

**Guidelines for the  
Preparation &  
Celebration of a  
Quinceañera Liturgy**



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# St. Patrick's Catholic Church

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# St. Patrick's Catholic Church

## Guidelines for Marriage Preparation

### And the Liturgical Celebration of Marriage

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## The Nature of a Quinceañera

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The *quinceañera* is a traditional celebration of life and gratitude to God on the occasion of the fifteenth birthday of a young Hispanic woman. The ritual emphasizes her passage from childhood to adulthood. The family usually requests a Mass or a blessing to be held in the Church. The rite is frequently celebrated in several countries in the Americas, including Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It is frequently requested by Hispanic Catholics in the dioceses of the United States of America.

In the presence of family and friends, the young woman (the *quinceañera*), often accompanied by young men and women of her choice, (*damas y chambelanes*), enters the Church in procession, together with her parents and godparents. If she has prepared the readings, she may serve as the lector for at least one of the readings. After the Liturgy of the Word, the *quinceañera* makes a commitment to God and the Blessed Virgin to live out the rest of her life according to the teachings of Christ and the Church by renewing her Baptismal promises. Then, signs of faith (medal, Bible, rosary, prayer book) may be blessed and given to her. A special blessing of the *quinceañera* concludes the Liturgy of the Eucharist. After Mass, the young woman is presented to the

community. The ritual continues with a dinner and sometimes a dance in her honor.

**In order to maintain a necessary spirit of reverence for the house of God, the following guidelines are to be observed by **all families/parties** planning to celebrate a Quinceañera at St. Patrick's Catholic Church.**

## Quinceañera Formation

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- **All young women wishing to celebrate a quinceañera are required to participate in a *Quinceañera Retreat*.** These retreats are held periodically at Saint Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center, 402 South Independence Blvd., Romeoville, IL [call (815) 838-5334 for more information].
- Young ladies wishing to celebrate a quinceañera are also expected to attend Sunday Mass and are expected to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their preparation. As a general rule, the quinceañera wishing to celebrate her Mass at St. Patrick's must be baptized and have already received the sacraments of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation (a confirmation certificate must be presented before the Mass will be celebrated).

## Ministers of the Quinceañera

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- Ordinarily, the pastor of St. Patrick's (or his delegate) will preside at a quinceañera celebration. A relative/acquaintance of the quinceañera who is a priest or deacon may, if the family prefers, preside at the quinceañera. In that case, but always subject to the prior approval of the

pastor of St. Patrick's, the visiting priest or deacon must provide a certificate from their diocese stating that they are in good standing. *Please note: All policies here stated are to be followed, even when a visitor is asked to preside.*

- If you wish to provide Altar Servers, Lectors or Eucharistic Ministers, please make your request with the priest and arrange to give them a donation for their services, where applicable. Normally, NO servers will be assigned to a quinceañera celebration.

## Regarding Offerings to the Parish

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- For active parishioners at St. Patrick's Church, the usual offering to the Church is \$250, in addition to any offering for the altar servers and the clergy. For non-parishioners, the mandated fee is \$500 for the use of the church and a mandated fee for the clergy. A 50% non-refundable deposit is required to reserve officially the date and time. The deposit is due two (2) weeks following the initial scheduling of a date being set. If for any reason the quinceañera is cancelled, the amount paid will be converted to a tax-deductible contribution. **In this case, we will send you a donation letter for the amount paid to the church**
- We also encourage you to make an additional gift to the Church for use in caring for the poor. When so much is being lavished, it is good to remember those who do not have as much. A suggestion would be to give an amount equal to the cost of one dinner at your reception. In that way, in your good fortune you remember those who do not eat as well.

## Scheduling the Quinceañera

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- NO other scheduling plans should be made before contacting the Rectory Office. The quinceañera date is tentative until it has been documented that young lady has received the aforementioned sacraments and promises to attend the required retreat (the pastor reserves the right to refuse the quinceañera if these conditions are not followed).
- The family of the quinceañera must consider it their personal responsibility to provide documents and attend to requirements in a timely manner. Please keep the priest informed of the status of your preparations, changes of mail address and telephone number, etc., in writing. These communications should include names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of the contact person for the event.
- Quinceañeras may be celebrated on Fridays afternoons (time TBA) or on Saturday afternoons at 12:00. Families may change the time of the celebration to 2:00 p.m. within six months of the event. As a general rule, there are NO Sunday quinceañeras celebrated at St. Patrick's Church outside of the regular Mass times. No rehearsals are scheduled for quinceañera celebrations. On their quinceañera day, quinceañera families generally are scheduled for a two hour period in the church. Thus, if a Saturday celebration begins at 12:00 noon, the family is allotted two hours in church (11:30 - 1:30); for 2:00 services, the family is also allotted two hours (from 1:30 - 3:30).
- **Please arrive 30 minutes before the ceremony. Before departing the church, please remove all unwanted items and make sure you take everything with you that should go.**

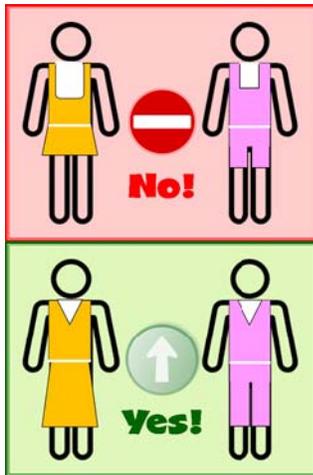
## Showing Reverence in God's House

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- When coming to the Church for the quinceañera, please remember that the church is the house of God. It is consecrated for sacred use only. Talking and visiting should take place in the Narthex of the church. Please be especially mindful of the fact that the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in our church, and should be treated with great respect and dignity. Likewise, the sanctuary of the church, as well as its furnishings, are all consecrated for specific purposes. They are to be treated with proper respect, and may not be moved or used for anything outside of the liturgy. Most especially, the altar itself is to be treated with great respect: It is consecrated and is a symbol of Christ himself. Absolutely nothing may be placed on the altar, except the bread, the wine and the book necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist.
- To prevent damage to the pews and other surfaces in the church, we ask that nothing be attached with tape, sticky tack, push tacks, glue, wire or paperclips.
- No balloons, butterflies or any other type of flying object may be stored or used in church or the vestibule.
- **No glitter is allowed in the Church (talk to your florist about this).** If glitter is found, the family must provide a non-refundable \$500 cash deposit prior to the service for the sake of cleaning the church.
- Food, chewing gum, and drinks of any kind are not to be brought and consumed in or around the church. The use of alcohol and tobacco is strictly and absolutely prohibited at any time on, or near parish property by persons

participating in the quinceañera ceremony. This includes anyone connected with the occasion.

- The use of cell phones is prohibited inside the church proper.
- Men and boys are to remove their hats.



- Because we celebrate our liturgies in God's house, a modicum of respect is expected for the parties celebrating the quinceañera. For those in the quinceañera procession, modest dress is required, with no exposure of shoulders, chest or clothing above the knee. Strapless and low-cut gowns, though fashionable and popular, are not appropriate at a Catholic setting. If you

select a strapless or low-cut gown, we ask that you also select a stole or short jacket to wear during the religious ceremony. **The celebrant reserves the right to cover those who are not dressed modestly in church.**

## Photographers

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To be thoughtful of others, pictures and other effects from the quinceañera must be removed within 1 ½ hours from the start of the liturgy. An insert has been provided in this booklet that families are asked to hand to their photographers and videographers prior to the service.

## Flowers

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Flowers in the Church, if desired, are provided by the quinceañera party. They should neither be placed on the altar itself, nor block the view of the young lady, nor that of the guests. Should the florist ask, **the main aisle is 66 feet long**. In regards to decorating the Church with flowers, please call the parish office a few days prior to the quinceañera to find out if any other services will take place on the quinceañera day. If no other services or activities are taking place the day of the quinceañera, then arrangements can be made to allow the photographer into the church at an agreed upon time. Otherwise, please be prudent on days when other activities are taking place in the church the day of your quinceañera. *As a general rule, no decorations may be removed from the sanctuary without prior approval from the pastor.*

## Other Options & Concerns for the Quinceañera Ceremony

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- *Candelabras* ~ Ordinarily, candelabra are not to be rented and brought into the church for use. The draft created from the heating and cooling system makes a mess, and is too difficult to clean up.
- *Receiving Line* ~ Usually, time does not allow for a receiving line at the church. It is preferred that your receiving line is held at your reception.
- *Rice, Bird Seed and Confetti, Rose Petals, Sparklers, Doves, etc.* ~ Throwing rice, bird seed, etc., creates a safety hazard. Such materials are neither to be thrown in Church nor on the parish grounds.

## Liturgical Texts

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The readings and prayers used during the liturgy must be taken from the approved liturgical books. The priest or deacon will always read the Gospel passage. You may select someone to read the first and second readings.

## Music for the Ceremony

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St. Patrick's parish has a music policy for quinceañera music which is to be followed at all times. Music must be suitable for the sacred nature of the Liturgy. Families must discuss music options with the pastor of St. Patrick's Church **before** making any other music arrangements or plans.

If you choose to engage guest musicians or instrumentalists for your quinceañera, please keep in mind the following considerations:

- [1] Does your guest have a thorough knowledge of the workings of Catholic liturgy?
- [2] Is your guest a confident, flexible, and skilled musician?
- [3] Do you personally know that your guest is a successful soloist for quinceañeras?
- [4] **All music must be played "live" - no pre-recordings are allowed!**

Most guest singers and instrumentalists are comfortable with a brief rehearsal on the day of the quinceañera. As a general rule, St. Patrick's will not be able to photocopy or distribute music to guests; they will need to purchase their own music, and will need

to provide accompaniment parts to the organist, if the music is not already available. Arrangements for guests are to be made well in advance of the quinceañera and will be subject to the approval of the pastor.

## **The Theology of a Quinceañera Celebration**

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### **Regarding the Celebration of the Eucharist**

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The Liturgy is always first and foremost the action of Christ. Thus, the principal actor in the liturgy is always Jesus Christ, the high priest, who by his own sacrifice on the cross has shown the Father perfect praise. As members of his body, we share in his sacrifice of praise. The unity of posture and gesture, like the unity of voice is both a sign and a help to building up of the Eucharistic assembly. *The General Instruction* explains that the people of God are to shun any appearance individualism or division, keeping before their eyes that they have only one Father in heaven and accordingly are all brothers and sisters to each other. (*The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 2003).

***Genuflection*** – Genuflect on the right knee when entering and leaving your pew at the beginning and end of Mass. The genuflection is made as a sign of reverence and adoration of Christ, present in the Blessed Sacrament and reserved in the Tabernacle of our Church.

***Bows*** – Only two types of bows exist in the current Roman rite: A bow of the head and a bow of the body, also called the profound bow.

***Bow of the head*** - A bow of the head is a sign of honor and respect made at the naming of the Trinity (in blessings and Trinitarian Doxologies), at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saint in whose honor the Mass is being celebrated. A bow of the head is also made before receiving the Eucharist.

***Profound Bow*** - A Profound Bow is made in respect. All make a bow of the body to the altar when approaching it or passing it and during the recitation of the Creed, in recognition of Christ incarnate, at the words, "By the power of the Holy Spirit... and became man."

***Sign of the Cross*** - We make the Sign of the Cross twice during the Mass: At the beginning of the Mass and at the Final Blessing. In addition, the "little Sign of the Cross" is made at the beginning of the Gospel, on the forehead, on the lips and over the heart (that the Word of God be in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts). Note that *The General Instruction* provides for NO Sign of the Cross during the prayer after the Penitential Rite, when the celebrant says, "May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to Everlasting Life." That Sign of the Cross that some priests and people make was never prescribed. No Sign of the Cross is used because, the priests words of "absolution" in this prayer lacks the efficacy if the Sacrament if Penance.

***Standing*** - The assembly stands for the Entrance Hymn, the Opening Rites, the Gospel Acclamation and the Verse, the Gospel, the Profession of Faith, and the Prayer of the Faithful.

After the Preparation of the Gifts, the Celebrant invites the people to pray, with the words, "Pray, brethren, that our Sacrifice may be

acceptable to God, the almighty Father.” In response to the invitation, the people FIRST STAND and then say, “May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.” This change is one of the differences we need to be attentive to in the Mass. Remain standing until the end of the Sanctus. Stand again once the Final Doxology and Amen have been concluded and maintain this posture until the conclusion of the Agnus Dei Once Communion is finished; then stand from the Prayer after Communion until the end of Mass.

*Sitting* – The assembly sits for the Readings from Scripture, the Homily, the Preparation of the Gifts and after Communion (once the Eucharist is put away and the Tabernacle door is closed).

*Kneeling* – The people kneel from the conclusion of the Sanctus until the conclusion of the Final Doxology and Great Amen. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon will kneel from the Epiclesis until after the elevation of the Chalice.

*The Lord’s Prayer / Our Father* – The Bishops of the United States specifically asked for the permission to have the people join the Priest in extending their hands in what is called the *Orans* position. This position of extended arms during public worship belongs to the priests alone. Likewise, the custom that has found its way into the Liturgy of joining hands during the Lord’s Prayer was also rejected as an appropriate gesture, since it places improper emphasis on the communal aspect (horizontal dimension) of the liturgy at a moment when the focus of the Community should be on the immediate preparation of the reception of Holy Communion, with our attention directed toward Christ who is about to give us Himself as food for our

journey. The custom was first observed in alcoholics anonymous groups and then it found its way into use in the Catholic Church through the Charismatic Renewal; but, it has never been prescribed or approved for use at Mass. What is supposed to be emphasized at that point in the Mass is the vertical dimension of the Liturgy, our (personal and communal) encounter with the Lord in the Eucharist. When participating in the public worship of the whole Church our own likes and dislikes, our own preferences should give way to being of one mind with the Church. At Mass, we are to do as the Church intends, to worship as the Church worships, and to safeguard the Liturgy as a priceless treasure entrusted to our care.

*The Reception of Holy Communion* - Care should be taken to receive the Eucharist with utmost care and devotion. Christ is really and truly present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Eucharist.

- [1] Approach the minister of communion conscious of what you are doing, and who you are receiving. When the person in front of you is receiving make a proper sign of reverence by bowing your head (with hands folded), you may also make the Sign of the Cross. Then, step forward to receive.
  
- [2] You may receive either on the tongue or in the hand. Either way, stand close enough to the minister. If receiving on the tongue, extend your tongue to receive the host. If receiving in the hand, extend BOTH hands, one under the other so that the minister can see and reach them easily to place the host in your hands. Stand close enough to the minister of Communion. Then, step aside, take the hand from beneath the hand holding the host, and place the Eucharist

reverently into your own mouth. Both hands should be clean and free (no keys, tissue, purse, children, rosaries, hymnal, etc. to endanger the Eucharist) to receive the host. If not, the option of receiving on the tongue is perfectly acceptable.

- [3] Respond audibly, “Amen,” to the minister’s invitation, “The Body of Christ.” This is the proper and called for response by the Church. Anything else is inappropriate and fails to express the unity and faith called for at this moment. Please do not change or add to the asked for response, “Amen.”
  
- [4] Church teaching is clear: Christ is fully present – Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity – and is fully received under either species of the consecrated host or of the consecrated wine. The common practice in the Western Church is to communicate only the consecrated host. However, at times, and at the discretion of the Pastor of the Parish, the Precious Blood may be offered to the faithful. If you opt to receive the Precious Blood, take the chalice reverently and firmly into your hands. Respond, “Amen” to the minister’s invitation, “The Blood of Christ,” and consume the Precious Blood. Then return the chalice to the minister. The same sign of reverence we make before receiving the consecrated host should be made before receiving the Precious Blood.
  
- [5] When you return to your place after receiving Holy Communion, kneel down and make an act of thanksgiving to Christ for having given Himself to you in the Eucharist. Even though the Priest and/or Deacon may be seated, the Congregation remains kneeling until the Eucharist is put away, and the DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE IS CLOSED.

That is your signal to be seated, NOT when Father sits down.

*Music* - The music used at Liturgy, before, during and after is to be chosen and performed in accordance with sound liturgical principles. Music is at the service of the liturgy, and it should never dominate or impose itself upon the Liturgy. Music at Mass is prayer, and not a performance looking for the approval of an audience. Music must be sacred in nature, composed for liturgical use. Some classical music, when appropriate, is also permissible. A variety of styles is permissible.

\*By way of clarification, the principles and directives we follow at St. Patrick's are not simply the opinions of your priests or parish boards. They are taken from the Documents of the Church, and are in accord with the Church's teaching. Our intention is to be faithful to our Catholic Faith: To treasure and safeguard the Liturgy which Christ, through His Church, has given us.

## Quinceañera Blessing



Loving God, you created all the people of the world and you know each of us by name. We thank you for N., who today celebrates her Quinceañera.

Bless her with your love and friendship that she may grow in wisdom, knowledge, and grace. May she love her family always and be faithful to her friends.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.