

# *Planning Your Wedding at St. Tarcissus*

## *A Prayer in Preparation for Marriage*

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the wonderful gift of our love, which has already brought us so much joy. Grant that we may continue to love reverently, patiently, and generously so that we may see You in each other.*

*We ask You to guide our understanding that our love and compassion may deepen and mature. In these hurried days of preparation, grant us the peace and the calmness to reflect upon the sacramental moment when You will seal and sanctify our vows, binding us together in profound intimacy.*

*Grant us the grace to understand that soon we will no longer be a man and a woman in love – but husband and wife. We will be an image of You and Your Church, with a special right to supernatural help, and a special commission to create love in each other, in our children, and in the family of God. In joy or in sorrow, in richness or poverty, in sickness and in health, may our love grow in Your Divine love till death do us part.*

*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## *Congratulations!*

This is a wonderful time in your life. One of the central truths of our faith is this: **“God is love. Those who abide in love abide in God and God in them”** (John 4:16).

Planning for marriage means more than just planning for a wedding ceremony. Preparing for a lifetime together in this modern world involves time, grace, and communication. Marriage is a mutually binding covenant embracing permanence, fidelity, and childbearing in accord with the will of God.

*“The Matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament”* (Code of Canon Law # 1055).

Jesus raised the marriage contract to the dignity of the Sacrament of Matrimony, thus placing the help of His blessing toward successful fulfillment of the vocation of marriage.

## *Preparation Time*

Couples wishing to be married sacramentally in the Catholic Church need to devote an appropriate amount of time for spiritual and emotional preparation. It is suggested that a minimum of six months be allotted for a couples' preparation for this sacrament. A parish priest or deacon welcomes your visit to discuss your intentions for marriage. Ideally, this discussion should be set up shortly after an engagement. The couple should be prepared for this meeting with any questions for the priest or deacon. We request that couples do not reserve reception locations until a date is secured within the Church.

## *Marriage Preparation*

*"The path to Heaven through the Sacrament of Matrimony."* This is the motto of "One in Christ," a two-day marriage preparation seminar offered monthly throughout the Chicago area. Couples wishing to marry at St. Tarcissus are required to complete this seminar.

The *One in Christ* Marriage Seminar is designed to prepare you and your fiancé for the Sacrament of Matrimony. *One in Christ* presents both the sacramental theology and the practical "tools" of Christian Marriage so that you and your fiancé may reach an understanding of how marriage is a participation in the life of Heaven and what that means for your lives together here on earth. The course presents the truth, beauty, and goodness of marriage and family life.

The seminar takes place on two Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There is a \$250 fee which covers the two days, books, resources, catered breakfasts and lunches, Natural Family Planning class, and stipends.

Registration information can be found at: [www.oneinchristmarriage.com](http://www.oneinchristmarriage.com).

At St. Tarcissus, we also require couples to complete "Catholic Couple Checkup," an online instrument for marriage preparation. This assessment tool is designed to identify the unique relationship strengths and growth areas of dating, engaged, or married couples. The couple receives a 15-20 page report on their relationship and can download a free Discussion Guide, designed to help them learn proven relationship skills.

The Catholic Couple Checkup will help couples discover their relationship strengths. These strengths are what enable couples to enjoy and continue developing a healthy relationship. It will also help identify issues that are threatening the vitality of their relationship and may need to be addressed.

Go to: [www.catholiccouplecheckup.com](http://www.catholiccouplecheckup.com) to register and complete the process. Please forward the electronic results of the check-up to the priest preparing you for marriage.

## *Planning the Ceremony*

Wedding Masses and/or ceremonies are available on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. and other days of the week, except Sunday or during Lent. Time for photography after a 3:00 p.m. wedding is limited because of the time needed to set up the church for 5:00 p.m. Mass. Saturday Wedding Masses do not fulfill the Sunday Mass Obligation.

At your consultation with a priest/deacon, you will receive a booklet, *"Together for Life,"* containing the various Scripture readings and prayers for a Catholic Wedding ceremony. After you have made your selections and once you have completed the Marriage Preparation, the priest will assist you in finalizing the specifics of your wedding ceremony.

## *Documents Needed*

- A copy of your Baptismal certificate (no older than six months old) from where the sacrament was received.
- A pre-nuptial questionnaire for both bride and groom.
- Affidavits for freedom to marry. Two affidavits are required regarding each individual's freedom to marry. Parents, siblings, or close relatives are normally the best witnesses to this fact. The papers must be filled out by a Catholic priest or deacon. Your loved one can go to *their* local parish to fill these out.
- Marriage License: To obtain a license, the couple must appear together at the Cook County Clerk's office. Information on office locations, hours of operations, ID requirements, fee amount, and other items of interest can be found at: [www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/marriage-licenses](http://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/marriage-licenses). The marriage license is valid for sixty days. Please give the license to the priest no later than at the rehearsal.
- *Attendance card for One in Christ marriage preparation class.*

## *Banns*

Marriage banns are published in the bulletin of the home parish of each individual for the three weeks prior to the ceremony.

## *The Marriage Ceremony*

If both bride and groom are Catholic, it is most fitting that the marriage vows be exchanged at Mass and that the Holy Eucharist be received by the couple. The sacrament of reconciliation is highly encouraged for Catholics before they get married.

When a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic Christian, a Mass is discouraged, since many in attendance presumably would not be able to receive Holy Communion. If one is Catholic and one is not baptized the Rite of Marriage outside of Mass celebrated.

The priest will be assisted by two St. Tarcissus altar servers at the wedding

ceremony. It is customary that each server receives a monetary gift after the ceremony.

## *Music*

The Parish music director will assist in the selection of appropriate sacred music and songs. Although non-sacred music may have a deep personal meaning to you, it may not be fitting for the Rite of Marriage.

A guest organist or singer(s) will be allowed only upon the approval of the music director. In every case, the music should be played and performed by competent and well-trained artists. The music director will provide you with a written contract outlining your choices, costs, etc. The music director sets his/her own fee and couples deal directly with him/her.

## *Church Fees*

The church requests an offering of \$300 payable on or before the rehearsal.

## *Rehearsal*

The rehearsal will be arranged by the officiating priest and takes place one or two days before the wedding. It involves the bridal party, lectors, parents, gift bearers and the priest or deacon. The rehearsal is a practice of the ceremony and lasts no more than an hour. Please emphasize with members of the wedding party and family the need for punctuality on the rehearsal day.

## *Flowers and Candles*

Flowers can enhance the beauty of the ceremony. However, floral décor should not distract from the focus on the bride and groom. The couple can make arrangements with a florist of their own choosing. They will provide the aisle runner, if one is used. Our aisle is 84 feet long. No wire, tape or other material is to be used on the pews. A couple is welcome to donate the flower arrangement to the church after the wedding.

## *Programs/ Worship Aids*

Some couples wish to print a liturgical program (worship aid) for their guests. Please consult the priest celebrating your wedding before finalizing the copy. We recommend that you print an outline of the ceremony rather than the complete text of all the prayers and readings. Thus, your guests can focus their attention on the ceremony rather than the printed words of the booklet.

## *Photography*

Our policy is to permit photographs and video during the ceremony, provided that they do not detract from the sacred nature of the Sacrament of Marriage. Flashes may be used only during the procession. Please inform your photographer or videographer that they should check with the priest at the ceremony as to what is allowed. After the wedding ceremony, photos may be taken in Church as time permits. All are reminded that this is a house of God and not a studio. People are often in Church praying, so a quiet, respectful way of doing this would be appreciated.

## *Visiting Clergy*

We welcome visiting clergy if there is some special relationship to the bride or groom. The visiting priest will be responsible for: a) filling out the marriage forms and papers; b) working on the readings and wedding liturgy with you; c) handling the wedding rehearsal; and d) filling out and sending in the marriage license.

If he is not a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the priest needs a "Letter of Good Standing" sent from their chancery office.

## *Love is...*

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So, faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love." – (1Cor 13:4-13)*

## *Required Document Checklist*

### **Groom**

- \_\_\_ Baptismal record from church of baptism (issued six months prior to wedding)
- \_\_\_ Two Affidavits concerning freedom to marry
- \_\_\_ Attendance card from One in Christ marriage preparation

### **Bride**

- \_\_\_ Baptismal record from church of baptism (issued six months prior to wedding)
- \_\_\_ Two Affidavits concerning freedom to marry
- \_\_\_ Attendance card from One in Christ marriage preparation

### **Both**

- \_\_\_ Marriage license
- \_\_\_ Catholic Couple Check-up (results forwarded to priest)
- \_\_\_ "Letter of Good Standing" for clergy from outside the Archdiocese of Chicago