



**ST. PATRICK
CEREMONY OFFICIANTS
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What many Brides and Grooms first ask:

1) How do we begin in finding an Officiant, Minister, Priest, or Rabbi?"

We are happy to be helping couples who have never been married or couples who have been married before. Many traditional faiths give time requirements for notification. Some couples require counseling or a weekend for engaged couples. Either of these requirements normally involves an extra cost -- to get married. Our personal philosophy is that your decision to marry is between the both of you and God. If the couple decides to proceed with our services, then we proceed in acquiring the couple's contact information and wedding day specific information. We send out an agreement stating the information (often within minutes of the telephone conversation), for your review. If you wish to reserve (the sooner the better), then we ask for you to execute the agreement with your signature and mail or e-mail it to our address with the requested deposit of at least 50%. *Due to so many requests, we need to work on a first come, first serve basis. A paid for ceremony reserves your date and time. Many times the office administrator has multiple calls to make to schedule an Officiant for a popular date or time with multiple requests for the same day.*

2) "How much will it cost for to marry us?" The fees range normally are from approximately \$400 to \$700. There are many factors that go into this. Many officiants charge differently depending on where they operate in the Country. Also, the distance from the ceremony and from where the Officiant actually lives will be a factor. All of our Officiants have to deal with real world issues such as transportation costs, upkeep, and their time. The Officiant is the least expensive part of your whole Ceremony Day, but it is the most important part of your "Big Day." Traditionally, it is the groom's responsibility to pay the Officiant's fees while the bride's family covers all other ceremony costs.

3) "What does the fee do?" Some couples feel that our Officiants should provide their services for free or close to it. Our response points to the following set of circumstances: Some of our Officiants are retired and are no longer paid by the churches that once employed them. There is also the costs of making our service known to you, which never go away and generally increase over time. Please keep in mind the many couples who are affiliated with specific faiths and are members of a Church are contributing to their church on a weekly and/or monthly basis.

In these situations, the Reverend/Pastor/Minister will provide his services usually for a minimal cost covering building expenses of about \$300-\$500. Non-members pay about \$1000 if the dates are available . . . often they are not.

Remember, that the church affiliated Reverend/Pastor/Minister already receives a weekly tithe/donation which exceeds our fee by more than or close to 10 fold annually. We feel our modestly priced fee structure adequately covers the expenses incurred in serving our couples.

4) "Do you have any Priests or Justices of the Peace in your clergy referral network?" Yes. There are married Priests in our network that have left the celibacy life of the priesthood, feeling that they can still serve God in other ways. Active celibate Priests are often encouraged not to leave their church building. If they do on those very rare circumstances, then it based on a close relationship or friendship the Pastor has with a very active member of the church. Justices of the Peace work only with County municipal systems. Many of our Priests CAN provide a very wonderful wedding ceremony, which accurately mirrors a Catholic ceremony including the Liturgy of the Word. However, this marriage, although recognized by the courts, the State, and Christian religions everywhere, may not be recognized by the Roman Catholic Church (the Latin Rite) as one of THEIR ceremonies. We can counsel with anyone more on this if you have further questions.

5) "Can you help us with other aspects of our wedding?" Yes, definitely. Please feel free to ask any question you wish in your wedding planning needs. If we cannot help you, we should be able to help direct you where to go.

6) "Are you licensed?" Yes. All of our Officiants are licensed AND Ordained. Although our clergy come from all different Rites and Denominations, there is not one "internet" Ordained Officiant in the network. We have attended Seminary and have Degrees.

7) "Is a blood test required?" There is only a blood test required in 12 localities in this Country.

8) "Is it common practice and good manners to invite the Officiants to my reception as well as an invitation by mail to the Officiant?" Yes, your wedding officiant and Assistant should be invited to the rehearsal dinner and the wedding reception. Although they might elect not to attend either celebration, inviting them is a respectful and considerate gesture. There may be times the Officiant has multiple weddings on the same day and may not attend, but it really is bad manners not to invite the Officiant/Assistant. Let them decide. Always send a wedding invitation to the Officiant by mail. Regarding your reception, be sure to plan food and refreshments for the wedding professionals who have helped you. This list of people could include a wedding consultant, photographer, videographer, and band or DJ. You should consider the timing of meals served at your reception, offering more than just a snack, for example, if the professionals will be there during dinnertime. Speak with your reception site manager or caterer ahead of time about arrangements to see about having separate meals prepared (these may vary slightly from the meals your guests receive) for wedding vendors. Seating may be separate, as well. Some facilities offer a separate room or area for vendors. This allows them to have some down time in private. Whatever arrangements you make, it is important to make sure that your vendors get the opportunity to take breaks and eat. When you put together your initial reception guest list, do not forget to include the officiant and his or her spouse or tending assistant and any wedding professionals you plan to include. Closer to the Big Day, be sure to let the caterer or reception site manager know final count of how many meals you will need.

9.) "If the Officiant is not local to my Ceremony, is an additional travel fee a normal practice?" Yes, Years ago Clergy were all at the location of the church building and did not travel. Due to the huge expense of gas, time, and preparation, it is just part of the normal arrangement. See us for details as to your specific situation as all travel details with couples are different.

10.) "My Anglican friends all have given a "tip" to their Priest who married, is this a common practice?" Yes, usually in the range of \$100-\$250 is the common normal tip, but it is up to the couple as to what they may decide. Usually this is the Groom's responsibility to take care of this detail.

11.) "If a Roman Catholic person wants to be married by you, will their marriage be recognized as a sacrament in the eyes of their Roman Catholic church?"

No, it is a Sacrament but may not be recognized in the larger Catholic Church, and may not be recognized as a legal Canonical Marriage by the Latin Rite (Roman) Church. Acceptance is based upon the local Clergy and there is not an across the board an acceptance or denial of the wedding.

The Marriage is recognized as a Sacrament but not according to The Roman Church Cannon Law or Rubrics. The Roman Church also requires that you are a member of that Parish Church, for a least a year, and the local Pastor will not marry couples outdoors/outside of church doors. You need to be a current contributing member of that Parish Church in good standing, attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and attend Pre-Cana classes for 6 months. The usual donation expected for these Pre-Cana classes averages \$300.00 or more. The charge for use of the church facility is \$500 to \$1,000. The couple also needs to sign documents to raise their children Roman Catholic. These are the main differences. **We don't require these.**

For more answers and advise go to: <http://www.bridalguide.com/wedding-planning/>

If any additional information is needed, please respond to this e-mail or call our office.

Thank you.

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Rev. Michael K. Carroll

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