

Cathedral of St. Raphael

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Guidelines for Weddings at Cathedral of St. Raphael

A couple's wedding is indeed a memorable occasion. When the sacrament of marriage is celebrated before and with the Christian community in the context of worship to our God a deeper meaning is given this event.

The Cathedral of St. Raphael has developed the following guidelines which will aid the couple in making their wedding the most meaningful event possible.

A. Arrangements and meeting with the Parish Priest where the couple resides

1. An appointment with the pastor or parish priest where the couple resides is normally to be done at least six (6) months before the anticipated wedding date. If the Catholic party is not a registered parishioner of the parish, normally he/she needs to register in the parish beforehand.
2. When meeting with the parish priest, the couple ask permission from the priest to celebrate their wedding at the Cathedral of St. Raphael, Dubuque, and indicate why they want to be married at St. Raphael. Normally, the parish priest will be happy to grant permission for the wedding to take place at St. Raphael.

B. Necessary Instructions to be completed where the couple resides

1. The priest will expect the couple's cooperation in receiving whatever religious instructions are necessary. Thus, if one of the parties is not Catholic, one or more conferences may be necessary to familiarize the non-Catholic party with the distinctive aspects of Catholic faith and practice.
2. In most dioceses, participation in an Engaged Encounter or a Pre-Cana Conference is normally an essential part of marriage preparation. The parish priest will explain to you what is required and assist you with registration.
3. If one or both of the parties has been previously married the couple is normally asked to participate in a re-marriage program rather than in the Engaged Encounter or the Pre-Cana.
4. The parish priest may assign a sponsor couple. Normally, the sponsor couple will invite the engaged couple to their home for a number of meetings. In these sessions the sponsor couple will discuss with the engaged couple various aspects of married life.

C. **Pre-matrimonial Papers and Forms.** to be completed with priest where couple resides.

1. Each Catholic party is to present a Baptismal Certificate with marriage notations issued within the last six months. In the case of a non-Catholic who has been baptized, proof of baptism is requested.
2. The Pre-Matrimonial Questionnaire must be filled out by each party separately under oath and before a priest/deacon/delegate. Usually this is completed by the parish priest after the Engaged Encounter or Pre-Cana and Sponsor Couple programs have been completed.
3. Affidavits Concerning the Freedom to Marry for each party are to be filled out by witnesses who have known the party since childhood. The witnesses are usually parents or close relatives.
4. If the parties are of different religious faiths, an additional form or forms may need to be completed.

D. **Planning the Marriage Ceremony.** to be completed with priest or deacon who will be presiding at the wedding at the Cathedral of St. Raphael, Dubuque

1. A prayerful and meaningful liturgical celebration for the wedding should be carefully planned by the couple and the priest or deacon who will be presiding at the wedding at St. Raphael's. This includes choosing the Scripture readings, other variable parts of the Mass or service, and liturgically suitable music. Normally, the priest or deacon will provide a copy of Together for Life, which will help the couple make their selections.
2. The music chosen for the wedding needs to be appropriate for a church service, that is, it needs to have a faith dimension, which helps the gathered community to pray, be artistic in quality, and music that fits the spirit and structure of the liturgy. The couple needs to contact Jim Mendralla, the Director of Worship and Music at the Cathedral, and engage his services in selecting the music and coordinating the music for the wedding. Jim will explain to the couple the various fees charged for his services and other musicians. Even if the couple wishes to use their own musicians, they need to hire the services of Jim Mendralla for music selection and coordination of the music at the wedding.
3. The marriage of two Catholics should ordinarily be celebrated within the Eucharistic Liturgy (Wedding within the Mass). A nuptial service outside of Mass is usually more appropriate for an inter-faith marriage between a Catholic and a person of another Christian denomination. Moreover, present church discipline permits only Catholics to receive communion.
4. Since marriage is a sacred covenant between the couple, a sacrament of Christ's Church, the Catholic parties are encouraged to include Sacramental Reconciliation as a part of their immediate preparation for marriage.

5. The unity candle is an option. It is not an integral part of the marriage rite. If the couple desires the unity candle option they need to provide the unity candle.

E. Participants in the Marriage ceremony

1. If the wedding is celebrated within the Mass, the couple is asked to provide extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion as well as Mass servers. (The parish can provide Mass servers, but the couple is asked to give a gift of \$10-20 for each of the servers provided by the parish.)
2. Cathedral musicians are preferred and usually available. Jim Mendralla, the Director of Worship and Music at the Cathedral, will inform you of available musicians at one of the music workshops that the couple is asked to attend. Remuneration for a parish musician who provides music for the wedding is arranged with the musician. If the couple desires to engage other musicians from outside the parish, they still need to hire Jim Mendralla to coordinate the music and set-up for the musicians. Since the Nuptial Mass or Service is an act of liturgical worship the wedding music must be appropriate for the worship setting and should invite and encourage the participation of the community.
3. We recommend for the Entrance Procession that the attendants process in as couples followed by the groom with his parents and the bride with her parents. The entrance procession needs to be in harmony with our processions for Sunday Mass.
4. Engaged couples are asked to be reasonable in the number of couples they request to be in their wedding.

F. Other Matters Relative to the Marriage Ceremony

1. The couple may arrange to have flowers provided for the sanctuary, but are to check with Jim Mendralla regarding their placement. Flowers are never placed on the altar. No flowers are needed at Christmas and Easter time since there are flowers already in the sanctuary. If you provide flowers in the sanctuary, you may remove them after the ceremony and take them to the reception. Flower petals are not to be strewn in the aisle since they may stain the carpet. Pew bows are allowed, but they may not be fastened by tape or wire.
2. Aisle runners are not allowed at the Cathedral
3. The couple is asked to make a financial donation to Cathedral for the maintenance of the church and parish.
 - a. 5% of the total cost of the wedding or
 - b. An offering in the range of \$500-750 is suggested. (A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is to be sent within a month of scheduling the date to reserve the date. The deposit is included as part of the offering for the wedding.)

4. The couple may arrange to have pictures taken and/or to have the ceremony video-taped. The photographer is to check with the priest before the ceremony regarding any photos or video-taping during the ceremony, and their location. It is strongly recommended that pictures be taken before the wedding ceremony. The amount of time needed for pictures to be taken is normally an hour and time of pictures should be arranged with the Cathedral. The bride and groom are the honored guests and as such they are encouraged to proceed promptly to the reception being held for them.

G. Wedding Rehearsal

1. The couple arranges with the priest/deacon at St. Raphael's a rehearsal time prior to the wedding. Normally the rehearsal is the night before the wedding. (Time of the rehearsal is normally not scheduled until three months before the wedding, in case there is a wedding scheduled on the night of the rehearsal.)
2. The Marriage License for the State of Iowa is to be obtained at a county courthouse in Iowa some days before the wedding. The couple is to bring the marriage license and return envelope to the wedding rehearsal.

H. Miscellaneous Concerns

1. A reception line may be set up in the back of the church immediately following the wedding, if it does not interfere with other scheduled services.
2. The throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals, or other confetti within the church building or on the church grounds is prohibited because of the mess and the hazard created. Please inform relatives and friends of this policy.
3. Drinking of alcoholic beverages in or near the church or on church property before, during or after the wedding is prohibited. Pop and food may be consumed in the Cathedral Center. No food or beverage is to be consumed in the church or in the gathering space or vestibule.
4. The couple is asked to advise the participants, friends and family members to show proper decorum in the church during the taking of pictures.
5. Clean-up of the Cathedral, Cathedral Center, Raphael Rooms, the restrooms and the grounds after the ceremony is the responsibility of the couple. Please inform your ushers that this is part of their duties. Please have them place all trash in the proper receptacles in the Cathedral Center.

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