church.

Because of this, marriage in the Roman Catholic tradition is identified as a "sacrament". In other words, marriage is a living "sign" in the world of our loving, faithful God.

Thus, marriage means more than a wedding day. Marriage designates the lifelong relationship of husband and wife and their commitment (their vows) to grow more and more in love as time goes on. Marriage for Catholic Christians, then, is not something they "receive"; it is something they become. Christian marriage is different from secular marriage. Christian marriage is a commitment to one's spouse within the community of faith, the church.

When two people marry in the church, it is more than being married in a particular kind of building. It is also more than something just between the two partners. Marriage is an event for the parish community as well. Indeed, there can really be no such thing as a "private" wedding because sacraments are public celebrations of faith in Jesus Christ.

For its part, the community has a responsibility to give the couple time to prepare adequately for the reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

B. The Preparation Process

1. The engaged couple contacts the parish: Archdiocesan policy requires couples contact the parish at least six (6) months in advance of the wedding to begin the process of preparation. At that time, the engaged couple will be sent a copy of these guidelines. After the

couple has had a chance to review the guidelines, they should contact the parish priest to arrange an appointment to consider the following important questions: **Am I a parishioner? Am I a practicing Catholic? Are we free to marry?**

2. Meeting with the Priest: During the meeting, besides discussing the three questions listed above, the priest will also explain the marriage preparation policy, the wedding ceremony and determine the eligibility of the engaged couple (according to both civil and church law) to celebrate their wedding at St. Clare. At this time, there will be a discussion of the wedding liturgy and what is appropriate in the revised ritual. There is a 26-minute archdiocesan videotape, "The Wedding Ceremony: Planning Your Celebration," which you might find helpful and can be checked out from the parish office. This meeting will conclude with the FOCCUS questionnaire, a pre-marital inventory: a checklist that highlights similarities and differences between you and your future spouse.

3. The engaged couple contacts the Sponsor Couple: The engaged couple will be introduced to their Sponsor Couple from the parish. Similar to sponsors for Baptism and Confirmation, these couples will share their experience of Christian marriage with the engaged couple. This will be done by means of sessions arranged at the convenience of the engaged couple and the Sponsor Couple. Owing to circumstances, a couple may also attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend, or the Catholic Family Services Marriage Preparation Program (Portland). In any case, unless physically impossible, meeting with a parish Sponsor Couple is preferable.

4. Planning the Wedding: When the Sponsor Couple Program is completed, the engaged couple should contact the parish priest again to plan the specifics of the wedding liturgy. During this meeting songs, readings and other arrangements will be discussed.

C. Reasons for Delay

A priest may not lightly refuse to witness the marriage of two people who are free to marry. However, for a just cause the priest may delay the marriage. Just cause would certainly include the following: (1) Non-practice of the Faith by the Catholic party with no intention of returning to the practice of the Faith. (2) Refusal to participate in or complete a marriage preparation program or to participate in pre-marital counseling, if this is required. (3) Lack of readiness for marriage as assessed by the priest, after consultation with parents (where appropriate) and thorough pre-marriage counseling.

If a marriage is temporarily delayed by the recommendation of the priest and the couple wishes to appeal the decision, they may do so by writing to the Judicial Vicar at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center (2838 E. Burnside / Portland, OR 97214).

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, persons 19 years or younger are discouraged from marrying. All the evidence indicates that the chances of the marriage lasting are greatly reduced. If either party is not yet 20 years old, besides the requirements of civil law, consideration for marriage in the church will be given only after the priest has consulted with the parents and the couple themselves and, if necessary, with a professional counselor.

When pregnancy occurs outside of marriage, it is a time of great stress for the parties involved and for their families. The church views such situations with compassion and concern. If you find yourselves pregnant, please give us a call so we can discuss your options.

D. Necessary Documents

1. Baptismal Certificate: All baptized Christians must provide a copy of his/her baptismal certificate. The copy has to be received from your church of baptism within the last six months.

2. Statement of Party to Marriage Form: Parents of the couple (if parents are deceased, then a close relative or friend who has known the person for a significant number of years) completes a form confirming the information provided by the engaged couple.

3. Marriage License: The couple must present a valid Oregon Marriage License at the time of rehearsal. The license is not valid until three days after it is issued and remains valid for 60 days. Any County Clerk can provide this.

II. PLANNING THE SERVICE

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

Couples should realize that the wedding celebration is first and foremost a liturgy. Therefore, principles used for Sunday Mass are the same for how we celebrate marriage: full and active participation through congregational singing, listening to the Word of God, etc. Also, actions that favor one gender are not appropriate. In brief, the model for a Catholic wedding is how we celebrate Sunday Eucharist.

The assembly at most weddings is a mixture of people from a variety of groups: family, friends, associates, neighbors, some catholic, Christian or non-believers. What is selected for this wedding should above all help these gathered people "assemble" to hear God's Word, renew their own commitments to Him and each other and express the gratitude they have for your vocation to married love. Anything that leaves them spectators or fragmented is not appropriate. The following guidelines are to help direct the arrangements for your wedding.

1. The Wedding location:

- a. Weddings usually take place **in a parish church** in which you reside and the parish priest usually witnesses the marriage. Our parish is happy to welcome other priests or deacons. They will receive delegation to witness the marriage at St. Clare church when the usual preparation is completed. Arrangements for this should be finalized one month before the wedding.
- b. For a wedding occurring **in a church of another faith**, the Archbishop may permit the Catholic party to celebrate the wedding in that church. This permission is obtained from the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center through the parish priest. Preparation for this marriage is the same.
- c. For students at Lewis & Clark College who wish to get married **in the South Campus Chapel** this process and policy apply. The reservation of that chapel should be made **AFTER** you have contacted St. Clare Parish, read this policy and have met with the parish priest.
- d. For weddings **not in a church**, only the Archbishop can grant permission and he does so only for grave reasons.

2. To have the Mass or not? The Church encourages couples that are baptized to celebrate a wedding Mass. You may also choose to celebrate your wedding without the Mass. You as a couple, together with the priest and Wedding Coordinator, will plan the liturgy. At St. Clare we do not celebrate weddings, according to longstanding church tradition, during the season of Lent.

3. The Music: Catholic Church guidelines prescribe that music used during the wedding liturgy be sacred in nature and must be in keeping with the liturgical traditions of the Catholic Church. Accordingly, no "pop" music is permitted in the service. The priest or his delegate will decide any instance in which there is a question of the appropriateness of a selection. Use of the organ or piano by outside musicians needs the approval of our parish organist, Joan Wall. Our Wedding Coordinator has the titles of music and the names of musicians who can help you with your selections. All wedding music must be pre-approved by her.

4. Flowers: Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary where they will not obscure the altar, pulpit or the celebrant's chair. Parish seasonal decorations for Sunday Mass are not to be moved. Please do not use tape on the pews to secure flowers, bows, etc.

5. Candles: There are lighted candles next to the altar. Large candelabra can be placed in the sanctuary where they do not obstruct the congregation's view of the altar, pulpit or bride and groom. The use of a Unity Candle can enhance the primary symbols of your consent and exchange of vows and rings. The Unity candle is not part of the Wedding Liturgy and so is not essential.

6. Photography: No flash pictures are permitted during the wedding service. Taking pictures and video taping during the actual ceremony is only permitted if it can be done without flash or other extra lighting equipment. The photographer should not be a visual or audible focal point. Therefore, they should stay behind the congregation. Videographers should stay in one place during the ceremony. We encourage formal pictures to be taken in the church before the wedding, but is necessary if there is a wedding following yours.

7. Time of service: Weddings are normally scheduled on Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. Confessions are at 4:00 p.m., followed by Mass at 5:00. Due to the time involved in set-up and clean up, we suggest only one wedding be scheduled per Saturday, but there can be two. Due to the heavy weekend schedule for the clergy, we don't have Saturday night weddings.

8. Rehearsal: A wedding rehearsal can be scheduled with the Wedding Coordinator. Generally the Wedding Coordinator leads it. We encourage anyone involved in the ceremony to come and be on time.

9. Decorum in Church: The couple is asked to inform members of the wedding party that great care must be taken to respect the quiet of the church and the dignity of the ceremony. Loud talking, running, chewing gum or smoking is not permitted in the church building. The use of alcohol or drugs by the wedding party on church grounds can be reason to cancel the wedding.

10. Official Witnesses: The Best Man and Maid of Honor ordinarily should be Catholic and must be 18 years or older. They sign the marriage license as official civil witnesses.

11. Financial Offerings and Fees: The amount of the Wedding Offering given to the church is up to the couple. It would seem, however, that it ought to reflect the time spent by the priest with the engaged couple and other parishioners such as the Sponsor Couple, musicians, the use of church facilities and so forth. Other fees are:

- a. **Parishioner Offering:** (?)
- b. **Non-Parishioner Offering:** \$200.00
- c. **Refundable Cleaning Deposit:** \$150.00
- d. **Musician(s):** (consult Wedding Coord.)
- e. **Wedding Coordinator:** \$175.00

12. The Procession: The following are options for the style of procession. Whichever style the couple chooses, all of the wedding party enter from the entrance of the church.

1st option: First the priest, then the wedding party (as couples), the Best man / Maid of Honor, the groom and his parents, the bride and her parents.

2nd option: The same as option #1 but the bride and groom escort each other during the procession.

3rd option: First the wedding party, then the groom and his parents, the bride and her father and then the priest.

13. Throwing Rice, Birdseed, Flower Petals or Confetti: This is not allowed anywhere on church property. The wedding party is to inform the guests. Aisle runners are not used at St. Clare.

14. Cleaning after the wedding: The family should designate to the Wedding Coordinator who will be responsible for making sure all wedding materials are removed from the church. We accept no responsibility for articles left in church. A refundable cleaning deposit of \$150.00 is to be given to the parish secretary. If any unusual cleaning of the church or grounds is needed, an appropriate amount will be deducted from the deposit.

15. Deliveries: Make arrangements with the Wedding Coordinator concerning deliveries. The parish office is closed on Saturdays.

16. Receptions: Our parish hall is available for wedding receptions. For more information contact the parish office or the Altar Society

THANK YOU

Fr. Tom Farley	Pastor	244-1037
Mari Becker	Wedding Coordinator	244-2105
Joan Wall	Organist	244-2286
Tia Sherry	Parish Secretary Monday - Thursday/ 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	244-1037
Tim & Julie Zweber	Sponsor Couples	452-9353

January 2003

