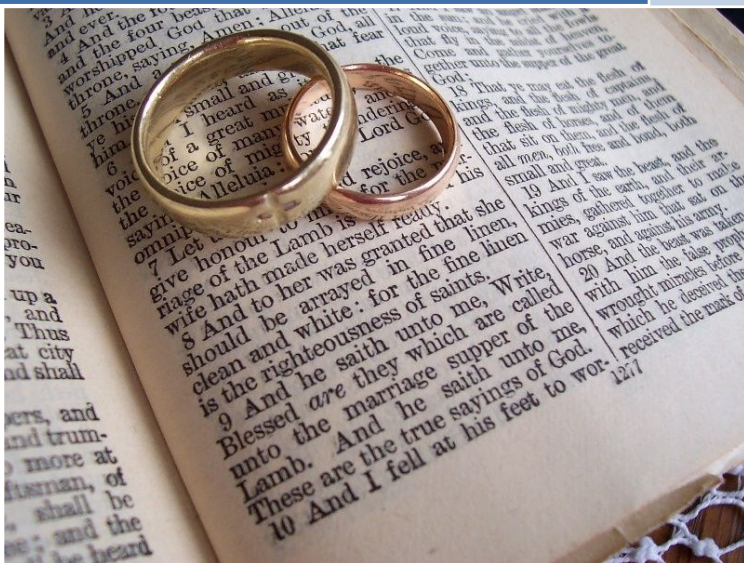


Marriage Preparation Policy



**St. Joseph the Worker,
Mankato**

Holy Family, Lake Crystal

Congratulations on your engagement! Marriage is one of the most important decisions of your life. The vocation of marriage is a calling in which two people who love each other pledge to be permanently faithful to each other as long as they both shall live. The family has often been called a domestic church, a small community or home where persons nourish and strengthen each other in faith and all aspects of life. For Christians, this kind of relationship is only possible if your relationship is built upon the person of Jesus Christ.

Our marriage preparation program here at St. Joseph the Worker & Holy Family Church is designed to help you further discern and prepare for the vocation of marriage and married life. This is best done by reflecting upon and cultivating the meaning of faith in your lives. Planning for your wedding also involves careful consideration of all the details that will make it a beautiful and memorable day. We want to help you plan a wedding liturgy that is spiritual and sacramental in accordance with the Catholic belief that marriage is a lifelong commitment and that it is a sacrament when it occurs between two baptized Christians. The following guidelines are intended to explain this preparation and to answer questions you might have.

We are here to help you!

Fr. Timothy T. Reker, Pastor

treker@sjwhf.org 507.388.3766

(First Interview, Liturgy Planning, Rehearsal, Wedding)

Amanda Gerdts, Marriage Therapist

amanda.gerdts@gmail.com 507.351.8799

(Prepare & Enrich Couple Preparation Program)

Mary Grack, Pre-Cana Retreat Coordinator

marygrack@gmail.com 507.327.8621 OR 507.387.4154

(One Day Retreat held at Minnesota State University, Mankato)

Nicole Hermer, Director of Parish Activities

nhermer@sjwhf.org 507.388.3766

(Schedule, Calendar, Decorating, Misc. Details)

Sister Janet Wermerskirchen, Music Director

sjwhfmusic@gmail.com 507.388.3766

(Music Selection, Sound System)

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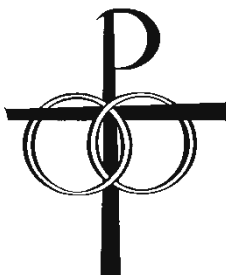
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SECTION I – MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Parish Registration - The exchange of wedding vows in the Catholic Church (Holy Matrimony) is a sacrament when it occurs between two baptized Christians. All sacraments, including marriage, are celebrated in the presence of a faith community. Also, registration as a member of our faith community signifies your commitment to practicing the Catholic faith which includes regular attendance at Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist, receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis, and living other basics of the Catholic faith. For these reasons, we require that at least one member of the engaged couple (or one of their parents) be a registered parishioner. Children of St. Joseph the Worker or Holy Family parishioners who are members of another parish must provide us with a letter showing that we have that parish's permission to perform their marriage. If either or both parties have been previously married, they must now be free to marry according to Church law.

Marriage Between a Catholic and a Person of Another Faith or Religion - When one party is not Catholic, the general practice is that a wedding be celebrated outside of Mass. The minister of the non-Catholic party is welcome to participate in the wedding ceremony if the couple so wishes. The invitation is extended by the couple after discussing it with the priest or deacon. The role which the minister will take is determined by the priest or deacon, and the couple, while respecting as much as possible the wishes of the minister.

A Catholic may be married in a non-Catholic church by a minister of that church if there is good reason, and the Catholic party obtains proper permission. All of the preparations required by the Catholic Church must be completed by the couple in addition to those expected by the other church. If allowed by the other tradition, the priest or deacon may be available to co-officiate.

Steps in Sacramental Preparation – The wedding preparation process is designed to help you assess your readiness for sacramental marriage. During this time an issue may arise that deserves more time and attention. It is better to address these issues during the preparation period when steps can be taken to resolve differences before the marriage commitment is made. Please refer to the following page for an overview of the process which can serve as a convenient checklist.

Steps in the Marriage Preparation Process

12 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING (In order)

- Meet with Fr. Reker for your Marriage Preparation Introductory Session and tentatively schedule your wedding date.
- Secure your preferred date by contacting Nicole Hermer.
- \$350 Wedding Fee due at the parish office within the week after securing your date.

8-10 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING (In order)

- Schedule the mandatory Prepare and Enrich Sessions (3 total) with Amanda Gerdts.
- Schedule and Register for the mandatory Pre-Cana Marriage Retreat with Mary Grack
- \$125 Pre-Cana Fee will be due at registration.

6-9 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

- Complete paperwork, including turning in newly issued copies of baptismal records, and begin planning the wedding liturgy with Fr. Tim Reker.
- Meet with Sister Janet to plan liturgical music. It is your responsibility to secure the musicians and singers for your ceremony, the church does not provide this.

3 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

- Complete your mandatory sessions with Amanda Gerdts (see above).
- Turn in your Pre-Cana Certificate to Fr. Tim Reker (when completed).
- Receive Marriage License Discount Form (inquire with Nicole).

1 MONTH PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

- Prepare your wedding program, if you choose to have one. You are responsible for the formatting and printing of the program. We can give you a template to follow for the Order of the Liturgy. The Order of the Liturgy section of the program should be approved by Fr. Tim Reker before printing.

2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Turn in your marriage license to Nicole Hermer in the parish office for processing.

SECTION II – PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY

Your wedding should be seen as a liturgical celebration and a public expression of the couple's love for each other. Hence, it is a sacred event. It is the joyful celebration of a sacrament – one of seven ways in which God's special grace is manifest to us in the Church. For this reason, it is essential that all aspects of the ceremony occur in a church, be in good taste and follow sound liturgical principles. When you meet with Fr. Tim Reker who will preside at your wedding, he will give you a booklet titled "Together for Life," which contains guidelines for planning Catholic wedding liturgies and walks you through the process.

Days and Times for Weddings - Wedding ceremonies may take place at St. Joseph the Worker or Holy Family on Friday or on Saturday. To accommodate our liturgy schedule, Saturday weddings may be held no later than 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Friday weddings may be held late afternoon or in the evening. Normally weddings are not scheduled during the season of Advent and Lent, unless there are special circumstances (e.g. danger of death or military leave).

Deciding Whether to Have Mass – It is appropriate and encouraged that a Mass be celebrated when both members of the engaged couple are practicing Catholics. When only one party is Catholic, the Minnesota Catholic Bishops recommend that the wedding is celebrated outside of Mass in respect for the other party's faith tradition. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony is not lessened when Mass is not chosen.

The Catholic Wedding – While allowing for certain personal preferences and choices, the wedding liturgy follows certain prescribed norms.

- ♦ The congregation actively participates in both spoken and sung parts of the liturgy.
- ♦ Readers may be family members or close friends with a good reading voice.
- ♦ Gift presenters may be family members or close friends.
- ♦ Eucharistic ministers may be family members, close friends, or parishioners who are Eucharistic Ministers in our parish.

- ◆ Musicians and cantors are usually secured by the couple, but we can assist in finding them.
- ◆ Music selections are sacred or classical pieces performed well and live (recordings are never allowed).
- ◆ Church decorations may not be altered.

Entrance Procession – The recommended order of the entrance procession is servers (if chosen), priest, attendants together, groom accompanied by parents, bride accompanied by parents. In the Catholic Church the bride's father does not give her away; she is giving herself in marriage to the man she loves and he is giving himself to her.

Choosing Scripture Readings – The Liturgy of the Word generally consists of a first reading from the Old Testament, a sung Psalm, a second reading from the New Testament, and a Gospel. There are several appropriate scripture selections you may choose from in the booklet “Together for Life;” at least one reading must speak explicitly about marriage (marked by an asterisk in the booklet). Usually the readings are proclaimed by a trained lector(s) of your choosing, and the psalm is sung by the cantor or soloist. The Gospel is proclaimed by the priest (or deacon).



Nuptial Blessing – This is a special prayer for the couple following the Lord's Prayer, or during the concluding rite; there are several choices in the “Together for Life” booklet.

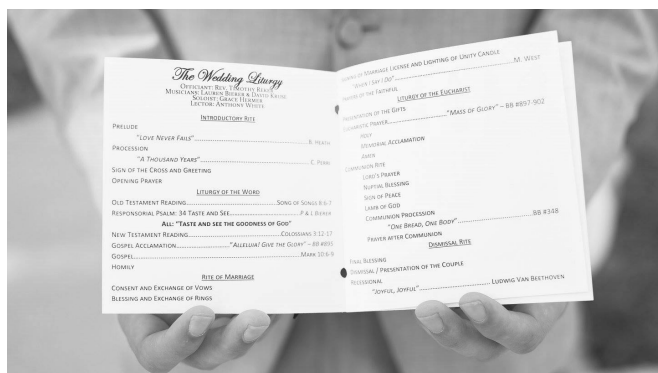
Choosing Music – Because marriage in the Catholic Church is a liturgical celebration, songs played right before or during the wedding ceremony should focus on the religious nature of love – the love that exists between God and the couple being married – and the sacred character of Holy Matrimony. This means that any music which would be appropriate at Mass or other liturgical rites is also appropriate for your wedding. There are many songs available to you from our hymnal. These, and a list of other appropriate wedding hymns will be suggested to you by our music director, Sister Janet, during a planning meeting. If one member of the couple is a Christian of another denomination, it may be appropriate to include music from their Church's hymnal. The place to focus on the romantic aspects of love is at the reception which is a social and cultural celebration. Again, we encourage you to work closely with your presider, Fr. Reker, and the parish music director, Sister Janet at this stage of your planning.

Cantor - leads the congregational singing which includes the Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and, if a Mass is chosen, the Eucharistic Acclamations. A list of parish cantors who sing for weddings and their fees may be obtained through Sister Janet. You are responsible for securing your own cantor. They must be comfortable and knowledgeable at leading congregational singing during these important selections.

Accompanist – plays the prelude music before the ceremony, the processional and recessional marches, in addition to accompanying the cantor and congregation. A list of parish musicians, who play for weddings and their fees, may be obtained through Sister Janet. Couples may choose a family member or friend as a guest soloist or musician for some of the music, but hire a cantor and a pianist from our parish to perform the music for the rest of the liturgy. Because we are an active parish with many activities in our church, any time needed in the church for music rehearsal should be scheduled through Nicole Hermer.

Unity candle – The principal aspects of the marriage rite are the exchange of consent (vows), and the blessing and exchanging of rings. A unity candle is not part of the Catholic wedding, if one is desired, it may be used at your reception. [Sand is never allowed in the Wedding Liturgy.]

Preparing a Liturgy Guide (Program) – We do recommend that you have a liturgy guide or program booklet to help your family and friends actively participate in your wedding liturgy. However, this service is not provided by our parish. You must make arrangements with someone to have these designed and printed. We have outlines available to assist you; if you would like one, please contact Nicole Hermer or check our website: sjwhf.org. You must have Fr. Tim Reker review it before printing it.



SECTION III – CHURCH FACILITIES

Respect for God's House – Please respect the church as the sacred place that it is. We ask everyone to behave in a manner appropriate to being in church. Please refrain from chewing gum, using profane or inappropriate language, letting children run around in the church, etc.

In order to keep the church clean for your wedding and the services following your ceremony, food, drink and chewing gum are prohibited in the worship space. Food and non-alcoholic drink are allowed in the Parish Auditorium/Gym. Of course, smoking inside the church building is prohibited by State ordinance.

Wedding Rehearsal – Each step of your wedding liturgy will be practiced at the wedding rehearsal which typically lasts one hour or less. All those who have an active part should attend the rehearsal to become familiar with their roles. This may include guest musicians, cantor or soloists, lectors and members of the wedding party including the flower girl and/or ring bearer if applicable, parents and grandparents. We ask everyone to arrive promptly, and carefully listen to and follow the instructions.

Alcohol Policy – No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the church grounds. The priest or deacon presiding at your wedding may refuse to allow the liturgy to occur if the bride, groom or any member of the wedding party has consumed or appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.

Dressing Rooms – The bride and her attendants may use the Bride's Room located in the choir loft, which has a full-length mirror, hall tree and some space to dress. However, we strongly recommend doing hair and makeup at home or at a salon; our facility does not provide adequate space for these activities. The groom and groomsmen usually come attired and will use the Auditorium/Gym. We cannot be responsible for your valuables, so do not leave them unattended. You are expected to leave the areas used for dressing in the condition in which you found them. Flower boxes, hangers, etc., are to be taken with you or thrown into the dumpster.

Seating of Guests – Ushers seat guests as soon as possible after they have signed the guest book in order to avoid a rush at the last minute. A line often forms at the guest book, so it is closed ten minutes before the wedding begins in order that the wedding starts on time.

Flowers and Decorations – You may choose to decorate with floral arrangements at the ambo (pulpit) and/or by the altar. Your florist is welcome to visit our church prior to your wedding if they are not familiar with it; please have them contact Nicole Hermer to schedule a date and time. You may put decorations on the pews by using non-abrasive items provided by your florist. Tape is never acceptable and will damage our pews. The Church does not own candelabras, but you may rent them; make sure they have globes and provide a plastic covering on the floor. Hurricane lamps and other types of candles are not permitted in the aisles for the sake of safety and the ease of movement.

No rice, birdseed, sparklers, poppers, flower petals and aisle runners may be used; these represent safety hazards or maintenance problems. Bubbles may be used outside the Church when the couple is leaving.



Photography and Videography – Care must be taken to see that the Mass and Rite of Marriage are not disrupted by the taking of pictures or video. The focus of the congregation should be on the liturgy. Please have your photographer and/or videographer follow these guidelines; they may consult with the priest or deacon beforehand if there are any questions.

- ◆ Flash photos may be taken only as the bridal party is processing into and out of the church; flash may not be used during the wedding liturgy.
- ◆ Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary – the elevated stone area around the altar, ambo and baptismal font.
- ◆ Pictures may be taken in the church before and/or after the wedding, but for Saturday weddings they must conclude by 4 p.m.



Additional Resources:

<http://www.foryourmarriage.org/>

<https://www.dowr.org/offices/life-marriage-family/index.html>

Parish Website:

<http://sjwhf.org/>

Facebook Pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/sjwmankato/>

<https://www.facebook.com/holyfamilylakecrystal/>

