

## **Introduction**

Congratulations on your engagement! A church wedding is a unique and special ceremony for contracting marriage. In planning a church wedding you are choosing to ask our Lord's blessings on your marriage and to have it sanctified by his Word and prayer. The wedding liturgy speaks to the marriage contract in ways other than the concerns of a civil ceremony or a social reception. The bride and groom exchange their vows as an act of worship within God's house. By asking Jesus to be present at your wedding you are beginning a marriage centered in Christ and his Word. Be assured he is pleased to join a couple in the fellowship of a Christian marriage. While this is an intensely personal event in a couple's lives, it is much more than a private celebration.

This ceremony takes place in the presence of a congregation of worshippers. Those assembled participate in this event to express their support, joy, and faith through prayers, acclamations, and songs. The Maronite Rite offers many alternative expressions to help the bride and groom personalize their celebration. Many of these choices flow from the sacramental nature of the wedding liturgy. Our Lady of Lebanon Church is committed to making your day memorable and prayerful for all. As with other sacraments, the Sacrament of Matrimony is not a luxury or an option, but a serious responsibility. To help facilitate the planning of this joyous event, you will find the following guidelines helpful.

## **Guidelines for Weddings**

1. Canon law requires instruction in Christian marriage as a preparation for solemnization and the answering of questions relative to the intention of the parties. It is therefore necessary for the bride and groom to meet together with the parish priest by appointment for this purpose. Appointments must be made at least 6 months in advance to complete this process.
2. No marriage can be solemnized in the Church:
  - a. Unless both parties have received Baptism and Chrismation.
  - b. Where either party has been divorced from a former spouse still living, unless a dispensation has been received from the ecclesiastical authority.
  - c. Where it is the intention that a second religious ceremony shall be in another church or any other place.
  - d. Any time during Lent or Holy Week.
3. Before any priest other than the parish priest, If he is otherwise engaged, the parish priest must be consulted.
4. Rehearsals shall be arranged by appointment with the parish priest. Since the solemnization is a religious service, the parish priest shall have charge of the rehearsal. All must arrive promptly for your rehearsal. We remind you that even during the rehearsal, you are in the presence of the Lord. Therefore, all behavior during must be dignified and reverent.
5. Marriage License must be issued by DuPage County for a wedding to take place in DuPage County. Weddings taking place in Cook County require a license issued by Cook County, etc...

### **Wedding Music**

As in any worship service, your wedding music should be chosen with great care. The church provides guidelines by which the suitability of music for worship is determined. Therefore, any music played in connection with the wedding except that which is called within the service, must be approved by the parish priest.

### **Flowers and Decorations**

Liberty to decorate the Church in any part shall be subject to the following conditions:

1. Arrangements must be made with the florist to carry out the work with the cooperation of the parish priest or with someone the priest delegates at an appointed time.
2. No furniture of the Church may be moved from its place.
3. Flowers and plants may be placed on the floor of the Sanctuary and Chancel (with the exception of the Altar steps) in stands or other firch receptacles and in such a manner as not to obscure the Altar.
4. Flowers may be provided for the Altar, care should be taken as to the size of the flower arrangement.
5. Thrown real flower petals are NOT allowed, but silk petals are if an aisle runner is present.
6. Decorations may NOT be nailed, screwed or taped to the furnishings or attached in any manner likely to damage or to be a fire hazard.
7. Decorations which do not meet these requirements will be removed in advance of the service under the direction of the parish priest or another person delegated by the parish priest.

### **Photography and Video**

Photographs and video may be taken at any time during the ceremony. Caution should be used by the photographer not to blind the eyes of the Priest, Deacon or any other member of the wedding party. At NO time nor for any reason will the photographer ascend the steps to the Altar or be at the Altar itself.

### **Ushers**

The principle task of the usher is to welcome everyone and seat people together in front of the church. Ushering and any necessary control of traffic shall be arranged by the families involved. All guests are to be seated at least ten minutes before the starting time of the wedding. The parents of the bride and groom will be seated last. Guests arriving late will quietly seat themselves.

### **Monetary Gifts**

All donations are the responsibility of the persons involved. The customary donation to the Church is \$200- \$300 this covers only the cost of the lights, heat, air conditioning, and staff to maintain the church on that special day. Fees for the organist are \$100, and the Cantor is \$75. If you should choose to donate a personal gratuity to the pastor, by check, please write "stipend" in the notation area, as this is optional. One may give more than the suggested fee if he/she wishes. However, if it is financially prohibitive, please contact the pastor.

### **Parish Policies**

1. The use of alcohol and tobacco is strictly prohibited at any time in the church by participating members of the bridal party and by guests during the rehearsal or the day of the wedding. If the bride and groom have obviously been drinking before the wedding, it will not take place. Consumption of alcohol impairs your judgment and becomes grounds for an annulment.
2. Loud or unruly behavior in or around the church is also inappropriate at any time.
3. Throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, real flower petals, or anything else in the church or outside is not allowed. Bubbles can only be used outside.
4. No sparklers are to be used at weddings.