

PLANNING YOUR MARRIAGE

Congratulations!

This is a wonderful time in your life. To love and to be loved is one of the best experiences we humans can have. One of the central insights 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, insight, and communication.

Marriage in substance 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 pleading the help of his blessing toward successful fulfillment of the vocation of marriage.

In the case of a non-Catholic bride or groom, appropriate instruction is required by the officiating priest to facilitate proper understanding of the Faith commitment of the Catholic person.

Preparation

Couples should begin preparing for their marriage at the same time they announce their engagement. Adequate time must be anticipated for marriage preparation. The Catholic Church of Chicago asks that a minimum of six months be set aside. A meeting with the parish priest should be arranged shortly after you become engaged. ***Couples should refrain setting a firm wedding date until after they have contacted a priest to discuss their plans.***

Documents Needed

We need a pre-nuptial QUESTIONNAIRE for both bride and groom and a recent (less than six months old) copy of your Baptismal Certificate, two AFFIDAVITS each concerning your

freedom to marry (two people, parents preferred who have known you well, they can go to their own parish where a priest will complete the forms and mail to your consulting priest). You will also need an attendance card from the Marriage Preparation.

In a case where there has been a previous marriage, documentation can become more complicated, so no date will be set until all is in proper order in terms of the Canon Law of the Catholic Church

Marriage License: To obtain a license, both parties must appear at the Cook County Clerk's office, in the Loop (118 N. Clark St., Chicago. Phone 312-443-5663) in Skokie (5600 West Old Orchard Road, Phone 847-470-7233) or in Rolling Meadows (2121 Euclid Ave, Room238. Phone 847-818-2850). Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 12 noon Saturdays. You will need identification, proof of age and a cash payment is due when you apply. The marriage license is valid for sixty days. Please give the license to the priest no latter than the rehearsal. Authenticated copies may be obtained only from the Office of The County Clerk.

Wedding and Marriage

“A wedding is a wonderful day, but a marriage is an entire lifetime.” That is the motto of Pre-Cana, the marriage preparation program of the Catholic Church. Couples spend an enormous amount of time preparing for the big day. We also want you to spend some time in formal preparation for the lifetime. We will give you a Marriage Preparation schedule. Please make a reservation as soon as possible because they become filled quiet rapidly. At St. Tarcissus we also required couples to answer FOCCUS. (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study), an instrument for marriage preparation.

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 Sundays and during the Season of Lent. Weddings can't be later than 3:00 p.m. due to confession at 3:45 p.m. and preparation for the scheduled 5:00 p.m. Parish Mass of obligation. Time for photography after a wedding is limited because of the time needed to set up the church for the following service. The Church must be cleared by 2.40 p.m. / 4.40 p.m. ***Wedding Masses do not fulfill the Sunday Mass Obligation.***

The priest will give you 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.

The Marriage Ceremony

It is most fitting that the marriage vows be exchanged at Mass and that the Holy Eucharist be received under both species by the couple, if both are Catholic. The parish Priest, or officiating Priest if invited, will help the couple to select appropriate sacred readings and prayers for the Mass, and in training friends who may wish to act as lector. The Parish music director will assist in the selection of appropriate and approved sacred music and songs after the couple completes and submits the wedding music form (available at the rectory). A guest organist will be allowed only upon the approval of the music director. The music director will also approve visiting singers. The music director will provide you with a written contract outlining your choices, cost, etc.

The usual marriage offering for St. Tarcissus Church is \$300.00. The music director sets his/her own fee and couples deal directly with him/her

If marriage is to be contracted outside the Celebration of Mass, the officiating Priest will help the couple to select appropriate sacred readings and prayers, which should precede the exchange of vows.

Rehearsal Time will be arranged by the officiating Priest; very often it is on the eve of the wedding date. ***The civil license should be presented at the rehearsal.***

St. Tarcissus altar servers will assist at the wedding ceremony, unless you advise us that you have chosen other servers. It is customary that each server receive a monetary gift.

Flowers and Candles

Flowers enhance the ceremony. However, since our Church is ornate and since the bridal party itself adds a great deal of color to the scene, we recommend restraint in designing floral arrangements. Two large bouquets, one on either side of the altar are often quite adequate. The couple should make arrangements with a florist of their own choosing. The aisle runner, if one is used, is supplied by the florist. Our aisle is 84 feet long. Except for the two altar candles, all

other flowers and candles are the responsibility of the bride and groom. No candles are allowed down the center aisle or on the pews. No wire, tape or other material which may cause damage to the pews may be used.

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 current policy is to permit photographs and video taping 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 video person that they should check with the Priest prior to the ceremony. After the wedding, photos may be taken in Church if 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 visitors if there is some special relationship to the bride and groom. The visiting Priest must take care of: 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 the marriage license.

Rice, Confetti and Bird seed

Couples are asked to discourage family and friends from throwing rice, confetti or bird seed inside or outside the Church doorway. In addition to the maintenance problems this causes, it also creates dangerous conditions for our elderly or disabled parishioners.

We appreciate your cooperation with this.

In the Love of Christ

The Priests and Staff of St. Tarcissus Parish