

# St. Raphael the Archangel



## Wedding Preparation Guide

*From the Pastor*

Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement! We rejoice with you and are happy to help in any way as you begin your new life together in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

The celebration of a wedding is a sacred, joyful time for the bride and groom, for their families and friends, and for the local parish community. This celebration of love, of new beginnings, and of promise and hope for the future, make this a grace-filled time in the lives of all those involved in the celebration. The Church celebrates the sacramental union of its members in the context of our prayer and liturgical life. This important sacrament draws us more deeply into the mystery of God's love for us.

Great care is taken to see that the wedding liturgy is reverent, graceful, beautiful, and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us. Our celebration of the sacraments, marriage included, are always rooted in listening to the Scriptures so that we can be nourished and strengthened by God's Word. Always we celebrate the sacraments as community. We gather our brothers and sisters in faith and ask for their prayerful support.

May you find this time a true blessing of discovering God's love for you more deeply so that it may be truly expressed in your wedding ceremony and throughout your married lives.

Sincerely,

Fr. John Mayo  
Pastor, St. Raphael the Archangel Parish

*Setting a Date with St. Raphael the Archangel*

To set a date with St. Raphael the Archangel for a wedding ceremony here, first you should contact the parish office (314-352-8100) and check with parish staff for available dates for the church. The couple should then contact the pastor or, if they desire, contact another priest or deacon to celebrate the wedding and confirm the date with him. After setting the date with the church and the celebrant, the couple should make a \$100 deposit to hold the date with the church.

*Fees for a Wedding Ceremony*

The Church, because of her beliefs, cannot charge a couple for the Sacrament of Marriage.

The fee for the wedding ceremony taking place in the church is \$400 for active parishioners and \$600 for non-parishioners. An active parishioner is defined as the parents or one of the spouses being registered in the parish for at least one year and attending Mass on a regular basis.

Parish organists receive \$200 and vocalists receive \$100 each. Other musicians or vocalist establish their own fees. If the couple requests servers from the parish, they are given an offering of \$10 each.

A free-will offering to the presider is always welcome.

### *Considerations for Timing of a Wedding Ceremony*

Weddings may be scheduled on a Friday wedding after 4:00pm, on Saturday Morning no earlier than 10:00am, or Saturday afternoon, with the latest time available at 2:00pm. On days when multiple weddings are scheduled, there will be an interval of one and one-half hours between them.

Weddings in Advent or Lent are permissible with the approval of the pastor, with the following understandings:

- In Advent, any decorations reflecting a Christmas theme must be removed from the church before the bridal party leaves the church.
- In Lent, the ceremony should be more subdued, to appropriately reflect the season's spirit of conversion and spiritual renewal.

Rehearsals are normally held on a Thursday or Friday evening. We ask that you allow an hour for the rehearsal and ask that all involved in the celebration be present for the rehearsal.

### *Preparing for Marriage in the Church*

After scheduling a time for the church for the Wedding, the Catholic Church invites the couple into a period of preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage. This includes:

- Any requirements made by the priest or deacon preparing the couple for the sacrament
- Completing a marriage preparation inventory and reviewing it with the priest or deacon preparing the couple
- Completing a marriage preparation course as approved by the Archdiocese of St. Louis
- Completing a Natural Family Planning introductory course approved by the Archdiocese
- Meeting with the wedding coordinator to go over details for the ceremony
- Meeting with Dr. Nancy Deacon, Director of Music, to go over music for the ceremony

### *Marriage License*

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a civil marriage license. The couple should contact the Recorder of Deeds Office of St. Louis City for further information. **Please bring your wedding license with you to the wedding rehearsal. The wedding ceremony will not take place unless this license is provided to the celebrant.**

## *Environment in the Church for a Wedding*

### *General Principle*

Marriage in the Catholic Church is first and foremost a time of intense prayer and communal celebration in which those attending are united with the couple in worship in Word and Sacrament. All of the other "traditional" elements of the ceremony are appropriate only insofar as they contribute to the atmosphere of prayer and communal celebration of this sacrament of the Church.

### *Specifics About the Environment*

Weddings are celebrated in the context of ongoing parish life. Therefore the normal environmental decorations of the parish cannot be removed to accommodate wedding color schemes, etc. Wedding couples should be especially mindful of this when selecting a wedding date that falls within certain liturgical seasons (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Easter etc).

Aisle runners are never used due to insurance. Rice, birdseed, confetti, sparklers, or anything like them are not allowed on SRA property; they are a safety hazard to those who worship at the church. It is your responsibility to inform those invited to your wedding of this limitation.

Pew bows may be used, as long as they do not damage the pews.

Pins, nails, tacks, screws, or adhesive tape may not be used, as they may damage the church.

Any signage that is carried in or is put up around the church should be appropriate to a church setting in wording. Carried in signs should easily fit in a pew. Signs not on an appropriate stand should not be left propped up anywhere due to the possibility of them falling, causing a trip hazard.

Wagons are not allowed in the bridal procession per generally accepted liturgical practice. They may be placed outside of the church building or used for photos outside of the ceremony.

No animals, excepts for service animals, are ever permitted inside the church before, during, or after the ceremony. Photos with pets are permitted on the church grounds.

Additional candelabras may be placed in the sanctuary. No candles of any kind may be put along the aisles due to space and insurance reasons.

### *Unity Candle/Sand*

In light of the revised Order for Celebrating of Marriage, the emphasis of the ceremony has returned to the proper prayers, the exchange of consent, and the giving of rings. In reflection of this desire of the Church, we ask that if a couple desires to have a unity candle, that it be part of the day in another way than as part of the ceremony.

For the same reasons as given above, unity sand is also prohibited to be part of the ceremony.

### *Photographers and Videographers*

We welcome both photographers and videographers to help preserve the memory of this special day.

In general, both photographers and videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary, unless a remote camera that needs no attendant can be setup and run remotely. Flash photography should be kept to a minimum as well. Further details should be obtained from the celebrant prior to the ceremony.

Any microphones used by the videographer that interfere in the proper working of the sound system of the church will be turned off or removed immediately, so as to not cause a distraction to the wedding ceremony.

### *Planning the Wedding Liturgy*

Together with your presider, you will choose Scripture readings, the appropriate vow formula, and General Intercessions. In addition, the presider will help you make plans for the order of your processions and the placement of the wedding party in the worship space.

A wedding coordinator from the parish will also accompany you to help plan other elements, assist at the rehearsal, and ensure a smooth celebration of marriage.

### *Facilities*

There is a bridal room up the stairs in the Jameson side vestibule. The wedding coordinator will open the room and give other guidelines for the use of the room.

The groom and groomsmen normally dress at home. Groomsmen may gather in the server's sacristy or in the cry room in the church prior to the ceremony.

### *Music*

#### *General Principles*

The overall atmosphere of a Catholic wedding must give witness to the joyful celebration of the Christian community. Although human, social and dramatic aspects have a real place in the wedding ceremony, the Christian dimension of marriage should take precedence and blend those other aspects within it.

The task of selecting music to be used at a Christian wedding has been difficult for many prospective brides and grooms, as well as for the priests and musicians. It is sometimes difficult to draw a line between sacred music and secular music, church music and popular music. There are so-called "secular" songs, which have a religious connotation; however, just because a particular song mentions God and/or love, it is not automatically suitable for a wedding liturgy.

As you begin to make music selections, we encourage you to read the texts carefully. Do the texts speak of your love as a sign and reflection of God's love? Will the texts remind the congregation that you believe marriage involves the two of you and God?

### *Musicians*

Couples are invited to contact Dr. Nancy Deacon, Director of Music, to setup a time to select music for their wedding. At that time, she will explain what instruments are available and vocalists as well.

A couple may also choose musicians from outside of the parish to be part of the wedding ceremony. Professional courtesy calls on these musicians, Catholic or not, to contact Dr. Deacon to go over the music selected for the Mass as well as any details on the setup of the instruments and sound system.

Dr. Deacon and/or the pastor has the right to approve or reject any music on a desired song list.

### *Drugs and Alcohol*

Drugs and alcohol are never allowed on church property before, during, or after the rehearsal or wedding ceremony. If a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the celebrant retains the right to ask them to leave the property. If someone in the bridal party, or the bride or the groom, is under the influence, the celebrant may cancel the wedding on his own discretion. The couple is asked to communicate these expectations to all guests and all of those in the bridal party.

### *After the Ceremony*

As the church has no janitorial staff on the weekends, we ask that the couple designate person(s) to check the church to ensure that all trash, extra programs, etc. from the wedding is removed so that the church is ready for the next sacramental celebration.

### *Important Phone Numbers*

Parish Office	314-352-8100
Fr. John	314-352-8100, ext. 215
Dr. Nancy Deacon, Director of Music	314-352-8100, ext. 220
Ms. Barbara Cramer, Wedding Coordinator	314-406-8699