

# Wedding Planner Guide

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St. Michael the Archangel RC Church wishes to congratulate those wish to celebrate their impending nuptials. We know there are many decisions to be made and the details of the Matrimonial Rites of the Church can be overwhelming. In no way are these meant to complicate an already difficult experience. This is to draw together differing aspects of the process so that should a question be forgotten or something overlooked while meeting with the Pastor, simply scanning these might fill in what has not been covered. Keep in mind that these guidelines apply only to St. Michael the Archangel RC Parish.

St. Michael's will make every effort to set a wedding time that is convenient for you and your family. We suggest that the groom, or other designed person, serve as the primary contact person for the parish.

Contact Person Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone and Email: \_\_\_\_\_

As Catholics, we celebrate the rites of matrimony between one man, and one woman in the sight of God. In so doing we are reminded of the sacramental and irrevocable nature of the marriage bond and the great call to holiness of life which the marriage state should inspire. Traditionally the Church identifies three principal marriage rites, with the customarily flexibility to choose the rite and/or rites that best mark the situation of the engaged couple.

- ❖ The Betrothal Ceremony – usually takes place immediately after the brides' father has given his consent and before the public announcement of the engagement, and before a wedding date is set. This ceremony generally includes prayers for the couple, and the posting of the marriage banns in the parish bulletin. The Rosary may be recited since it helps us to reflect upon the sacrificial nature of married life and the relation between Christ and His Church.
- ❖ The Marriage rite – the essential liturgical rite, which takes place in the church, with a priest witnessing, on behalf of the Church, the vows made by the couple. This rite may be followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass but in the case of a mixed marriage this is left to the discretion of the couple. The form of the marriage rite used at St. Michael the Archangel is appended. The date of the Marriage rite cannot be less than 6 months after the announcement of the engagement. The Pastor's consent is necessary for another priest, or deacon, to perform the Marriage rite at the parish of St. Michael the Archangel. The Pastor must also be consulted as to the necessary marriage preparation and instruction which consist of twelve regular meetings, the FOCCUS examination, and the completion of the required Diocesan investigation.
- ❖ Nuptial Mass – celebrated in the church immediately after the Marriage rite with a priest offering the Holy Sacrifice of Christ for the newly married couple. The nuptial liturgy includes the special blessing of the couple during the Canon of the Mass, and a final admonition calling them to holiness of life. Holy Communion may be distributed at this Mass subject to the dispositions of the married couples' families.

## Planning for the Wedding Services

What service(s) and date(s) would you like?

Betrothal Ceremony

Marriage Rite

Mass of Thanksgiving

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Planning for the Wedding Services

Name of Priest for the service(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Names of the Engaged Couple: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth  
of Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth of  
Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

There are two forms of the ancient Mass, the High Mass and the Low Mass. The High Mass requires at least four servers and a Plain Chant Schola. The Low Mass may be arranged with a single server.

### Low Mass

Altar Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

Altar Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

### High Mass

Altar Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

Altar Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

Altar Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

Altar Servers: \_\_\_\_\_

(It is customary to offer a stipend to the Altar Servers. (We recommend \$20/server.) In cases where the couple has no one in mind to serve the Pastor will assign the required number.

## Planning for the Music

Music is an essential part of the High Mass, and we encourage families to make full use of the Church traditions and the parish resources. The traditions of the Church clearly give the primacy of place to Plain Chant. The Plain Chant Nuptial Mass is considered the usual choice. The parish Music Director will assist in assembling a Plain Chant Schola for the Nuptial Masses of Active Parishioners. In cases where polyphonic music, requiring a larger choir or orchestral players, is desired the parish Director of Music is will also assist in assembling singers/players. However it should be noted that additional singers/players require an additional stipend which is set by the Music Director and dependent on the type of music, size of choir and number of players.

In the event that a Nuptial High Mass is desired the Contact Person should contact the Music Director Mrs. Eileen Hanisch by email at [meh.sga@gmail.com](mailto:meh.sga@gmail.com) at least two months before the wedding date.

Stole Fees and Stipends for Nuptial Masses are laid down by the Diocese of Scranton. Please note that these are not “costs”. Financial difficulties will never prevent the parish St Michaels from providing the nuptial rites to active parishioners.

### Stipend for small Choir at Nuptial Masses:

Nuptial High Mass for Active Parishioners:	\$600
Nuptial High Mass for Inactive and Non Parishioners:	\$800

### Stipend for Organist at Nuptial Masses:

Nuptial High Mass for Active Parishioners:	\$100
Nuptial High Mass for Inactive and Non Parishioners:	\$150

### Stole Fees for Nuptial Masses:

Stole Fees are the contribution provided directly to the Pastor. At St. Michael the Archangel the Pastor has chosen personally not to take a stole fee. Instead this offering will be given to the Church to help defray the parish expenses. No other contribution need be considered.

Stole Fee for Nuptial Mass:	\$300
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We at St. Michael the Archangel RC Church are very proud of our Choir and musical tradition. We therefore encourage couples to make use of this wonderful resource before asking for other musicians to provide liturgical music for marriage rites. However, if desired guest musician may be permitted with the consent of the Director of Music. We do ask for a small fee of \$150 to accommodate outside performers and a fee of \$50 in the event that an outside organist is invited to play. This fee should be paid directly to the Director of Music.

## **Some Practicalities**

### The Reception of Holy Communion

Holy Communion is the summit of our belief in Jesus Christ. The Real Presence of Christ in our midst inspires us to remember of our sinfulness and the rules regarding the reception of the sacrament. Only those who are practicing Catholics, NOT conscious of grave (mortal) sin, should consider themselves disposed to receive worthily. The mode of reception is in keeping with our humble attitude in the presence of our God. Therefore at St. Michael's Holy Communion is received upon the tongue while kneeling at the altar rail. An announcement to this effect will be made before all Nuptial Masses. Should, for any reason, the couple should choose not to have Holy Communion distributed to their guests this should be agreed with the Pastor during the marriage preparation.

### Flowers

We welcome flowers as part of the Marriage rite. Flowers in the traditional rites of the Church may be placed behind the Main altar and at the side alters. Flowers for the parish are provided by McCarthy Flowers 570 587 8787 and will be delivered on the day of the wedding. Couples are asked to arrange for flowers at least two months in advance. The cost for flowers and decoration is the sole responsibility of the engaged couple.

### Reception

St. Michael's basement hall is not a suitable venue for wedding receptions. Couples are therefore asked to make alternative arrangements for a venue where family and friends can gather for a time of refreshment and celebration. The hall is however available for bridal preparation before the wedding.

### Donations and Fees

- There is no charge for a Wedding at St. Michael the Archangel. It is customary to give a donation to the parish to help defray the cost of lights, air conditioner, cleaning, and maintenance of the facilities.
- There is no charge for the services of the priest, or altar servers. However, it is recommended a generous discretionary donation for their services.
- Fees and stipends for the Music Director and cantor(s) are listed above. Please make sure to provide for the professional work.

### A Final Thought on Catholic Marriage

As a vital part of the body of Christ, a married couple is called to be open to life. The procreation and Catholic education of children is the greatest blessing bestowed by God. Therefore, we are called upon as a Catholic community to create an environment, in our homes and our parish, where the next generation of Catholic souls can flourish. Prayerful preparation and planning of the marriage rites will help you deal successfully and gracefully with the trials and tribulations, the joys and blessing of the married state. The pastor is always available to address any issues or questions.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS GUIDELINE  
AND RETURN TO THE OFFICE**