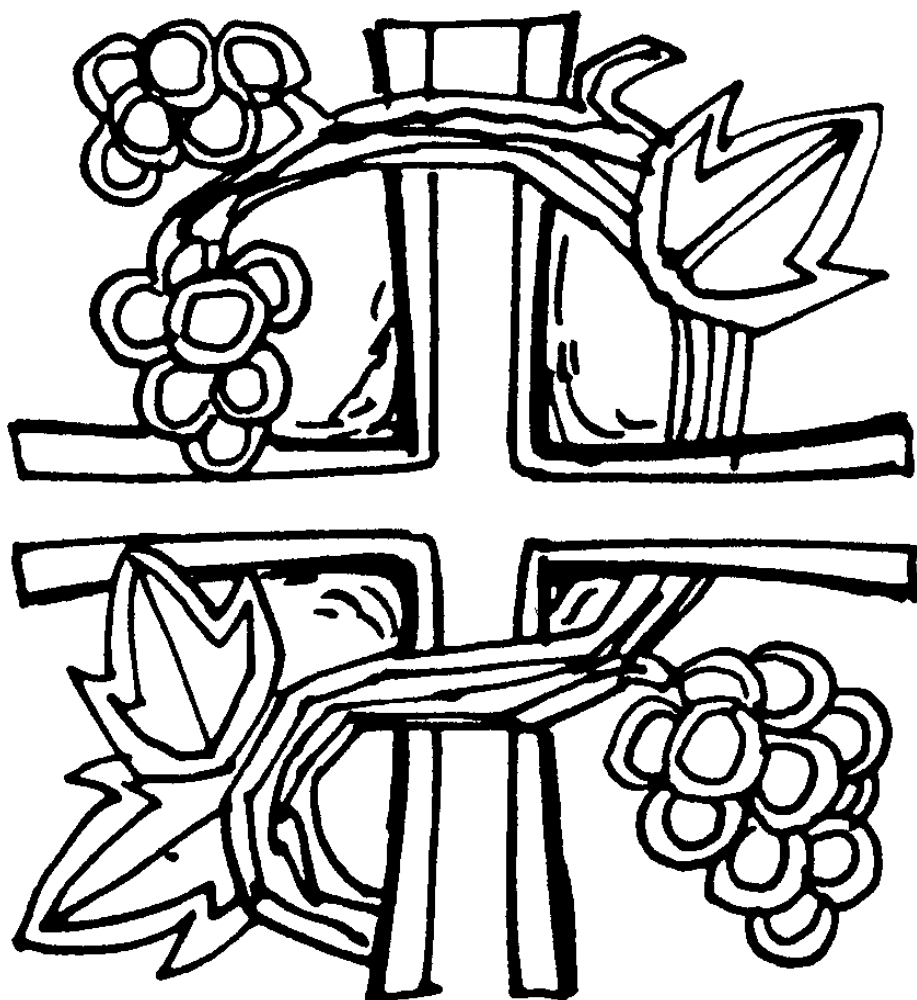


*Planning Your
St. Julia Parish
Wedding*



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PLANNING YOUR WEDDING IN ST. JULIA PARISH, WESTON / LINCOLN

If you and your fiancé are planning to be married soon, congratulations! This resource is aimed at addressing basic questions you might have about your Catholic marriage ceremony in either of the parish's two churches: St. Julia Church in Weston or St. Joseph Church in Lincoln.

A wedding is an occasion of great joy. The sacrament of marriage is God's action of uniting two people whom God has already created and loved. God's action happens through the prayer of the Church, and so the marriage is not only the couple's event. It belongs to the whole Church, God's people, who support the couple and who will be affected by their lifelong union. It is a commitment that not only the bride and groom are making, but one that God is strengthening through the Church's action.

Since the event of a marriage is the couple's and the Church's, it is important that it be carried out well. Many people will be helping you to prepare for marriage. Here are some of the topics you will want to know about. Please consider these points, and feel free to bring questions to the parish secretary, the parish clergy, the parish wedding coordinator and others who will work to help make your wedding an occasion of God's blessing for you.

Scheduling the Wedding

The man and woman planning to be married (ordinarily not their parents or others) should be the ones who contact the parish, at least six months before the proposed date.

A time for the wedding will not be set until you (the couple planning to be married) have met with the priest or deacon at the parish, but in an initial phone or e-mail contact you can find out about the tentative availability of the desired church at the times you are considering. The wedding may be celebrated either within a Mass or at a simple ceremony. There are also a few days during the year when a wedding cannot be celebrated, as indicated in the Church's liturgical calendar.

Weddings usually take place on weekends. However, a wedding celebration cannot conflict or come too close to the time of any parish Mass, the Sacrament of Penance, or any other special liturgical occasion (e.g., First Communion, First Penance, or another wedding).

Meeting with the Priest or Deacon

After the first contact is made with the parish's priest or deacon, an initial meeting will be set up. Then, after that meeting, you will meet a few times more with the priest or deacon as you prepare for the event and for a lifetime of marriage. These meetings will provide you with the spiritual and practical support you will need to get ready for your special day and for the days ahead as husband and wife. These are arranged a few weeks or months apart. Within the meetings, you:

- will need to fill out wedding forms that will be kept on file in the parish
- will also receive information on how to obtain documentation, such as certificates of Baptism and Confirmation (if you did not receive these sacraments in St. Julia Parish or in the former St. Joseph Parish in Lincoln)
- will be given copies of "Together for Life," a guide to planning the wedding to help you choose the readings for your wedding day.

If you know a priest, deacon or bishop whom you would like to invite to officiate at your wedding, please mention that to our parish's priest or deacon at your first contact or first meeting with him. You will need to decide whether our parish clergy will help prepare you, or whether the visiting clergyman might do so. After you consult with the visiting clergyman about this, you should inform the St. Julia Parish clergyman about the decision. However, the other priest or deacon should contact the St. Julia Parish priest to convey his wishes and to check on any details needing to be known. If the visiting clergyman lives outside Massachusetts, he must obtain permission from the State House in Boston to officiate at the wedding.

If one party in the marriage is not Catholic or not Christian, his or her minister/rabbi would be welcome to be on hand for the wedding. That person (minister/rabbi) should also be in contact with the pastor of St. Julia Parish.

If your phone or address information changes over the course of the preparation period, changes should be reported to our parish office, so we may update our records.

Marriage Preparation Program (A.K.A. "Pre-Cana")

Since marriage is a deep and lifelong commitment, appropriate preparation is needed. Those approaching marriage must attend one of various good pre-marriage enrichment programs, such as "Pre-Cana" or "Catholic Engaged Encounter." Procedures for registration for a program will be explained to you at your first meeting with the priest or deacon. The programs all require many hours of time and thought, and they are well worth the effort. Inevitably, positive comments come back to the parish from the couples after they have attended. The cost of this program is carried by the couple, and you should give your certificate of attendance to the priest or deacon at a meeting with him following your participation in such a marriage preparation program.

Within the Archdiocese of Boston, there are various places where preparation sessions are offered. A list of these can be found at www.rcab.org. Then go to the third tab at the top of the "home page" (Offices/Ministries). Scroll down and click on "Family Life Office." Then click on "Marriage Preparation." Each couple should call and inquire as to availability. Early planning brings better results.

Wedding Coordinator

Usually soon after your first meeting with the priest or deacon, you should be in contact with the parish's wedding coordinator, who will assist you with some of the practical aspects of the upcoming celebration. Contact information is on the cover of the parish bulletin.

The wedding coordinator will meet with the couple well in advance of the celebration and will usually lead the rehearsal.

Wedding Rehearsal

Usually a wedding rehearsal is scheduled for approximately a half-hour period one or two nights before the wedding day. Rehearsals should be attended by both of you (the couple) of course, and by all members of the wedding party (the best man, the maid/matron of honor, the readers, the ushers, the bridesmaids, and the parents). The parish's wedding coordinator leads the rehearsal.

The rehearsal is usually 5:00 or 6:00 PM. This time need not be set at the same time as the wedding date is secured. As the time gets closer to the wedding the rehearsal time can be set for the convenience of both the couple and the parish staff.

It is important that the rehearsal begin and end promptly, out of respect for many people and especially for the wedding coordinator, who may have another rehearsal on the same day. A delayed start will necessitate a truncated rehearsal.

You should bring the following items to the rehearsal:

1. Marriage License

The state requires that couples planning to be married should file for a license and fulfill accompanying obligations. The license must be obtained within 60 days prior to the wedding day. You may file for it at the town office or city clerk's office in any Massachusetts city or town. It will be partially filled out by the town clerk. Please bring to the rehearsal a postage-stamped envelope that has the issuing town office's or city clerk's address on it. The priest or deacon will complete the license and enclose the license in the envelope you have provided them with so it may be mailed to its proper destination.

2. Monetary Offerings

- a. It is customary for the couple to make a donation to the parish. For use of the church (including also the preparatory assistance by the priest or deacon and by the wedding coordinator) and for the upkeep, the normal offering is \$200.
- b. For the two altar servers, gifts of \$20 cash for each should be brought in separate envelopes as well.

3. Programs

If you choose to create a worship aid ("program") for your guests, please do yourself, your family, and friends a favor and bring your programs the night of the rehearsal. Then they will be at the church, and it will be one less thing to worry about on your wedding day.

Wedding Day Celebration

Out of respect for everyone (guests, clergy, and music ministers, etc.) who will be present at the church on your wedding day, the wedding should begin on time. This needs to be a conscious concern for all in the wedding party.

Flowers, of course, are welcome in the church during the ceremony. They should be delivered to the church **between 11 AM and 3 PM on Saturday** of the weekend in which the wedding will happen, even if the wedding is on a Sunday. The flowers are considered a gift to the parish for its Masses in that church for the whole weekend.

For weddings planned for a time when the parish features special floral arrangements or other décor (i.e. Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas, First Holy Communion, Confirmation), the parish decorations should be considered; these cannot be removed for weddings. Please be sure to consult with the wedding coordinator.

You are welcome to have photos taken during the ceremony. The photographer/videographer needs to be as subtle and unobtrusive as possible. They should speak to the officiating clergyman just before the wedding begins.

We discourage the use of a "unity candle" as part of the ceremony; if desired, it could be included among festivities at the reception.

A white runner is optional at weddings. It can sometimes be hazardous when people go up to receive communion and/or as everyone leaves the church. The church carpets are kept clean, and a runner is not needed as it was in days long ago.

We must also ask that no flower pedals, soap bubbles, confetti, bubbles, rice or seed be thrown either inside or outside the church.

Overall Guidelines for Music in St. Julia Parish

After the couple has met with the priest or deacon, the music director should be contacted if the wedding will be at St. Julia Church in Weston (He has a music list and CD available). For St. Joseph Church in Lincoln, the parish wedding coordinator carries out the task of linking the couple with the musicians. The following information provides some guidelines and suggestions for couples in preparation for the music consultation. There may be some adjustments to these guidelines if your wedding will be held at St. Joseph Church in Lincoln.

You will receive a list of music, but this list does not exclude other possibilities. If you request a piece not on the list, it must be pre-approved by the parish music coordinator. All wedding liturgies at St. Julia Parish contain liturgical music as prescribed by the Catholic Church as well as instrumental music for the Processional and Recessional. The words for any vocal selections must be religious in nature. Please reserve any favorite secular songs for the reception.

Another person who will be assisting on the wedding day will be *the cantor*, who is an integral part of the wedding liturgy, whether you choose to have a wedding Mass or a wedding ceremony. The cantor helps the assembly to participate actively by leading them in all responses and hymns. The cantor may also sing solos, if appropriate selections are made. It is essential that a cantor currently active in St. Julia Parish be hired for the main singing functions of a nuptial Mass.

If you wish a friend or relative to sing, it is recommended that on the your wedding day you invite your guest to sing only one solo, and leave the main responsibilities to the resident cantor. As long as the selection for a guest singer is approved, a short run-through before the wedding should be sufficient. If you feel strongly about having a guest cantor from another parish, this must be cleared with the parish Music Director, and you must be willing to pay the Music Director an additional fee for rehearsal time. Having a guest cantor requires the music director to discuss parts of the Catholic liturgy and repertoire, mailing music to the singer, and an additional rehearsal.

Other advice and information:

- ❖ The musicians are not usually present at the wedding rehearsal. At this time, the person directing the wedding rehearsal will walk you through the Processional and Recessional. The Music Director always confirms cues with the presider before the wedding liturgy.
- ❖ *Additional Instrumentalists:* Occasionally, a trumpet player, violinist, or flutist is requested. An additional fee is required. If you wish to have a harpist, string quartet, or bagpiper perform, it is suggested that you contact these musicians directly. If you need suggestions, please contact the Music Director for names and contact information.
- ❖ Having music at a nuptial mass will not make the liturgy last significantly longer, but adds to the prayerful aspect of the liturgy.

A Message for Couples Looking To Be Married Soon

During the time of preparation for your wedding, be sure to pray together. Attend Mass together if possible, with the intention of asking God to bless your upcoming wedding. Use this time well to get to know each other better, and to think about the joys and challenges that marriage will bring. Do not be afraid to explore the differences between the two of you. Trust that God is with you in these months of preparation, and that God wants to give you wisdom and grace to test out your plans and affirm your plans for marriage.

Selections for Our Marriage During a ____ Mass ____ Ceremony

Approximate number of guests: _____

Entrance Procession

- _____ Bride accompanied by parents preceded by ushers and bridesmaids.
- _____ Bride accompanied by father preceded by ushers and bridesmaids.
- _____ Both bride and groom accompanied by parents, preceded by ushers and bridesmaids.
- _____ Both bride and groom accompanied by parents, preceded by ushers, bridesmaids and presiding clergy.
- _____ Other: _____

Processional Music:

Opening Prayer: page 8 (A1-4) No. _____ page _____

Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading: pages 10-26 (B1-9) No. _____ page _____

Read by _____

Responsorial Psalm (*Always sung by cantor; consult with music coordinator*)

New Testament Reading: pages 34-54 (D1-13) No. _____ page _____

Read by _____

Gospel Acclamation (*Sung by cantor*)

Gospel: (*Always proclaimed by priest or deacon*)

pages 56-72 (F1-10) No. _____ page _____

Homily

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of Consent or Wedding Vows: pages 76-77 (H1-2) No. _____ page _____

Consent though questions _____ Memorized _____

Recited after priest/deacon _____

Blessing of the rings

Prayer of the Faithful

Read by _____

***If you are planning a wedding without a Mass only the Nuptial Blessing, Recessional Music, ** and extras section need to be filled in beyond this point.*

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the gifts

Bread and wine will be brought forward by:

Music: _____

Communion

Immediate Wedding Party receiving communion:

Groom ___ Bride ___ Best Man ___ Maid/Matron of Honor ___

Music: _____

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion? (Optional)

Yes _____ No _____

Nuptial Blessing: pages 87-89 (M1-3) No. _____ page _____

Final Prayer: pages 91-92 (O1-4) No. _____ page _____

Recessional

Music: _____

Please note "Extras" if any: Receiving Line, Photos, people to pick up bows, etc.