

## **Marriage Guidelines**

### **Our Mother of Good Counsel Catholic Church**

*Matrimony is a sacrament of the Church. We are glad to celebrate this special event in the life of the Church with you! Here are some of the guidelines and policies of the Church as practiced here at Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish.*

We ask for a six-month period of preparation at minimum for all couples preparing for this lifetime commitment.

Certain conditions are necessary for marriage in the Church.

At least one party lives within Our Mother of Good Counsel Parish, or has been a registered member for at least six months.

#### **Items that must be addressed before a date can be set for your wedding:**

1. At least one of the parties is a Roman Catholic.
2. An annulment or church document stating freedom to marry must first be obtained by anyone who has been previously married.
3. Certificates: A recently issued (6 months old) certificate from the church of Baptism is needed for all Catholic parties (photocopies and faxes are not acceptable). Certificates of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation are expected as well. Proof of baptism is needed for all non-Catholic Christians as well.
4. Two affidavits of Freedom to Marry are each required of the bride and groom.
5. A California Marriage License is required.
6. Marriage Preparation Class: An Engaged Encounter Weekend is required of all. A schedule booklet of these classes can be found at: [www.la-archdiocese.org/org/familylife/marriage](http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/familylife/marriage)  
The priest/deacon may recommend, in addition, that you take a pre-Cana course as well.
7. Meetings with the priest/deacon who is celebrating your marriage ceremony. Each priest/deacon is responsible for asking you important questions concerning your understanding of marriage, making sure you are free to marry in the Catholic Church.

**Items that must be addressed once you've set your date:**

1. The couple needs to set up an appointment with the wedding coordinator. This can be arranged by contacting the parish office, ext. 351 (2 months prior to wedding).
2. A rehearsal date and time is to be reserved through the wedding coordinator. Please encourage all members of the wedding party to be on time.
3. Flowers and, if desired, "unity" candles are to be provided by the wedding party.
4. Cultural traditions are honored but must be addressed with the priest/deacon and the wedding coordinator before the rehearsal date.
5. The wedding itself is to start on time.
6. Photography may not take place longer than ½ hour after the wedding. If the wedding starts late, the photographer may be asked to reduce his/her camera work by the number of minutes the wedding was delayed.
7. Music: We suggest that music be used to enhance the prayerful mood of your wedding ceremony. The parish has many qualified musicians and vocalists we can recommend. Liturgical (church) music is to be used during your ceremony.

**Fees and stipends\*:**

\$1,000.00	Facilities fee (\$700 for registered families contributing \$500.00 or more per year)
\$150.00	Marriage preparation by priest for marriages outside the parish.
(\$100.00)	Deposit to reserve date (credited to facilities fee)
\$100.00	Stipend for deacon (if requested or required)
\$150.00	Fee for parish wedding coordinator (required)
\$ 20.00	Stipend for altar servers (if requested)
	The stipend for the priest is left to the discretion of the couple.
Music*:	
\$250.00	Musician / Cantor Coordinator (rehearsals are additional)
\$200.00	per additional parish musicians / singers
\$50	Bench fee for musicians not associated with OMGC.

*\*commensurate with wedding expenses, payable to musician(s) and submitted to parish with balance of account no later than two weeks prior to ceremony.*

Flowers: (to be provided by wedding party)

**Balance of fees and all paperwork, including the marriage license, is due no later than seven business days prior to the ceremony date.**

Please be aware that we need to work with the other professionals you might have contracted with for your celebration. All photographers and videographers are asked to meet with the wedding coordinator before the ceremony and respect all boundaries. A prayerful liturgy is always the priority. Photos may be taken after the wedding ceremony if time permits. Flowers and Decorations also need to be appropriate. Please make sure all your flowers and decorations are removed after the ceremony. We ask that the church be left as tidy as it was when you entered! You are welcome to leave floral arrangements in the church after your wedding but you must notify the wedding coordinator first. All pew decorations need to be removed.

Church restrictions for your celebration:

- No runners
- No rice or birdseed
- No flowers thrown or dropped in church
- No flowers placed on the altar itself
- No flowers obstructing the view of the priest/deacon or readers
- No flowers or decorations that restrict access in/out or within a pew
- Photographers may not be in the sanctuary during the ceremony
- Photographers may not interrupt the ceremony for a picture

## OMGC Music for Weddings and Celebrations

The musicians of **Our Mother of Good Counsel** are available to you for your special liturgy or celebration. It's our job to take the stress out of this portion of your planning, so don't worry!

### **Cantor —What is this and why do I need one?**

A cantor is much more than a soloist. There are many places in the liturgy that call for vocal music of one kind or another. For some of these liturgical moments, solo vocal music can be very effective, such as during the seating of parents during a wedding, during communion, or during a visitation to Mary's altar. However, there are many other parts of the liturgy that ideally involve the singing of the entire congregation, such as an opening hymn, the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, and (if you're having a full mass) the various congregational responses during the Eucharistic prayer. These congregational parts are always more festive when sung – rather than spoken – and they require the specialized services of a well-trained cantor to lead the congregation in song (as well as to render the solo verses, such as those in the responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation).

If you are planning a full mass with communion, please be aware that utilizing a cantor is

required, and only experienced cantors from Our Mother of Good Counsel are permitted to serve in this capacity. The role of the cantor is a unique one, and it differs quite markedly from simply singing as a soloist. Cantors must be thoroughly familiar with the musical requirements of the liturgy, and comfortable working with the acoustics of the OMGC church building and its sound system. Our cantors are very experienced in working with OMGC pianists and clergy, and all of our cantors are well-trained, professional singers.

### **What instrumentalists should I have?**

Instrumentalists can add significantly to the festivity of the liturgy, and we are often asked our opinion on what works best, especially if you're on a fairly tight budget. First, if you're on an extremely tight budget, piano and cantor are fine (and are required for a full mass). If you're not having a mass but rather a liturgy of the word (without communion), you don't necessarily need a cantor and could choose to add an additional instrumentalist instead. Guitar, flute, violin, oboe, cello and brass may all be added to enhance the music. Our musicians will work with you to recommend the best choice for your celebration and budget. Trios and quartets are contracted independently and may require additional fees.

### **What if I have a friend or family member who sings or plays an instrument?**

If you have a special friend or family member whom you would like to have sing or play at the liturgy, we are more than happy to consult with you on how to include them. Please remember, it is also important that those serving as musicians for your liturgy be truly competent. Too often, friends or relatives are asked to serve as musicians out of friendship rather than competence. Please note that if you are having a full mass, an OMGC pianist and cantor are still required because it ensures a desirable continuity with the church's regular worship life. It also helps guarantee that the service will go smoothly because presider, cantor, pianist and instrumentalists are accustomed to working with each other as well as with the specific acoustical demands of the liturgical space.

### **How do I select music?**

Our musicians will guide you through the process. Please note that not all secular/popular songs are appropriate for a mass, and even if they are, they are usually only appropriate for prelude or postlude. While it is clearly possible that musical selections designed for purposes other than liturgical worship (such as popular show tunes, love songs and secular ballads) can be beautiful or meaningful, music of this type is often best left to the family reception, where another dimension of the celebration prevails. If you have specific songs that you would like to include, we will help you decide the appropriateness of the music and the placement in the liturgy.

If you are having a full mass, there are also choices to be made for the gathering song, psalm, offertory, communion and recessional. If you have specific choices from Breaking Bread (the hymnal we use at OMGC), we will try to include them.

**If you have no idea what to choose or how to do it, don't worry!** We can make all the selections for you and offer you some choices that will enhance the celebration.

## Selecting Music for A Wedding

Music is a basic and integral part of Catholic Worship, and therefore also for your wedding celebration. Whether you exchange your vows during a liturgy of the word or a mass, music is not a frill, but an important and basic element that cannot be overlooked when planning your wedding ceremony. This is a joyous day, and music will enhance the celebration! After you've decided on your instrumentalists and vocalists, it's time to pick the music, and this is where the fun begins. Please be sure to read the paragraph in the general guidelines regarding the selection of songs. Listed below are the "parts" of the wedding liturgy and how music fits in:

### Prelude

Prior to the beginning of the wedding liturgy, there is a prelude consisting of about 15 minutes of instrumental music as guests arrive and are seated. While the guests are assembling, instrumentalists, choir or vocal soloists may perform appropriate music. The purpose of this prelude music is to gather up and unite the thoughts of all present and to prepare them for the celebration of marriage. Music during this time is usually selected at the discretion of the musicians and encompasses a combination of pieces that mirror the festive nature of the occasion as well as the quiet dignity of prayerful reflection. The prelude might be comprised entirely of solo piano or organ repertoire but the utilization of other instruments (flute, violin, etc.) is possible as well. This might also be the time for a secular piece of music if it is appropriate.

Entrance: Preferred—both parents accompany the bride.

### Acceptable Seating of Parents

Couples often wish to have the seating of their parents highlighted and accompanied by a special piece of music. The seating of the parents takes place just prior to the procession of the wedding party, so the music should be clearly different from that of the processional. A meditative vocal solo or relatively quiet instrumental piece is usually best here.

### Processional

The processional is usually played by the organ or piano alone or with additional instrumentation. It is customary at OMGC to choose one piece of music for the entire processional.

### Opening Hymn (optional)

Following the processional, some couples wish to have an opening hymn sung by the congregation. After the procession is completed and the presiding celebrant has welcomed all he will invite them to stand and sing together. This hymn makes the people participants rather than spectators. If you elect to have an opening hymn, be aware that you'll need to

have a printed program containing the words (and music if you wish) so everyone can join in the singing. If they are from our hymnal (Breaking Bread), you don't necessarily need to print them in the program.

#### Responsorial Psalm

If there is a cantor, it is highly desirable that the responsorial psalm be sung, but not necessary. If there will not be a cantor, the responsorial psalm may be spoken. The responsorial psalm follows the first reading, and there are many psalms from which to choose. The priest will help you select your psalm if it is spoken. We can make suggestions if it is sung. If you are printing a wedding program, be sure to print the words of the psalm refrain so your guests can join in the singing.

#### Gospel Acclamation

Before the gospel reading, an Alleluia is always sung (except during Lent). This will be led by the cantor. During the season of Lent, Alleluias are omitted from the Church's liturgies, and the Lenten gospel acclamation "Glory to you, O Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ" is sung instead, led by the cantor. This will be selected by the musicians.

#### Offertory (full mass)

If you are planning a full mass, the liturgy continues with music during the offertory and preparation of the altar. The song may be instrumental, sung by the cantor/soloist or sung by the entire congregation.

#### Acclamations (full mass)

During mass, the Eucharistic Prayer follows next. The cantor will lead the congregation in singing the responses within the prayer. Also called acclamations, these include the Sanctus (Holy, Holy), the Memorial Acclamation (Christ has died), and the Great Amen. These responses are taken from the standard liturgical repertoire, and will be selected by the musicians.

#### Lord's Prayer

Sometimes couples ask to have the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) sung. Although this might work well on Sundays in your local church, keep in mind that your wedding guests will likely come from several different churches and faiths. Since this is the one common prayer among all Christian denominations, it is very important that everyone be able to join in praying it together. For these reasons, the Lord's Prayer is spoken, rather than sung, at OMGC.

#### Sign of Peace (full mass)

Since the sign of peace involves speaking and movement on the part of the congregation, and since the Lamb of God follows immediately, we do not have music at this point

### Lamb of God (full mass)

The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) is sung immediately following the sign of peace, just before communion. As with the other acclamations, musical settings of the Lamb of God are taken from the standard liturgical repertoire, and will be selected by the musicians.

### Communion (full mass)

In selecting music for communion, couples will want to keep in mind the nature of the Eucharistic rite as a sign of the unity of everyone gathered. If you have a congregation that likes to sing, a congregational hymn would be very appropriate here. A vocal solo, a choir anthem, or a meditative organ/instrumental selection could work well here too. Please note that one piece of music is usually sufficient for communion.

### Recessional

The wedding recessional is usually the liturgy's most festive and joyous of musical expressions. Most often played by the piano/organ alone or with other instruments, there are countless possibilities.

---

## **Music**

The parish office will refer you to a musician who will coordinate the music for your liturgy and handle the booking of the additional musicians for you, if desired. If that musician is unavailable on the date of your event, they will refer you to another musician on our roster who best suits your needs. Preferred method of contact is by phone.

## **Pricing**

Each OMGC musician is a skilled professional and familiar with liturgy at our parish. The cost per musician is \$200. Although there is a minimum booking of two musicians (piano and cantor) for a full mass, some of our musicians can both play and sing and may be willing to do so to enhance the music for no extra charge. If there is no singing in the liturgy, only the pianist is required.

If you wish to book string or wind instrumentation other than flute, there is an additional \$50 contractor fee.

If you are not having a mass, but rather a "liturgy of the word" with outside musicians and no OMGC musicians are booked, there is a \$50 bench fee for sound system set-up.

## **Payment**

Payment is to be made to the individual musicians. Checks or cash are acceptable and should be given to the coordinator prior to the rehearsal. Please don't make the musicians ask for their fee! Marriage certificates will not be released until this has been taken care of.