

Why These Guidelines?

♦ A wedding in the Catholic Church is a **sacred and public celebration performed according to the official *Rite of Marriage*. It is an act of prayer and worship.**

♦ A Catholic wedding is both a **personal and community celebration**. It is *personal* because two persons, a man and a woman, confer upon each other the *Sacrament of Marriage* by vowing themselves to one another. It is also the celebration of a *community* - the Church with the couple's families and friends - witnesses the couple's vows and supports them in their commitment to one another.

♦ **Nothing** (such as decorations, photographers, etc.) must distract from the sacredness of this celebration nor from the focus proper to the couple, who are the ministers of the sacrament, and from the community who is present.

♦ The parish wishes to be **welcoming and supportive** to you who are preparing for marriage at Holy Faith. These guidelines are meant to assist you in having a wedding which is dignified and festive but which avoids unnecessary problems and distractions. Therefore, this brochure will state expectations and guidelines to assist you and others in planning for a happy wedding.

The Wedding Ceremony

♦ The wedding of two **practicing Catholics** always involves a Mass.

♦ It is recommended that the wedding of a **Catholic to a non-Catholic** be celebrated with a *Liturgy of the Word* (Scripture readings without the Eucharist) in consideration of the non-Catholic party.

♦ The wedding ceremony is prepared with the couple under the direction of the **Liturgy Director**. *Any special requests or circumstances should be brought to the Liturgy Director's attention.* A visiting priest who will preside at a wedding in the parish must request permission beforehand from the Pastor.

The Wedding Procession Into the Church

♦ Must conform to the **official *Rite of Marriage***. The entrance procession is similar to the Sunday Mass procession where various persons *all enter together in order*.

The ***Rite of Marriage*** (#20) states: "If there is a procession to the altar, the ministers go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and groom. According to local custom, they may be escorted by at least their parents and witnesses."

♦ This type of procession is not always followed in every Catholic parish. Many places still have the bridal party alone entering in procession, with the groom, attendants and clergy slipping in by a side entrance. *This does not happen at Holy Faith Parish.*

♦ You may choose one of several forms which comply with the Catholic *Rite of Marriage* and which will create a beautiful and festive entrance of the couple, family, and friends

Various Forms of Processions at Holy Faith:

FORM A

- First: Priest & Assisting Ministers
- 2nd: Groomsmen escorting bridesmaids
- 3rd.: (Parents of the Bride & Groom)
- 4th.: **BRIDE & GROOM together**

This form focuses well upon parents, friends, and especially upon the **couple** who enter **together** as the **ministers of the Sacrament**.

FORM B

- First: Priest & Assisting Ministers
- 2nd: Groomsmen escorting bridesmaids
- 3rd.: **GROOM** with his Parent(s)
- 4th.: **BRIDE** with her Parent(s)

This form (like **FORM A**) especially involves the parents who are presenting their children for marriage.

FORM C

- First: Priest & Assisting Ministers
- 2nd: **GROOM** with parent(s) or **Best Man**
- 3rd.: Groomsmen & bridesmaids (**Maid of Honor** enters alone)
- 4th.: **BRIDE** with her Parent(s) (both or one)

♦ The *Liturgy Director* will discuss with you the form which best suits your circumstances.

Music for the Wedding

◆ The **Music** for the wedding is under the direction of the **Music Director**. The Director is responsible to the **Pastor** for assuring that the music is appropriate for a Catholic wedding.

◆ The Parish will provide an **accompanist** and a **cantor** who are trained in leading the music for the liturgy. Holy Faith requires that these music ministers are present at all weddings to assure the quality of the music and to facilitate the community's sung prayer.

◆ Guest musicians and singers are **not encouraged** at Holy Faith. If you want to consider them in your wedding, they are subject to an evaluation and the Pastor's approval (even if they have previous experience singing in churches). (**Consider inviting guest musicians to sing or play at your reception in a more relaxed atmosphere**).

Decorations

◆ The guide here is "keep it simple!"

◆ **One large** flower arrangement is permitted in front of the altar (no higher than the altar - up to **3 ft**). **Two medium** arrangements on either side of the altar (up to **5 ft** with stands) — but still leaving room to move around the altar.

◆ If your wedding is taking place in the **Christmas** or **Easter Seasons**, note that the church is already decorated in a festive manner (you may wish to save in flower arrangements).

◆ **UNITY CANDLE** is not part of the Catholic tradition and is not permitted at Holy Faith. (Consider having it as the opening ritual at you reception).

◆ **Archways** are not permitted and **candelabra** (if used) must be placed at the back of the sanctuary and dripless candles must be used.

◆ For safety, **floor runners** are not permitted, and neither are *flower petals*, *paper petals*, *rice* and *birdseed* within or outside the church.

◆ **Nothing** can be *tacked* or *glued* to the pews.

◆ If you wish, you may leave your flower arrangement for the church — all other decorations **must** be removed from the church immediately after the wedding. Please make prior arrangements to remove them. *Holy Faith is not responsible for the loss of equipment or decorations used at the wedding.*

Dress

◆ In our society women's formal wear is more varied than men's. Women in the wedding party should not wear dresses that are too short nor cut too low. There is a **dressing room** available for women. Men should come already dressed for the wedding. *Please lock your valuables in your car's trunk not in the bride's room. Holy Faith is not responsible for loss or theft of valuables.*

Photography & Videography

◆ **Photos** are permitted. Photographers are to respect the sacredness of the wedding. **Flash Photography or standing/moving in the sanctuary are not permitted during the ceremony**. *Please refer to "Directives for Photographers" in your in wedding package.*

Time & Other Considerations

◆ As a courtesy to your guests and to the church please plan to begin **on time**. **The use of alcohol in the church premises before the wedding, by any member of the wedding party, may result in the immediate cancellation of the wedding.**

Practical Considerations for your Wedding at Holy Faith Catholic Church



CONTENTS:

- Why These Guidelines
- The Wedding Ceremony
- Music for the Wedding
- Decorating the Church
 - Photos & Video
- Attire for the Wedding
- Time & Other Considerations

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