

# Marriage Guidelines & Preparation Handbook

## ST. THERESA PARISH

Palatine, Illinois

### CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DESIRE TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY!

The decision to marry is a joyful moment for you, your families and the Church. We are happy to be a part of this holy moment of celebration. The vocation of Christian marriage, the union of one man and one woman with Jesus Christ, demands a serious commitment. Parish membership by one of the parties, or a parent, is a first consideration. Non-members require a personal conversation and permission of the pastor.

The Church desires to do all that it can to assist couples as they prepare to accept the obligations of Christian marriage and to fulfill them faithfully. The Catholic experience of celebrating matrimony vows clearly conveys the Church's beliefs about the sacrament.

In the Catholic Christian faith, marriage is not just a legal contract—marriage is a sacrament, a covenant and sign of God's love for you and with you throughout the entirety of your married lives. As you celebrate the sacrament of Matrimony at St. Theresa Parish, we will assist you in every possible way to be aware of God's presence in your lives, and to make this celebration a faith-filled event for the two of you and for your family and friends.

**Please note. If you have been previously married, no date can be set for the wedding until you have spoken to the priest/deacon handling your request for marriage at St. Theresa.**

### MARRIAGE DATES AND TIMES

In accordance with the Archdiocese of Chicago policy, the couple planning marriage must contact the parish at least six months prior to the wedding date and arrange an initial meeting with a priest or deacon. Freedom to enter marriage in the Catholic Church is established at this first meeting. No date reservations may be made without first establishing this freedom.

#### WEDDING TIMES

**Friday:** Evenings at a time which fits into the Church schedule.

**Saturday:** **11:00 AM to 12:30 PM** including time for pictures

**2:00 PM to 3:30 PM** including time for pictures

There are **NO** Sunday weddings.

### THE CHURCH FEE

The Christian soul desires to thank God for the blessing that comes in Christian matrimony. The Church donation is **\$500.00**. Checks should be made payable to St. Theresa Parish. The money will go directly to the parish and is not retained by the priest or deacon witnessing your wedding. This fee assists the parish to help defray the cost of heat/air conditioning, lights, cleaning and upkeep of the church. An honorarium for the priest/deacon is appreciated, but optional.

## **SPECIFIC PROTOCOL**

St. Theresa Parish wishes to remind you that preparing your mind and soul for this important occasion is vitally important and there is a protocol within the Church universal as well as proprietary preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony in the parish.

Our Marriage Preparation Ministers will assist you in fulfilling this protocol. **Please note that all components are an obligation.** Here is a quick reminder of the basics:

- Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire (first paperwork signed by the priest/deacon);
- Participation in the Archdiocese of Chicago online Marriage Preparation Program ([familyministries.org](http://familyministries.org)) or the parish program One in Christ ([oneinchristmarriage.com](http://oneinchristmarriage.com)) (see sheet). There are associated fees for the One In Christ program;
- Submittal of all forms to the marriage ministers including recent Baptismal and Confirmation certificates (issued within the last six months), witness affidavits, Declaration of Nullity, and a Cook County marriage license (good for 60 days in Cook County). These forms must be on file ***before*** the rehearsal;
- A final meeting with the priest/deacon to go over your wedding choices before the rehearsal.

It is encouraged that all couples stay in contact with celebrating deacon/priest and be regular attendees at Sunday Eucharist.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

There is a significant difference between your wedding and your marriage. As a faith community, we are interested in assisting you in preparing for your marriage, not just your ceremony. The purpose of marriage preparation is to provide you with additional opportunities to look at issues which couples have found significant in married life. No one will tell you how to live your married lives. Material will be provided to assist you in looking at some of these issues at this time, and may be helpful later on in your marriage. Participation in the Archdiocese of Chicago marriage program One in Christ ([oneinchristmarriage.com](http://oneinchristmarriage.com)) is required. Registration is through the website. Other options may be discussed with the priest/deacon. There are related fees for this program. Couples are encouraged to attend the One in Christ program as soon as possible. It is never too early to attend. As you get closer to your wedding date, you will not have the quality time to put into your preparation. Decided on your preferred preparation session now, and make your reservation to attend as soon as possible.

**A reminder—You will need to obtain and provide the following documents:**

- **A Baptismal certificate issued within the past six months from the Church of your Baptism (no photocopies, no originals);**
- **A certificate of Confirmation for all Catholics;**
- **Two Witness Affidavits for both the bride and the groom—parents or siblings are ideal witness candidates (this is an official church form and does not refer to the people you choose as witnesses at the liturgy);**
- **A Marriage License—obtained from the Cook County Clerk’s Office. The closest office is at 2121 Euclid Ave., Rolling Meadows. The license is valid the day *after* the date issued and remains valid for 60 days.**

Please note: If you have been married previously-in any church or before a judge or any other civil authority, even to each other, you must inform the person taking the initial information **when you first call the parish**. Also if you have been married before, you must provide:

- A Death Certificate for your former spouse or
- The divorce decree, or
- A Declaration of Nullity of Annulment from the Catholic Church. If any of these is needed, we will be happy to assist. **However, no date for the wedding can be reserved until freedom to marry is established by the declaration.**

### **INTER-FAITH MARRIAGE**

The Rite of Christian Marriage encourages that the exchange of wedding vows between two Catholics generally take place in the context of a Nuptial Mass. This presumes that the couple regularly participates in the Sunday Eucharist and is not a stranger to their own faith tradition. It is recommended that marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic be celebrated as a ceremony only. If one party is not baptized, only a ceremony is allowed.

Because you are asking God's blessing upon your marriage, the wedding must take place in church. No wedding can take place outdoors (Canon Law/Archdiocesan Policy).

### **PLANNING YOUR WEDDING LITURGY**

St. Theresa Parish Wedding Ministry will work with you in planning your wedding. This may include the selection of prayers, vows, scripture readings, etc. A well planned wedding is marked by prayerfulness and sincerity of your faith expression, rather than by the selection of readings, music, or gestures, which might be more appropriate to the reception. You will receive a book entitled "Together for Life" which will assist you with your planning. Only scripture readings may be used for your wedding liturgy.

### **MUSIC FOR YOUR CEREMONY**

The music selected for your ceremony must be **sacred music** texts drawn from scripture and liturgical sources. It is your responsibility to contact our Music Ministry to arrange for musicians, as well as to select prayerful music for your wedding. Please contact the Music Director at 847-358-7760.

The fee for the Keyboardist is **\$250.00** and for the Cantor is **\$200.00** (this is separate from the Church fee) is due one week before the wedding. The St. Theresa Music Director must approve all music. The Music Director is ordinarily the person who will perform for the wedding. If you choose to use an outside musician, there is a **\$150.00** bench fee and approval is necessary by the St. Theresa Music Director.

### **VISITING CLERGY**

If you have a special relationship with a priest or deacon not associated with St. Theresa Parish, you may request that they be the celebrant at your wedding. Please notify your consulting priest/deacon and Marriage ministry at St. Theresa Parish about this arrangement. A Protestant Minister/ Rabbi may be present but can only impart a benediction and may not receive the Matrimony Vows, however.

Visiting priests from outside the Archdiocese of Chicago must obtain faculties (a letter of permission and good standing from his Ordinary (Bishop) and confirmation from the Archdiocese of Chicago Chancery) to witness a Marriage in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

## **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

Wedding Rehearsal Ministry will contact the Bride approximately three to four weeks prior to your wedding. They will assist you with planning your rehearsal, will conduct the rehearsal, and assist at your wedding.

## **ALTAR SERVERS**

Two altar servers will be scheduled to assist at your celebration. It is customary to give the servers a gratuity (\$10--\$20 donation per server).

## **LIVESTREAM (OPTIONAL)**

Fee is \$500

## **CHURCH DECORATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

The Catholic Church observes the days and months of the year as liturgical seasons. Each season has its distinct color and décor. Seasonal flowers, plants or other items placed by the parish may not be removed for your celebration. Please inform your florist of this rule.

**FLOWERS:** Flowers arrangements are not required for your wedding. If you wish to have flowers, your florist is responsible for the placement of these flowers with the assistance of St. Theresa Parish Marriage Ministry. Flowers are never placed on top of the altar table. Note that during the Christmas and Easter seasons, our parish has an abundance of flowers in the church.

**PRESENTATION FLOWERS:** If you wish to present flowers at the greeting of peace and/or to the Blessed Mother, please have your florists supply them.

**PEW DECORATIONS:** If you wish to have a pew decoration such as bows or flowers, they may be attached with rubber bands or green wire. **No tape** is to be used at any time. There are 14 pews down the center aisle of the church.

**WHITE RUNNER:** A runner is not utilized at St. Theresa Parish.

**RICE, CONFETTI, BIRDSEED AND BALLOONS:** These are **Not Allowed**. Nothing may be thrown or released into the air. Current recommendations is the use of bells. Bubbles may be used **outside** of the church. If someone throws flower petals (only fake ones are allowed), the wedding party is responsible for clean up.

**UNITY CANDLE:** Unity Candles are not discouraged for the ritual.

Additional candles, hurricanes, candelabra, etc, are not allowed.

No animals are allowed in church (other than companion service dogs).

No "outside wedding planners" should interfere with the wedding liturgy or St. Theresa Marriage Ministry.

**AT THE REHEARSAL:**

\*Please bring all unpaid fees for Musicians, Church, Servers

\*Please bring your wedding license

\*Please bring any booklets or hand outs

\*Have all people taking part in your ceremony there (Readers, Gift Bearers, Parents, etc.).

\*Please be on time