

**Immaculate Conception  
Catholic Church of Dardenne**

# **WEDDING**



# **HANDBOOK**

**It is imperative that you read this book  
when planning a wedding at ICD**

# Congratulations!

Your commitment to love one another and your intention to marry is a sign of joy and hope. Your request to be married in the community of the Church is a sign of faith. This booklet is intended to assist you on your journey toward a union of love and to help you prepare for your wedding at Immaculate Conception Church.

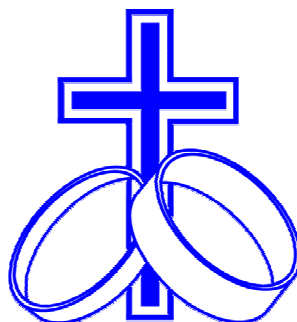
*“Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament. The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life.”*

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1660-1661

Regardless of the event or occasion, sacraments are always an encounter with God for all who are present, not to be isolated to involve only a particular set of individuals. So, first of all, it is important to understand that the celebration of marriage celebrates not just the union of two people, but the reality of God’s love for all people – truly, a celebration of the Christian life! It is a call and a challenge for all of us to deepen that love and to share the love of Christ throughout our entire lives. Marriage is a call to a lifestyle; one that is grounded in the love of God and spent in service to others. Marriage is a vocational call to be more than husband and wife merely for the sake of each other. By this committed love to each other, you should also be of service to all God’s people and be examples of the mandate of building and nurturing the kingdom of God. We celebrate your decision to undertake this permanent and faithful union.

Since marriage will be your life’s vocation, it should be thoroughly prepared for and seriously considered.

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church of Dardenne has established some specific guidelines for weddings taking place in our parish. These should not be viewed as obstacles to be overcome in order to have a church wedding, but rather guidelines for reflection and preparation which will help you create a beautiful and meaningful ceremony.



# GENERAL PARISH POLICY

## USE OF FACILITIES

Weddings at Immaculate Conception Church are limited to registered members of our parish, or whose immediate family are registered parishioners. Weddings may be scheduled in either the Chapel (which seats up to 250 people), or in the Church (which seats from 100- 1000 people).

Note: Due to limited space in the Chapel sanctuary, weddings in the Chapel should have no more than five couples in the wedding party.

## FEES

The expected offering by registered parishioners for the Church and the Chapel is \$200.00. This fee is for the use of the facility. This fee *is not* a donation to your priest, deacon, or music ministers for their services. **This fee is to be paid 1 month prior to your wedding date.** A special envelope is provided for your convenience.

Non-parish members will be charged a fee of \$450.00 to be married at Immaculate Conception Church. Anyone living within the parish boundaries but not registered, or registered but with no record of regular contributions prior to their initiating the marriage preparation program, may be charged the “out-of-parish” fee.

## SCHEDULING

Scheduling the use of Immaculate Conception Church or Chapel for your wedding liturgy should be your first priority before the scheduling of your reception hall. **According to Archdiocesan policy couples planning to marry must make arrangements with one of our parish priests or deacons at least six months prior to the date you intend for your wedding.** Your wedding date is considered tentative until after the Pre-marriage Assessment (FOCCUS) is discussed between the priest and the couple. If you wish for a priest or deacon not assigned to the parish to be your celebrant, you must contact the pastor of Immaculate Conception to obtain his permission before you proceed with your plans.

The usual times for weddings are Friday evenings after 5 p.m. in the Church only or Saturday at 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. in both the Church and the Chapel. Extraordinary circumstances may be considered which can alter the usual times as stated above. Wedding rehearsal time should be scheduled as soon as possible in order to reserve the time in the Church or Chapel. It is preferred that the rehearsal be on the Thursday, or if necessary, the Friday evening before your wedding date. The time and day may depend upon the availability of the priest or deacon presiding at the ceremony, as well as the availability of the Church or Chapel.

# PREPARING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

## PRE-MARRIAGE ASSESSMENT

Before the wedding date is firmly scheduled, couples are expected to complete the FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding & Study) assessment. This is not a test or a way to predict the future. It is designed to help you target the topics you need and want to talk about as a couple. The person assisting in your preparation will review the assessment with you.

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The couple is expected to attend one of the following programs of their choice:

1. COUPLE TO COUPLE is a program conducted by married couples living in Immaculate Conception Parish who have been trained and follow an approved program. This program consists of 4 or 5 sessions and is usually held in the presenting couple's home. There is a fee of \$10 for this program. Please contact Mrs. Paula Brown at 636-561-4669.
2. PREPARING FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE is a 4-part series sponsored by the Archdiocese Office of Laity and Family Life. Topics pertinent to marriage are presented through videos and discussion. A current schedule of times and locations will be provided upon request. The fee for this program is determined by the Archdiocese of St. Louis.
3. ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKENDS are given at a retreat center by married couples who share their own experiences of married life with a group of engaged couples. This takes place from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. A current schedule of times and locations is provided in your Wedding Preparation Folder. There is a fee of \$200 for this weekend retreat. Contact: Jim & Cheri Zobel at 636-379-0411 or visit [www.geocities.com/stlcee](http://www.geocities.com/stlcee).
4. MARRIAGE PREPARATION MINI-RETREAT is held at St. Francis Xavier "College" Church. It begins on a Saturday from 7 to 9:30 p.m. and you return again on Sunday from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. There is a fee of \$125 for this retreat. A current schedule will be provided upon request. Contact: Bridget at 314-977-7318.

#### **PRE-NUPTIAL INVESTIGATION FORM AND BAPTISM CERTIFICATE**

The Pre-Nuptial Investigation from the Archdiocese of St. Louis must be completed with the priest or deacon six months prior to your wedding date. At the end of the form, you will be asked to sign the "Declaration of Intention" which states:

*"I understand the rights and essential obligations of Christian marriage. Accordingly, I am entering this marriage freely. I intend to be faithful to (Spouse's name) until death, and I pray that our marriage will be blessed with children."*

**It is the responsibility of the couple to schedule an appointment to complete this form. Your wedding may not take place without it.** This form will be kept on file at the parish where the marriage takes place.

You will need to provide a recent copy of your Baptismal Certificate dated within 6 months prior to your wedding. When you request the Baptismal Certificate, ask that they include the date of Confirmation, and if possible, the date of First Communion. It is a customary courtesy to make an offering (\$5) to the church that provides your Baptismal Certificate.

#### **BANNS (BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT)**

The Wedding Banns are required official church announcements with your names being published in each of your parishes three Sundays prior to the wedding. This is usually done by way of the parish bulletin. If you are not a member of Immaculate Conception, contact the priest of your parish in sufficient time to publish the Banns. A Wedding Banns form is included in your folder and it should be turned in at least 2 months prior to your wedding date.

### **PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY**

*"The goal of your preparation is to encourage the full and active participation of all who will gather to celebrate your marriage. This is best accomplished by carefully preparing and celebrating the central features of the wedding liturgy. The primary focus of your attention, then, is the Rite of Marriage, in which the structure and individual*

elements of the wedding liturgy are presented. These are basic and essential to the wedding liturgy.” - Paul Covino, in Celebrating Marriage.

When planning your wedding liturgy, you may want to consider that church law does not require that a Mass be celebrated with the Sacrament of Marriage. When both partners are Catholic, Mass is encouraged. When the wedding liturgy is without Mass, a deacon may preside.

### **ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE WEDDING LITURGY**

#### **1. CEREMONY WITH MASS**

Introductory Rite  
Liturgy of the Word  
Rite of Marriage  
Liturgy of the Eucharist  
Communion Rite  
Dismissal Rite

#### **2. CEREMONY WITHOUT MASS**

Introductory Rite  
Liturgy of the Word  
Rite of Marriage  
Dismissal Rite

Your wedding will be traditional because it is based on the Rite of Marriage, and is faithful to the church’s understanding of marriage. It will be contemporary because it is a celebration of God’s love for you here and now.

Before falling back on “traditional” wedding customs, inquire just whose “traditions” these are and where they came from. You may wish to consult Celebrating Marriage which is a book provided by the parish. It explains how many of these traditions originated and will help you decide whether you wish to incorporate them into your ceremony.

Focus your attention on the wedding liturgy so that it is the highlight of the day. Concentrate on hospitality and a liturgy that invites participation by all gathered. Choose each part of your wedding (procession, readings, music, flowers, and dress) to be not only a reflection of your tastes, but a reflection of your faith and values.

You are not alone in preparing your wedding liturgy! Your priest or deacon, our Parish Wedding Liturgy Consultant and our Parish Coordinator of Liturgy and Music have a wealth of experience to share with you and will help you make informed choices.

As you begin to plan your liturgy with your priest or deacon, you have the option of contacting our Wedding Liturgy Consultant. She will meet with you in either the Church or the Chapel to give you ideas and options and to answer your questions. Our Parish Coordinator of Music and Liturgy is also available to help you, especially in the area of music. (Contact information for both of them can be found on the Liturgy Planning sheet in your folder.) Final decisions about your wedding liturgy will be made as you discuss your plans with the priest or deacon.

## **LITURGICAL MINISTERS**

You are encouraged to invite family and friends to take part in the wedding ceremony by participating in the various ministries of Lector, Extraordinary Minister of Communion, Server, Musician, Cantor, Presenter of the Gifts, Celebrant, Con-celebrant, and Deacon. Generally, the people that you choose for these various ministries should have some experience fulfilling that particular liturgical role. During the early stages of your planning, the person helping you to prepare for your marriage should be made aware of whom these people are.

## **LECTORS**

Those who are given the responsibility of reading the Holy Scripture should read in a many in which they “proclaim” the Word to the assembly. Be sure to give the Lector(s) copies of the readings and a copy of the Prayers of the Faithful (unless the Bride and Groom are reading them) well in advance so they will be prepared. The readings are to be proclaimed from a Bible or Lectionary and not from a separate piece of paper. Lectors may rehearse opening the Bible or Lectionary at the wedding rehearsal.

## **MASS SERVERS**

You will need two servers, even if you are not having a Mass. The church will provide these servers for you. It is a customary courtesy to give each server \$5- \$10 each. If you wish to have a friend or family member serve in your wedding, please contact the church **before asking them**. The church will need to verify that they are experienced and of the age to serve (fifth grade or older).

## **MUSIC MINISTERS**

Take care in selecting musicians and singers for your wedding. The persons chosen for this portion of the liturgy are referred to as music ministers, indicating that their service is a ministry and is not to be taken lightly. Pastoral musicians are best suited to provide the music. They are familiar with the flow and rhythm of the liturgy; can suggest suitable music, and are skilled at leading and inviting the assembly to join in the sung prayer.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are asking people who are not music ministers at our parish to do music at your wedding they need to contact the Parish Coordinator of Liturgy and Music before any musical selections are finalized.

## **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

If you are having a wedding with a Mass, you may wish to ask family members or friends to be Extraordinary Ministers of Communion. You will need 2 or 3 persons for this position, depending on the number in your congregation that will receive communion. Please discuss this with your priest or deacon as you plan your wedding liturgy.

## **ENTRANCE PROCESSION OPTIONS**

No hard and fast rules exist regarding the procession for the start of the celebration. There are a number of options.

### **OPTIONS FOR PROCESSION OF THE WEDDING PARTY**

(Includes Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor)

- a. Bridesmaids process down aisle individually and groomsmen are waiting to escort the bridesmaids partially down the aisle.
- b. Bridesmaids and groomsmen process down the aisle as couples.
- c. Bridesmaids and groomsmen process down the aisle as couples, except maid/matron of honor processes by herself and best man is in front with the groom.

Note: Due to the limited space within the sanctuary of the Chapel, we recommend that you have no more than four groomsmen and bridesmaids in addition to the Maid/Matron of Honor and Best Man when you choose the Chapel. Please discuss with the priest any request for additional persons in the wedding party.

### **OPTIONS FOR THE PROCESSION OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM:**

- a. Groom processes down aisle with parents before the wedding party, and waits at the top of the aisle. The Bride processes down the aisle after the wedding party, escorted by one or both parents to meet groom.
- b. Groom begins wedding ceremony already standing at first pew to await Bride.
- c. Bride and Groom process down aisle together.

Note: In the case where parents do not escort the Bride or Groom, they may process down before or after the wedding party.

### **FLOWER GIRL AND RING BEARER**

The Flower Girl and Ring Bearer process down the aisle immediately before the Maid/Matron of Honor. An adult should be designated to ensure that the child(ren) start down the aisle at the appropriate time and receive the child(ren) into one of the front pews. Consideration should be given to the age of the children. We ask that children under the age of 5 not be a part of the wedding procession. Though young children are adorable, their unexpected behavior can distract from the wedding ceremony.

## **OTHER LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **THE UNITY CANDLE**

The usage of the unity candle is a practice that has become popular, but it is not part of the marriage ritual and is optional. A lovely alternative could be the lighting of a marriage candle as part of the prayer service at your wedding rehearsal or as part of the blessing before the meal at the reception. If you do wish to have a unity candle, we do have a table available for your use. You will need to supply the unity candle, the two side candles and the candleholders. These must be brought with you to the wedding rehearsal. The side candles are lit before the ceremony begins by the server. Note: A nice custom is to use the Baptismal candles of the Bride and the Groom as the side candles of your unity candle.

### **DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES**

Presenting flowers at the Shrine of the Blessed Mother in the Church, or to the Blessed Mother or the Holy Family in the Chapel, is a preference for some couples. It is a practice meant to express a personal devotion and is not an official part of the rite of marriage. If you have a strong devotion to Mary, you may wish to incorporate this devotion as a part of the wedding ceremony. If you do not choose this option, you may wish to express your devotion by including a bouquet at the Shrine which could be placed at the beginning of the rehearsal with a short prayer. The presence of the bouquet on the day of the wedding would be a quiet and respectful reminder of your personal feelings for Mary or the Holy Family. Either practice is optional to you.

### **SIGN OF PEACE**

As part of the ceremony, the sign of peace is given by the couple to the parents of both the bride and groom. The couple may choose to enhance this action by giving a flower to their parents at the Sign of Peace. If music is used during this time, it should be soft, instrumental music only to allow the assembly to exchange gestures of peace.

## MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

Music “should be considered a normal and ordinary part of (this) liturgical celebration” (Liturgical Music Today, #13). The music used should establish a spirit of prayer and celebration to strengthen the expression of faith. In this, the words should clearly express Christian faith and serve to deepen prayer. Music at your wedding has the power to encourage or stifle the participation of the assembly. The norm here is music in which the people can take part, with the Sunday Mass being our model.

Careful application of the church’s three judgments of music - musical, liturgical, and pastoral - will help you to determine what music is appropriate for your wedding. Popular music, Broadway music and music written for other media are not written for use in the church. Text found in most popular love songs is limited to dialogue between two people and leaves out the community aspect of the celebration. Texts which violate the form of liturgical language, neither representing God speaking to us nor our addressing God, are also inappropriate. Secular music is best left to the reception where other dimensions of the wedding celebration prevail. Once again, music which is familiar to the couple from Sunday Mass is the model we follow.

Also, keep in mind that music is meant to enhance the celebration and should not become an obstacle that causes long pauses and delays the liturgy. The person helping you choose music should be aware of this and will help you to select music that is not only appropriate for its content, but also in its length.

### **SELECTING MUSICIANS FOR YOUR WEDDING**

As soon as you have set the date for your wedding at Immaculate Conception Church, you are expected to contact a musician or musicians listed on the Liturgy Planning Handout that is included in your folder. If you are planning to have a musician other than those listed on the handout, you must discuss this with the Parish Coordinator of Music and Liturgy.

### **INSTRUMENTALISTS AND CANTOR**

You have your choice of instrumentation for your wedding. The Chapel is equipped with an organ, piano and electronic keyboard. The Church has a grand piano and electronic keyboard. Other instruments may be considered as an alternative or to add dimension to the music, such as guitar, bass, violin, flute, or trumpet, or bells. Your music minister can help you determine what additional instruments will add to the particular music you have selected. A list of instrumentalists is included on the Liturgy Planning Handout in your wedding packet.

The cantor, or leader of song, is an important person in your wedding. This person is responsible for inviting the congregation to participate in the musical portion of the liturgy. While most of the singing is to be congregational, there are appropriate times that a solo may be sung during the liturgy. A solo may be done by the cantor or someone else. A list of cantors in our parish is included in your wedding packet. We are fortunate at Immaculate Conception to have a wide selection of very talented musicians and singers. If you are actively attending Mass at Immaculate Conception, you may already be aware of the different musicians and their abilities in instrumentation or vocal styles, which will help you to make your choice for your wedding. If you have not been actively attending Sunday Mass, you are strongly encouraged to do so to experience the range of musicians and singers available to you before choosing those who will minister at your wedding.

### **FEES**

The fees for the musicians and cantor are negotiated on an individual basis. Be sure to inquire as to each person’s fee when scheduling them for your wedding. Payment of fee should be made before the

date of the wedding, preferably at the time of planning your music. Having this settled prior to your wedding is one less detail you'll need to worry about come your wedding day

## **A GUIDE TO SELECTING MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING**

Your music minister or our Parish Liturgy and Music Coordinator will guide you in choosing appropriate music for the following portions of the liturgy:

### **PRELUDE MUSIC**

This is music that is played or sung as people are gathering before the wedding ceremony and it is optional. Prelude music does set the tone for the liturgy that is about to take place. Consider what effect the melodies will have on your assembly as you make your selections. Usually 2-3 selections are adequate.

### **THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

This is a joyful musical accompaniment of the entrance of the parents, wedding party, presider, (priest or deacon) and bride and groom into the church. There are many wonderful choices here. PLEASE NOTE: There has been much discussion of the use of the "Bridal Chorus" ("Here Comes the Bride") and "The Wedding March" for processional or recessional music. Many couples are unfamiliar with the two operas in which these selections appear and what this music represents in each. This music accompanies the actions of a forced marriage with an unwilling partner, which ends in murder and suicide and a staged, illicit wedding, set up to be ridiculed. Neither piece of music represents the marriage of two people committing their lives to each other in Christian love. Both pieces mock what we understand as Christian marriage, and therefore have been determined inappropriate by church authorities. Ask your musician to give you alternative selections.

### **THE GATHERING SONG (OPTIONAL)**

A Gathering Song is an appropriate way to invite the assembly to join in a communal expression of praise for the wedding celebration. This song is sung after all have processed in and it is usually announced by the cantor. This should be a general song of praise or a song expressing the purpose of this gathering, as well as a song that all can easily sing.

### **THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

This is a sung prayer occurring between the first reading and the second reading. The cantor will sing the antiphon, (or refrain) and then invite the assembly to repeat this antiphon. It will again be repeated in between verses sung by the cantor. There are many appropriate and easy responsorial psalms that can be used in the wedding liturgy. Your music minister can help you choose one that will best express your prayerful sentiments on your wedding day.

### **THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

The joyful "Alleluia" precedes the reading of the gospel. During Lent, it is replaced with "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ" or some variation of this phrase.

### **SONG DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS (MASS ONLY)**

This song may be a simple instrumental piece or a selection that is sung by the entire congregation, or by a soloist. This song accompanies the action of the offertory procession and the preparation of the gifts, and should not be so lengthy as to extend past the actions of the priest or deacon.

### **EUCCHARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS (MASS ONLY)**

These are three sung acclamations during the Eucharistic Prayer; the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclama-

tion, and the Great Amen. Choose familiar musical settings for these acclamations so all can participate in singing.

#### **SIGN OF PEACE**

A short instrumental piece may be used, but is not mandatory.

#### **BREAKING OF THE BREAD OR “LAMB OF GOD” (MASS ONLY)**

The cantor leads the assembly in the “Lamb of God” litany as the priest breaks the bread and pours the wine for communion. A familiar musical setting is appropriate.

#### **COMMUNION SONG (MASS ONLY)**

Singing a song together is a true symbol of communion with God and each other. Since people are usually moving in procession at this time, a very familiar song should be chosen. You may want to take into consideration those people in the assembly who are not Catholic, and choose a song that is universally recognized by other faiths (for instance, “How Great Thou Art” or Amazing Grace”). A song at communion should be one of praise or thanksgiving, citing God’s love for humanity and our unity in Christ.

#### **MEDITATION SONG (OPTIONAL)**

A meditation song immediately following communion may be used, but is not necessary. If flowers are being presented to the Blessed Mother or Holy Family, the procession to the Shrine of Mary may take place at this time and be accompanied by a solo or instrumental.

#### **RECESSIONAL**

This is most often a festive hymn or instrumental piece that accompanies the bride and groom and wedding party as they leave the church.

## **WEDDING PROGRAMS**

Now that you have made your musical selections and chosen pieces that will encourage participation among the assembly, you may wish to provide programs to your guests to help guide them through the wedding and keep them apprised of their role in the liturgy. These programs usually contain the order of service (as outlined earlier), and your music, as well as listing of the members of the wedding party, your presider (priest or deacon) and other ministers. To encourage participation in the singing, you need to implement one of two plans: to print the names of the songs and their song numbers in the hymnals, or print the music directly in the programs, which is more work for you, but more inviting for the congregation. There are some parts of the liturgy, for example the Responsorial Psalm, that are to be sung by everyone gathered. Therefore the words, and if possible, the music for these songs must be included. Again, our Parish Liturgy and Music Coordinator, or your Music Minister can assist you. Also keep in mind that while the Chapel has hymnals in the pews, the hymnals in Church are on book carts in the gathering area. In Church, if you decide to use hymnals, you will need to designate someone to hand them out before the start of the ceremony.

## **CHURCH DECORATIONS**

The environment for your wedding is of great importance. It speaks volumes about your message of hospitality and the consideration of your guests. When planning your decorations, take into consideration the space that you are decorating. Too many decorations are distracting, while too little may seem too

impersonal. Our Chapel is small, intimate and is also very decorative on its own. On the other hand, the Church, which is built for 1200 people, is very spacious and simple in decor. It may require decorations with extra height or content. Please pay careful attention to the following guidelines when decorating the Church **or** Chapel. Also please inquire as to what day and what time you may decorate the Church or Chapel. (Times will vary depending on what is scheduled for that day, or the day before.)

Be aware that the Church and Chapel may already be decorated according to the liturgical season. Because it is unreasonable to ask that these decorations be removed, you may wish to complement the existing decorations. A wide variety of decorations may be used depending on the time of year. Please contact the person from the parish with whom you are working if any questions arise regarding seasonal decorations.

Colors primarily used in the Church and Chapel for seasonal decorating:

- Advent (four weeks before Christmas) - Violet
- Christmas- White, Red, Green, Gold
- Lent (six weeks before Easter) - Purple or Violet
- Easter and Easter Season (seven weeks) - White (with accent colors)
- Ordinary Time (usually June through November)-Green

**FLOWERS AND PLANTS**

Tasteful floral arrangements of real flowers - not silk or artificial of any kind - are strongly encouraged for a wedding ceremony. These may be placed on either side of the altar- not in front - and/or near the ambo (pulpit). Position your flower arrangements so they do not hide or overwhelm the furnishings. Flowers should be a tasteful accent. Both the Church and Chapel have lovely plant stands of various heights available to you in order to add height to your arrangements, which in many cases is necessary.

Please check with our Wedding Liturgy Consultant before needlessly renting stands that may not even work in our space. Keep in mind that flowers may be seen well when one is standing in the sanctuary but may not be seen at all by a seated congregation. Giving these flowers extra height, allows them to be enjoyed readily by everyone.

Note: It is customary to leave the flower arrangements at the Church or Chapel after the wedding not only as a courtesy to the parish, but also because there is usually not time to rearrange things in the sanctuary prior to the Saturday evening Mass. If you wish, you may return on Monday, after the Sunday Masses are over, to pick up your floral arrangements.

**AISLE AND PEW DECORATIONS, CANDLES AND CANDELABRA**

You may place decorations on the ends of the pews; however these may not be attached using tacks, tape or anything that would damage the finish of the wood. Your florist may have helpful ideas that are acceptable. We have also seen some creative solutions using plastic hooks or elastic. Please note that the absence of pew ends in the Church might make attaching decorations a bit of a challenge.

Candelabras are available for your use in both the Church and Chapel. These can be set up within the sanctuary area. These candles should be lit before the beginning of the ceremony. For safety reasons, setting up stands for candles in the aisles is strictly forbidden.

Aisle runners no longer serve any practical purpose, and for the sake of the bridal party's and guests' safety, are not to be used.

### **BANNERS**

Immaculate Conception has wedding banners that you may wish to use at your wedding. Please check with our Wedding Liturgy Consultant if you would like to see them.

### **GUEST BOOK STAND, TABLES, EASELS**

There are guestbook stands available in both the Church and Chapel. The parish also has a variety of decorative tables, and several sizes of easels should you need them. Again, please check with our Wedding Liturgy Consultant on the use of these items.

### **CARE OF THE FACILITIES**

Please note that we do not employ a custodian on the weekend and so we ask the courtesy that you leave our parish facilities in the same condition as when you arrived. It is expected that you designate someone in your party to ensure proper clean up of the Church or Chapel, and any other rooms that were used, of tissues, flowers, boxes, programs, etc.

**Please note that none of the church furnishings may be moved for the wedding.**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **RICE, BIRDSEED, FLOWER PETALS, CONFETTI, ETC.**

Throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals, etc. is not permitted inside or outside of the Church or Chapel, because it can be hazardous to the health and safety of our environment and also presents a clean-up problem. Balloon release is strictly forbidden for environmental reasons.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

It is desirable to record the wedding ceremony. However, it is important that the recording process not distract members of the assembly from the act of worship. Therefore, please ask the person helping you plan your wedding ceremony to indicate those locations in the Church or Chapel which are most advantageous for videotaping and photography. This will prevent the professional you hire from roaming through the Church or Chapel and interfering with the ceremony. We ask that flash photos taken by your guests be kept to a minimum to avoid distraction during the ceremony. Picture taking after the wedding ceremony is allowed provided there is no conflict with other scheduled liturgies. Other lighting, including flash, can be used then.

Picture taking after the wedding is to be done in a reverential way, mindful of good order and the sacredness of the place. Please remind the members of your wedding party to behave respectfully in the sanctuary and to monitor their tone of voice during the photographing, especially on Saturday afternoon as parishioners gather for the 5:00 p.m. Mass. We ask that you complete your picture taking and remove all equipment and personal items from the Church by 4:00 p.m., because of confessions at 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Mass. This time frame must be adhered to. After a 2:00 p.m. wedding, you will have approximately one hour to take pictures and /or have a receiving line. Before the wedding, determine how you want to use that hour, so that it may be utilized efficiently.

### **RECEIVING LINE**

Instead of a receiving line after the wedding, we encourage the bride and groom and their families to greet their guests as they arrive. Couples who choose to do this find it to be a very hospitable and welcoming gesture, in addition to being very practical. If you choose to have a receiving line after the wedding it takes place in the gathering space of the Church or outside. If your wedding is in the Chapel, the receiving line should take place outside, weather permitting. Another option to consider is to have the receiving line at the reception.

### **A SPECIAL PLACE FOR THE BRIDAL PARTY**

If you are getting married in the Church, the St. Ann's Room may be used for the bride and attendants to gather before the wedding. The groom and best man may gather in the Reconciliation Parlor. If your wedding is in the Chapel, the bride and attendants may gather in the vesting sacristy. The groom and groomsmen may wish to gather in the work sacristy of the Chapel before the wedding. Again we strongly encourage you to consider being present to your guests before the ceremony.

### **CONSUMPTION OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

We kindly ask that no food or drink be brought into the Church or Chapel. Likewise the consumption of food and alcoholic beverages on church property in connection with the wedding rehearsal, the wedding ceremony or during picture-taking is forbidden. Any member of the wedding party giving evidence of inebriation will not be allowed to participate in the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the wedding party of this policy.

### **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Before entering into the Sacrament of Matrimony, you are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Reconciliation at Immaculate Conception is available on Saturday from 4:00p.m. until 4:45 p.m., or you may call to schedule a special appointment with your priest.

### **REHEARSAL**

In order to insure a smooth flowing rehearsal, requiring a minimum of time, it is essential to adhere to the following:

- The time for the rehearsal should be set well in advance.
- Arrive on time for the rehearsal and please insist that all members of your family and your wedding party be present and arrive on time.
- Prior to the rehearsal make all decisions regarding the wedding and those involved in the ceremony. Please write down the names of those involved and what their part in the ceremony will be.
- Several weeks prior to the rehearsal, please give your priest a written line-up of the Entrance Procession for the wedding liturgy. Please provide the full name of everyone in the procession listed in the order in which they will come down the aisle. Include the names of everyone in the wedding party - all parents and grandparents, all attendants and ushers. Include the names of any ushers who will provide escort, and who they will escort.

If all are present and on time, the rehearsal will be completed in one hour. Please note that the rehearsal is really a time of prayer and that reverence should be observed. Please respect the fact that the presider (priest or deacon) is in charge of the rehearsal.

If you wish to invite your priest or deacon to the gathering after the rehearsal, please do so at least two weeks in advance.

If the priest that is leading your rehearsal is not from our parish, please contact the ICD parish office to make arrangements for the building to be open and set up for the rehearsal.

### **INVITATIONS – CHURCH OR CHAPEL?**

When inviting your guests, it is very important to indicate to them whether your wedding is to be in the Church or the Chapel to avoid confusion. A map of the parish campus is included in your packet for your convenience in directing them. It is also helpful to designate certain persons to be in the parking lot to direct your guests to the correct building. The addresses of both buildings are listed below.

**PARISH REGISTRATION**

If you plan to live in Immaculate Conception Parish after your marriage, please indicate this to the person helping you prepare for marriage, or one of the parish secretaries, so that you can be registered as a new family. Please do not presume that a previous registration will accurately indicate your status as a newly married couple.

**CHURCH & CHAPEL ADDRESSES**

**Immaculate Conception Church**

7717 Highway N  
Dardenne Prairie, MO 63366

**Immaculate Conception Chapel**

7701 Highway N  
Dardenne Prairie, MO 63366

