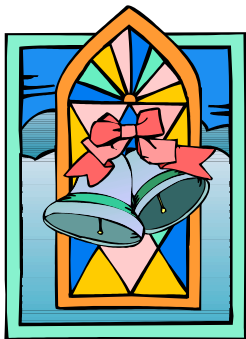


THE WEDDING LITURGY – STARTING POINTS
PLEASE REVIEW all of this important information.



Congratulations! You are embarking on what will be a joyful and exciting experience. Given how television oddly portrays weddings and recognizing that this is the first time you have approached the Church to seek the Sacrament of Marriage, it is likely you have some preconceived notions of how a wedding liturgy is “supposed to be.” To avoid misunderstandings or even hurt feelings, it is useful at the start to clarify some issues. Mindful that the learning curve can be steep at times, be patient with yourselves and the Church.

Foremost it is important to understand our starting point. The wedding liturgy above all conveys a **sacrament**, which by its nature is both **public** (meaning it takes place within the community of the Parish and therefore governed by basic liturgical norms) and **makes real Christ’s presence** (meaning it not only signifies Christ’s presence, Christ is present!) It follows then that within the life of the Parish, the wedding liturgy is *our* liturgy, celebrated within the community of believers and invited guests and guided by the Church’s basic ritual norms. Together, within this broad framework of the Church’s ritual, sacramental, and worship practice, we will understand, plan, and celebrate this exciting and joyful sacramental moment.

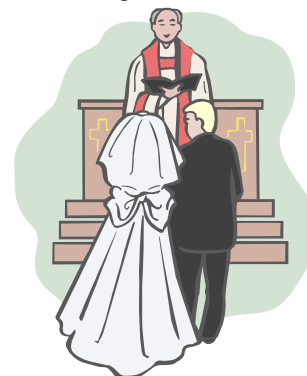
Specifically, at Christ the King Parish, we always seek to follow good and sound liturgical practice. Too often and without good cause, the less-important secondary options are emphasized, leading people to believe those options are the more important norm. In a similar way, when it comes to weddings, couples can easily misunderstand family or cultural customs as “absolute musts” and established Church ritual as “optional add-ons.”

Fear not! Together we will navigate these customs and rituals and come to the best arrangement that allows for personal variety while still respecting the integrity of our worship. Listed below are some common areas that usually require clarification:

- **Liturgical Music/Texts** – It is a long established principal, although perhaps casually implemented, that **all music and texts used as part of our worship must be liturgical**. (*Consider this: would you sing “Happy Birthday” as part of a farewell party? Obviously not, because it would not be appropriate nor would it make sense*). Have no worry, our Church offers an extensive library of beautiful and appropriate liturgical music. Our Music Director will gladly provide you with a list and/or CD of appropriate and acceptable wedding music choices.
- **Procession** – Along with appropriate music is the proper style of the Wedding Procession. For all our worship experiences, the rule of thumb is: **there is one procession and everyone is part of it**. It follows then that wedding processions begin with a cross bearer, altar servers and the Priest. Closely following them will be the Wedding Party, of various numbers and makeup. And, like each time we begin our worship, only one song accompanies the whole procession. As you choose your music, be aware that **all of us will process to the same selection of music**.

- Postures** – Each time we gather to worship and celebrate the sacraments, we are united foremost through our *common* belief in Christ, subtly but powerfully expressed through our *common* song, prayer and posture. For different reasons (i.e., architectural limitations or changing liturgical practices) this ‘common-ness’ has been unintentionally diluted during the celebration of Sacrament of Marriage. Again, seeking to stay true to good liturgical practice, **all present at the wedding – including the bride and the groom – will share in our common song, prayer, and posture.** Probably the most surprising part of our common posture will be how it applies to you, the bride and groom. Basically, while still giving you a dignified place of honor, you will sit and stand along with all gathered. (*Consider this: would you stand while watching a movie in a cinema? Of course not, because it would be distracting, odd, and inappropriate*). To allow for easy movement, especially for the bridal gown, when necessary, you will be seated in the **very first pew or in armless chairs.**

[N.B. If a Nuptial Mass is to be celebrated, during the Eucharistic prayer only, you will stand with the Priest behind the altar or, if you prefer, kneel on kneelers in front of the altar. Beyond that, you will share in the common posture of the assembly.]



- Unity Candle** – Oddly enough, one of the most well known yet often misunderstood customs tangled into wedding liturgies is the so-called ‘unity candle.’ To begin, please understand that Christ the King Parish is not anti-Unity Candle. Indeed, such a candle makes a wonderful memento of your wedding day. However, it should be noted that the Unity candle is not mentioned anywhere in the wedding ritual and thus has no liturgical status. Often, couples have been told they must have a Unity candle as an outward sign of their union. Again, that is not the case. In the Catholic tradition, the outward signs of your unity are the spoken vows and the wedding rings. Because the unity candle has no liturgical status, **its’ use is not appropriate during the liturgy.** We suggest, in a compromising spirit, that if a couple still wishes to have a unity candle, that it be part of the prayer offered before the reception meal.
- Honorarium/Fees** – Not surprisingly, there is a financial aspect of this celebration. Please know that the Church does not “charge” for sacraments. We do, however, require payment for overhead costs and professional fees. In particular, understand that the Organist and Cantor fees are part of their livelihood and are not optional. (Indeed, their salary is structured at a lower level because they can anticipate an average amount of fees collected through funerals and weddings). Our honorarium/fees are as follows:

Fees:	Church	\$160
	Organist.....	\$185
	Cantor.....	\$125

Honorarium:	Altar Server	\$10	Tip per Altar Server
	Coordinators.....	\$30	Tip per Wedding Coordinators
	Priest	?	Tip of your determination.

IMPORTANT - Financial hardship: One final word about the fees: If your financial situation makes meeting these fees difficult – and obviously the scope of your wedding would reflect such difficulty – please speak to the Pastor (in all likelihood, the church fee could be waived.) However, we must insist that payment still be made for the Organist and Cantor (as that is their livelihood). Their base salaries are structured lower because there are supplemented by weddings, funerals, etc. (in much the same way waiters/waitresses depend on tips.) Thank you.

- **Miscellaneous** – Some other items that come-up...
 1. ***Wedding Flowers:*** The flowers are yours (you paid for them; feel free to take them with you and the end of your wedding). Obviously, if you choose to leave them, the parish certainly will make good use of them.
 2. ***Center aisle Runner:*** Over the past two years, we have had some nasty falls due to the unpredictability of the aisle runner (there is no sure way to secure it to the floor). So, for safety reasons, we do not allow aisle runners.
 3. ***Visiting Cantors or Instrumentalists:*** Sometimes, a friend or family member has offered to sing or play. We welcome such participation! Obviously, a proper understanding of our wedding liturgy will be required. Please consult with our Music Director for further arrangements.
 4. ***Visiting Clergy:*** We welcome a ‘family Priest’ or ‘Priest friends’ involvement! Please be sure he reviews this supplement; the presumption is that these guidelines will be followed.
 5. ***Little children in Procession:*** Sometimes young children are invited to be part of the procession. Even though they may act well at the rehearsal, inevitably they tend to panic or freeze on the wedding day. Any children must be *at least five years of age* to be in procession and should be lined-up behind a familiar “face”, ideally a relative.
 6. ***Size of Procession:*** Processions are powerful symbols of our unity and our Christian journey. However, to maintain the flow of the liturgy, any bridal party that has *more than eight* bridesmaids and groomsmen combined must be paired together (just as we do for all our weekend liturgies.)
 7. ***Time:*** To respect other events in the parish calendar, the personal time of volunteers and professionals, as well as other clergy commitments, any Wedding Nuptial that begins 20 minutes or more behind schedule will be switched to a Ceremony.

We hope that this supplement covering some issues within the Wedding Liturgy has been helpful. We encourage you to review the planning book, *Celebrating Marriage* (by Paul Covino). As was mentioned at the beginning of this supplement, you haven’t done this before, *so don’t become flustered if you get confused*. Please feel free to ask the Priest, Music Director, or our Wedding Coordinators any questions that come to mind. God bless you as you prepare for a life together...with each other, with the Church, and most importantly, with Christ.

In the Hope of Christ’s true love,

Rev. David P. O’Donnell
Pastor

Theresa A. Ronan
Music Director