

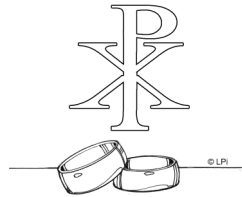
Checklist for Marriage Preparation

Responsibilities of the couple:

- To see that all meetings with priest, music minister, and wedding coordinator are scheduled in a timely fashion.
- To participate in the designated marriage preparation program in good time.
- To assemble the necessary documents and submit them to the priest.

Bride & Groom:

- Baptism Certificate
- Affidavit of Freedom to Marry
- Church Annulment (if needed)



Couple:

- Marriage License
- Liturgy Selection

Important Phone Numbers

St. Agnes Parish Office.....308-632-2541

Director of Music:

Theresa Rezac.....308-632-6573

Wedding Coordinator:

Kay Busekist..... 308-632-8610



Congratulations on your decision to choose St. Agnes Catholic Church for your wedding. Our commitment to the sacrament of marriage is to ensure that your Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony is a most joyous and solemn occasion. Each marriage celebration should be sacred in nature and follow the regulations set by the Catholic Church and St. Agnes Parish. We pray that your wedding day is a beautiful and memorable occasion. May the Lord bless you abundantly on your journey together.



First Steps

The first step in your preparation is a meeting with the parish priest for the required pre-marriage interview. The purpose of this meeting is to help determine that both parties are free and ready to marry. This meeting is usually held four months prior to your wedding.

A \$100 non-refundable deposit (later credited to church wedding offering) must be made to ensure your date and before you secure reception halls, caterers and other services surrounding your wedding!

Weddings are celebrated at St. Agnes weekday evenings and Saturdays at 11am or 2 pm. No weddings are held after the 6 pm Saturday Vigil Liturgy. Rehearsals are usually held on the evening before the wedding.

At your first meeting, the priest will explain the need for certain documents, which should be completed and returned to him as soon as possible:

1. Baptismal Certificate
2. Affidavits of Freedom to Marry
3. Required Promise in Interfaith Marriages
4. Marriage Preparation Requirement (FOCCUS, Engaged Encounter or Pre-Cana Program)

Your State of Nebraska *marriage license* should be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal.

Photographers and videographers should be appropriately dressed for their work in this sacred place. To avoid misunderstandings, please deliver these guidelines to your photographer and videographer in plenty of time before the wedding.

Receiving Line

A receiving line at the Church is **not** recommended. This formality should be reserved for your reception.

The Environment of the Church

Seating capacity: 350 people
Center aisle: 50 feet long by 6 feet wide
Garden Room capacity: 100 people



After the ceremony begins no pictures may be taken from anywhere in the sanctuary or from the pews by relatives and friends. Flashes of light, electronic camera noises, movement of camera equipment or photographer, loading and unloading of film etc. creates a very disturbing environment and destroys the solemnity of the worship.

The sanctuary is a sacred place in our Catholic tradition. The altar is consecrated as a symbol of Christ's presence. It is inappropriate to use the sanctuary as a studio for casual photographs. In particular, sitting on the floor or on the sanctuary steps, and moving the altar or leaning against it are not permitted. Furnishings in the church are not to be moved.

The following additional guidelines are in effect for videography:

- Video equipment must be in place 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.
- Videography is only permitted from the choir loft or from the left side of the altar. Camera equipment must be on a stationary tripod.
- No additional lighting may be used.
- No wires may be laid across any aisles.
- Nothing may be affixed in any way to church walls or furnishings.

Wedding Coordinator

St. Agnes requires each couple to use the services of the parish Wedding Coordinator. The Coordinator has been trained to assist you in every need related to your wedding in our church. The Wedding Coordinator will contact you after your wedding date is set with the church office. The Wedding Coordinator is responsible for the following in regard to your wedding at St. Agnes Catholic Church:

- Pre-wedding meeting with the prospective bride and groom to discuss the guidelines for weddings at St. Agnes.
- Assisting with necessary preparations before the wedding.
- Assisting with the wedding rehearsal the day prior to the wedding with all members of the wedding party.
- Insuring the Church is ready for Mass after the wedding.

Wedding Coordinators receive a fee for their services. Please be mindful of the fact that they give many hours of service in planning each wedding and should be given the proper respect as church staff members.



Music

Your wedding is a sacred moment; sacred music is appropriate. Recorded music may not be played during the ceremony. At least 3 months in advance of your wedding date please contact the Director of Music to schedule a consultation regarding the music for your celebration.

The Wedding Liturgy

The model for any liturgical celebration in the Catholic tradition is the Sunday Liturgy; it is the heart of our worship life.

Liturgy is communal prayer. The wedding ceremony is community-oriented as well as prayerful, personal, beautiful and memorable both for the couple and for their assembled relatives and friends.

This community focus does not mean that you, as a couple, will be unable to make this celebration your own. In addition to choosing members of your wedding party, you are encouraged to select from among the options provided by Catholic tradition: readings from Sacred Scripture, prayers and music, and to decide who will participate as ministers in the celebration.

Deposit to reserve wedding date (credited towards church offering)	\$100.00
Church Offering (Member/Non-Member)	\$300.00/\$600.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$100.00
Church Accompanist (if utilized)	\$100.00
Church Cantor (if utilized)	\$100.00
Total Cost for Member/Non-Member	\$600.00/\$900.00

Photography

We understand that photographs are important reminders of your wedding. The two hours prior to your ceremony are reserved for photographs. Photography should be completed 20 minutes before and within 20 minutes after the ceremony. The officiant will be happy to pose with you in the first picture immediately after the ceremony; please understand that he will have many other weekend commitments, and may not be available if your pictures are delayed.

During the ceremony, the photographer may take pictures without flash from a place that is not visually distracting to the guests. Your photographer is free to photograph the wedding party as they come down the aisle but must not impede the procession.

Bride's Waiting Room

The preferred plan for the wedding day is that the bride, her attendants, and her family arrive at the church ready to walk down the aisle. Otherwise, you are welcome to use the bridal room of the church for the bride's dressing room. No food, beverages, or smoking are permitted in the bridal room. All valuables should be left in cars or at home. A friend should be designated to clear the bride's waiting room directly after the end of the ceremony. Please leave the room in an orderly condition, including removal of pins, etc.

Gratuities

It is customary to make an offering to the church on the occasion of marriage. The offering is requested to cover the cost of heating, air conditioning, and maintenance of the church as well as a stipend for the presider. Any other gift you would like to make to the priest, please do so on your own. **The \$100 deposit must be made at the time your wedding date is set, and the remainder must be paid two weeks before your wedding date. All payments are to be made at the parish office.** Any gifts for other musicians that you choose will be the couple's responsibility. If you choose *not* to use our music director as accompanist for your wedding, a consultation fee of \$25 is expected to ensure music selections meet diocesan rules.

- **Interfaith Weddings:** It is usually preferable to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage in the context of a Liturgy of the Word rather than in a Eucharistic Celebration.
- **Introductory Rites:** While guests are assembling, instrumentalists or a vocal soloist may perform appropriate music. The purpose of the prelude music is to gather and unite the thoughts of all who are present and to prepare them for the celebration of Christian marriage.
- **Liturgy of the Word:** You may invite readers from among your family and friends to proclaim the first and second readings you have chosen – from the Old and New Testaments, respectively. These readers should be selected for their devotion to the Word of God and for their ability to speak clearly in public. Do not include the actual text of these readings and other prayers in programs or worship aids. The assembly benefits more from listening actively to the readings and prayers, well prepared and well proclaimed. The Responsorial Psalm and Gospel acclamation should be sung. The cantor will sing verses of each, with the assembly singing a simple response after the verses. The priest will proclaim the Gospel, which is followed by the homily.

- **Rite of Marriage:** The Marriage Rite includes the statement of the couple's intentions, the exchange of vows, the blessing and exchange of rings, and the general intercessions.
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist:** (When celebrated in a Nuptial Mass) the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar by two of your family members or friends who will be participating in Holy Communion.
- **Concluding Rites:** The blessing and dismissal are followed immediately by strong, joyous recessional music, which can be a song sung by the assembly or an instrumental selection.

Other Considerations

Attendants: The Church requires you to be married in the presence of an ordained minister and two witnesses. You may choose to have honorary witnesses (bridesmaids and groomsmen).

Added Ceremonies: In its reform of the liturgy, the Second Vatican Council mandated that the primary liturgical symbols be allowed to "speak" and that there be a noble simplicity in the rituals used.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are usually held the evening before the wedding. You must call the Parish Office (308-632-2541) to set your rehearsal time after you have set your wedding date with the priest.

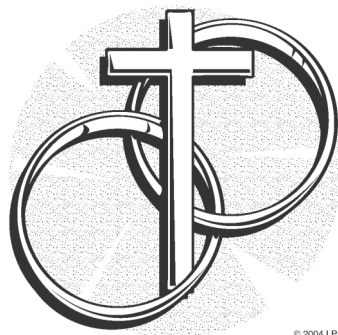
Rehearsal must start on time: There may be two rehearsals on one evening. Members of the wedding party should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal time.

Rehearsal will proceed in a quiet, dignified manner: Members of the wedding party should be reminded that they are in a holy place. They should dress appropriately. The use of alcohol/drugs before or during the rehearsal or before the wedding is absolutely prohibited. Smoking is not permitted on church property.

The Wedding Coordinator assists at rehearsals: Depending on the schedule of the priest, he may or may not attend the rehearsal. If he is unable to attend, the Wedding Coordinator will take charge. It is recommended that ONLY the wedding party members attend the rehearsal. The rehearsal will take approximately an hour, with one walk-through rehearsal. Please inform your Wedding Coordinator of any special circumstances or arrangements you have discussed with the priest. No changes in the ceremony will be approved at the last minute.

Worship Aids: You may want to consider preparing a special booklet or program for your wedding. This would help your guests follow the Catholic rite and encourage the congregation to participate, particularly in the singing of songs, responses, and acclamations.

Map to St. Agnes: Please include with your wedding invitations a detailed map to guide your wedding party and guests to the church. The parish office is not open on Friday nights or Saturdays to respond to your guests' last minute calls for directions. Maps can be easily obtained from Google or Yahoo Maps. The church's official address is: 2314 3rd Avenue, Scottsbluff, Nebraska.



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In preparing your wedding liturgy, any elements that might not add to the communal prayer of the liturgy should be treated cautiously, and perhaps omitted. These might include:

Very Young Children: Those below the age of five are often uneasy about being in front of large groups and might detract from the solemn occasion of your wedding.

The presentation of flowers to the Blessed Mother is not actually a part of the rite. It is best done privately, immediately following the liturgy, but not during it.

Unity Candle: This is an optional part of your celebration.

Throwing Rice, Seeds, or Flower Petals: This is a pagan fertility custom that has little or no Christian meaning. We have no staff on duty to perform clean up; therefore, the throwing of rice, seeds, flower petals, bubbles or similar items (including balloons) are **not** permitted on church grounds.

Use of chewing gum is not permitted in the church. Please do not allow your wedding party to chew gum during rehearsal or at the wedding.

Environment: At weddings, flowers are often used for their beauty, freshness and promise of abundant life. Flower arrangements and plants should be modest, and must not visually overwhelm the primary symbols of the altar, the ambo, the presider's chair, and the couple. All decorative ideas must be approved by the parish Wedding Coordinator.

Aisle Runners are not permitted. Runners on a tile floor pose a hazard to those walking down the aisle and are a liability if someone were to trip and injure themselves.

Tacks, nails, tape, or other damaging means of securing decorations to the walls, pews, furniture, or fixtures may **NOT** be used.

Seasonal Decorations: During the Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons, as well as at other times during the year, the church and sanctuary are already decorated in an appropriate manner with or without flowers and/or other installations. Under no circumstances may these be removed for weddings.

Flowers: Wedding flowers and other decorations must be removed from the Church immediately

following your picture sessions. We invite you to take your flowers with you to your reception where you may continue to enjoy them.

Lay Ministers: You are offered a great deal of freedom in the selection of lay ministers for your wedding: readers, altar servers, greeters, ushers, presenters of gifts, and ministers of the Eucharist. We suggest you think of the skill needed in performing these ministerial responsibilities as you select members of your family and/or friends.

Pastors of Other Faiths: In the case of an interfaith marriage, the non-Roman Catholic party may invite his/her pastor to participate in the ceremony. In the context of the Liturgy of the Word, the visiting pastor may vest, proclaim one of the readings before the gospel, and offer a message. At the conclusion of the ceremony he/she may offer an additional prayer and a blessing. If an interfaith wedding is celebrated during a Mass (which is not recommended), the visiting pastor may come from the assembly at the end of the ceremony to offer additional prayers, an exhortation and a blessing. This should be discussed with the parish priest who is assisting you.

