

Congratulations on your engagement! This is a very exciting time in your life, and Guardian Angels Parish wishes to extend to you our heartfelt promise of prayer and assistance as you prepare for your marriage!

STEPS IN YOUR MARRIAGE PROCESS

Initial Contact/Interview

The initial meeting with Pastoral Associate, Steve Petty, should be done no less than six months before you would like to be married. At the meeting, your marriage date will be scheduled in the parish calendar. During the initial interview the pastoral associate will explain the parish policies concerning the formation timeline, begin to fill out the required paperwork for your marriage and answer any pertinent questions. When you first contact the pastoral associate, please be sure to let him know right away if either of you has ever been married before.

Marriage Preparation Sessions

To help you for a life-long commitment, Guardian Angels utilizes a compatibility tool known as PREPARE. After the initial interview with the pastoral associate, all couples take the PREPARE tool. PREPARE is a tool designed to help you learn more about yourself, your partner and your relationship. It identifies the strengths in your relationship. It also helps you identify any issues that may need to be discussed. The PREPARE tool is there help the couple develop communication skills that are so vital for a healthy marriage. .

The PREAPRE Tool is administered online. The pastoral associate will register the couple with the PREPARE/ENRICH Company. The company then contacts the couple via email to complete the online assessment. The couple pays a fee of \$35.00 for the compatibility tool to the PREPARE/ENRICH Company online. Once the couple has taken the compatibility test, the company assembles a facilitator report that is sent directly to the pastoral associate. The pastoral associate will make individual appointments (usually 4, but whatever is needed for you) to go over the results with the couple. These appointments will be held at Guardian Angels.

Baptismal Certificate

During your formation time you will need to provide a current baptismal certificate (dated within six months of your marriage). If you were baptized at Guardian Angels, a certificate will not be necessary. You will only need to provide a certificate if you were baptized at a parish other than Guardian Angels. You can obtain your certificate simply by calling the parish where you were baptized and have them send you a copy. If you were baptized in another Christian denomination, we would appreciate a photocopy of your baptismal certificate.

PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY

Days Available for Weddings

The celebration of marriage may take place any day of the week except those days that are specifically prohibited by the Church or Guardian Angels Parish. These include all Sundays during the Church Year, all Solemnities (Christmas, etc.), Holy Days, and all days of Holy Week and the Triduum. **Friday evening weddings are usually celebrated at 6:00 pm. All Saturday weddings are celebrated at 2:00 pm.**

Clergy

In order to be validly married within the Catholic Church, a baptized Catholic must proclaim his/her vows before a priest or deacon and two witnesses. In the case of an interfaith marriage (between a Catholic and another baptized Christian), the minister of the non-Catholic party is welcome to participate in the wedding liturgy. The details should be discussed with your priest/deacon.

If the marriage is between two baptized Catholics and the Eucharist is to be celebrated, the priest will be the celebrant of the wedding (see forms below). For weddings ceremonies where the Eucharist is not celebrated, the deacon may be the celebrant of the wedding (see forms below). Please contact the appropriate minister (priest or deacon) for the initial interview. A guest priest or deacon (family members or friends) are welcome to celebrate your wedding but must have the permission of the pastor.

Sponsor Couple

Couples getting married at Guardian Angels will be assigned a sponsor couple. The sponsor couple conducts the wedding rehearsal prior to the wedding and is present on the actual wedding day to help organize the wedding party (order of procession), serve as sacristans, and ultimately assist the presider with the wedding.

Forms of Liturgy

The Rite of Marriage provides three forms for celebrating marriage in the Catholic Church:

- I. The Rite for Celebrating Marriage During the Eucharist** is used when two practicing Catholics marry.
- II. The Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside the Eucharist** is used when a practicing Catholic marries a baptized person from another Christian church.
- III. The Rite for Celebrating Marriage Between a Catholic and an Unbaptized Person** is used when a practicing Catholic marries someone who is not a Christian.

The first form has the wedding ceremony within the context of the Eucharistic liturgy. In the two remaining forms, Eucharist is not celebrated. Each of the forms is equally valid in the eyes of the Church. The only difference is that Eucharist is not celebrated in Forms II & III.

Liturgy Details

Guardian Angels Parish has the resources to assist in the important task of planning the details of the liturgical celebration. During the **Covenant Couples Program**, your sponsor couple will give you a booklet, entitled ***Together for Life***, to help you plan your wedding celebration. It will contain a variety of Scripture readings, responses, prayers and blessings for you to choose for your celebration along with other information you may find helpful. If you have any questions concerning the liturgy, your priest/deacon or sponsor couple will be able to answer them.

Music

The Director of Music will be more than happy to meet with you to help you in the selection of music appropriate for your wedding ceremony. In this meeting, the Director will play and advise you about the various selections that are appropriate for a wedding liturgy. You will need to contact the Director of Music at least six weeks prior to your wedding date with your final choices. The parish Director of Music is the usual musician for weddings at Guardian Angels.

The use of other musicians, singers and **all selections of music** need to be approved by the Director. You must contract with the Director of Music for service at your wedding.

There is a stipend fee of \$175.00 for the Director's services, payable at your initial meeting with the Director of Music. This fee is paid directly to the Director of Music.

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Decorations

In planning decorations, care should be taken to respect the existing church environment and the particular season of the Liturgical Year with its specific colors and arrangements. **Please speak with the pastor or pastoral minister about decorations.**

Please note: An **aisle runner cannot be permitted** because of safety precautions and insurance reasons.

Appropriate Dress

The celebration of any liturgical function in a house of worship calls for appropriate dress. The bride, and members of the bridal party, should take care in selecting gowns dignified for the House of God. Those acting in a ministerial capacity during the liturgy (readers, soloists, cross bearer, Eucharistic ministers) and those in the wedding party should dress with dignity.

Rehearsal

Your sponsor couple will handle your rehearsal. The rehearsal should take about than 45 minutes. You must call your sponsor couple to schedule a rehearsal date and time. They will in turn secure the church for this use. We are aware that all of you will be in a highly celebrative mood. We ask, however, that you come prepared to rehearse. A good rehearsal will help things run a little smoother on the day of your celebration

Wedding Liturgy Options

The **Unity Candle**, while a tradition in other Christian denominations, has no official standing in the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy. If you wish to use a Unity Candle at your wedding, it should be displayed on a separate table or stand; it is not permitted to be placed upon the altar.

The **presentation of a bouquet** to the Blessed Mother shrine is an expression of the personal piety of the bride and groom. If you wish to honor the Blessed Mother, you might do so in a special way, following the post communion prayer. This is traditionally done by placing flowers at the statue and spending a moment in prayer, asking the divine assistance of the Mother of God on your marriage. This is not a photo-op moment but a moment of prayer and praise.

Couples are **encouraged to prepare a Basket of Food for the Poor**. This basket of non-perishables should be enough to feed a family of four for one meal. This special offering is an extension of the banquet you invite your guests to. This offering will be brought forward with the gifts at the celebration of the Eucharist or offered before the liturgy begins when Eucharist is not being celebrated. The St. Vincent de Paul Society of the parish will see that it gets to a family in need.

Family Customs

If you would like to use a particular family or ethnic custom within your celebration, please discuss this with your presider.

Photography and Videotaping

Videotaping of the wedding liturgy allows for a beautiful remembrance of this important moment in your lives. However, it should never be a distraction to the participants or interfere with the celebration of the sacrament. The video camera must be on a stationary tripod.

Photographers are prohibited in the sanctuary during the wedding liturgy. The use of flash photography anywhere in the church is likewise discouraged during the liturgy.

The time allotted after the ceremony for pictures will be approximately 30 minutes. This should be enough time to complete your pictures.

Receiving Line

Due to time constraints, a receiving line is not recommended at the Church. This only takes away from the allotted time for pictures and may interfere with other parish celebrations. A receiving line is most appropriate at your banquet hall.

Throwing Rice, Seed, Etc.

To avoid any hazard to safety, to protect the environment and to minimize custodial work, **the throwing of rice, confetti, rose petals, birdseed or ANYTHING is prohibited at Guardian Angels Parish.** Please inform your families regarding this parish policy. If anything is scattered or

thrown by your guests, you will be assessed a clean-up fee and held liable for any personal injury accident.

Miscellaneous

Food and/or beverages are not to be brought into the church, the bridal room, the gathering space or restrooms for either the rehearsal or the wedding.

The wedding party and immediate family members of the bride and groom should refrain from chewing gum during the ceremony.

OTHER ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE

Use of Alcohol or Drugs

If the bride, groom, witnesses (Maid of Honor and Best Man) or wedding party, are found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs prior to the start of the wedding, the **celebration will be postponed** until a later time.

Stipends/Donations

Registered, active and contributing members of Guardian Angels Parish support the ongoing work of the parish through their prayer, participation, weekly contributions and generous offering of their time, talent and treasure. We do not require any additional support at the time of the sacramental celebration of marriage. However, any offering would be gratefully received and would be applied to the ongoing works of the Church.

If you are not an active and contributing member of the parish, we want you to consider the cost of the staff time and of the facilities of the parish when you decide on your marriage stipend. The expected minimum is \$300.00.

Outline of fees

Although the fees have been discussed above, we list them here for your attention and planning.

\$35.00 *Prepare* Compatibility Tool. Payable to Guardian Angels and due at *Prepare* Session.

\$250.00 Marriage Preparation Program.

\$175.00 Music Director/Organist fee. Payable to Director of Music. Due at the music planning session.

We thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. You are now ready to call the parish and set an appointment with your priest and schedule a tentative wedding date. The time of formation that you are about to begin is a time of excitement, anticipation and discovery. You

can be assured of our prayers and support during this time. May you continue to grow in love for one another, for God and for the Church.