



MUSICIANS & SOLOISTS

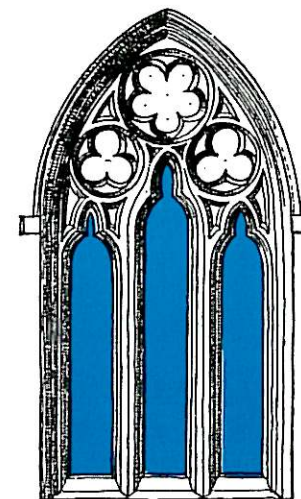
Music has long been an integral part of any Catholic worship service. Since the purpose of the Church Wedding is to celebrate the religious dimension of marriage, the music especially needs to reflect that fact. Secular romantic pieces or popular songs are highly discouraged if not restricted. This directive includes the time of gathering prior to the procession and service.

Only music suitable to the religious dimension of the wedding and the Catholic liturgy is considered proper. Even here, there is a certain ideal order of preference:

Using the Sunday service as the model, the Church encourages the use of congregational hymns when possible and prefers musicians to support the traditional sung portions of the service - acclamations and responses - prior to choosing any solo pieces. Suitable instrumental processional and recessional are certainly appropriate.

Only when the above choices prove awkward for a particular event should the consideration of a soloist be considered. Again, even here, music suitable to a church service is to be chosen. The Lord's Prayer is always a communal prayer, never sung as a solo, nor is a solo or hymn appropriate during the sign of peace.

Individual parishes have certain directives concerning the proper musician for weddings. Couples are strongly encouraged to consult months in advance with the priest or pastoral musician responsible for the wedding to avoid any last minute confusion or disappointment.



THE CATHOLIC WEDDING

A GUIDE FOR
FLORISTS
CONSULTANTS
PHOTOGRAPHERS
MUSICIANS

OVERVIEW

The celebration of a wedding in the Catholic Church holds much in common with weddings celebrated throughout our society. Dresses, tuxedos, flowers, pictures and music are all recognized elements of weddings and contribute greatly to the festive occasion. The Catholic Church, however, like other religious denominations, strives to celebrate marriage not simply as the "couples' day", but also as it relates to Faith and to Prayer, to the Church community and to the presence of God.

To do this it strives to create an atmosphere of communal prayer, one in which all who attend are seen less as an audience or "guests" and more as participants in the celebration of Word and Sacrament. All other elements are judged as appropriate only as they contribute to this atmosphere.

This twofold goal of community participation and prayerful setting often directs the manner in which flowers, pictures, videos and music are involved. Generally the Church strives to use the normal worship service of Sunday Mass as the guide to the celebration of Catholic weddings. It is our hope and intention that the following will be of some help as you provide your own professional help to those planning a Catholic wedding.

The local Catholic parish has been invited to print their own specific guidelines on the back page of this brochure.



FLORISTS

Floral arrangements have long been part of the worship environment in the Catholic Church. Again, the normal use of flowers on Sunday and festive occasions serves as the model for their placement at weddings.

Excessive concentration of flowers in the sanctuary (chancel) or along the main aisle is normally discouraged. At no time are the altar and pulpit to be hidden by flowers. (Our churches have been encouraged to consider the entire space (sanctuary and nave) when deciding decorative additions.

Most parish churches request that any flowers specifically ordered for the church be left with the church after the celebration. Likewise, because of limited parish staffing on weekends, florists are encouraged to remove additional stands, runners and ribbons soon after the event.

Certain practices and items are considered optional and sometimes even discouraged: the wedding (unity) candle, flowers presented to parents and those placed at the Marian shrine. None are essential to the Catholic wedding. Couples are encouraged to consult with the priest prior to arranging such items with the florist.

WEDDING CONSULTANTS

Wedding consultants are sometimes employed by the couple to assist in the planning of the ceremony. The procession of the wedding party and placement of participants in the sanctuary, however, are considered an integral part of the Catholic wedding liturgy and under the direction of the presiding priest. The Church provides a variety of entrance processions, none of which encourage the community to stand only for the entrance of the bride. Likewise, large numbers in the wedding party are normally discouraged.

The traditional practice of separating the bride and groom prior to the ceremony is not considered as necessary by the Church. The presence of the couple greeting friends at the church door, for example, is a recognized practice.



PHOTOGRAPHERS (VIDEOGRAPHERS)

The Church is grateful for the "Code of Church Conduct" as provided by the PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION OF GREATER ST. LOUIS, INC. It supports the practice of many photographers who consult with the officiating minister as to the specific requirement of the local Church.

The same "Code" encourages photographers to apply their professional skills with as little disturbance to the ceremony as possible. (Such directives keep us all from the tendency to destroy the present moment in an attempt to preserve it for the future.)

Normally the Church discourages any flash photography during the ceremony and the taking of pictures during the proclamation of the Scriptures or times of prayer. Any movement during such moments may distract the community from full attention to the Word or the prayer.

The use of our sanctuaries for posed pictures before or after the wedding is strongly discouraged. Each parish provides specific directives, either providing an alternative space or suggesting a limited time for such pictures. Refreshments during such "sessions" are inappropriate within the church nor is any church furniture to be rearranged without permission. Reverence is to be maintained in the sanctuary as is proper in a sacred place.

The placement of any video equipment within the sanctuary is normally not permitted. The presiding priest, familiar with the space and the ceremony, can often suggest the most appropriate placement for such equipment.

Again, as with consultants, the style and movement of the procession is under the direction of the presiding priest in consultation with the couple.