

Guidelines for the Preparation & Celebration of a Quinceañera Liturgy



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The Nature of a Quinceañera

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.

In the presence of family and friends, the quinceañera, often accompanied by young men and women of her choice and age, (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, Crucifix, 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.

Quinceañera Formation

All young women wishing to celebrate a quinceañera are required to participate in watching some videos on Teen Faith Formation (Ms. Juanita at the parish office can provide you with the videos), reflect on the questions and email their response to Fr. Scott at marianpriest@gmail.com

Young ladies wishing to celebrate a quinceañera are 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 must be baptized and have already received the sacraments of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation.

Ministers of the Quinceanera

Ordinarily, the priest of the church will preside at a quinceañera celebration. If you wish to provide Altar Servers, Lectors, Choir or Eucharistic Ministers, please make your request with the priest.

Regarding Offerings to the Parish

For active parishioners, the usual offering to the Church is _____. For non-parishioners, the mandated fee is _____ for the use of the church. In this case, we will send you a donation letter for the amount paid to the church.

Scheduling the Quinceañera

The quinceañera date is tentative until it has been documented that the young lady has received the aforementioned sacraments and promises (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 Friday's at 5:30 pm or Saturday afternoons at 12 Noon or 2:00 pm.** As a general rule, there are NO Sunday quinceañeras celebrated outside of the regular Mass times. No rehearsals are scheduled for quinceañera celebrations. However, Confessions for the quinceañera and friends who are Catholics are a day before the quinceañera mass. 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

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. 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 sticky tack, push tacks, glue or paper clips. 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). Food, chewing gum, and drinks of any kind are not to be brought and consumed in the church. The use of alcohol and tobacco is strictly and absolutely prohibited at any time on, or near the parish by any person participating in the quinceañera ceremony. This includes anyone connected with the occasion. Cell phones are to be turned off or turned to silent during the service. Men and boys are to remove their hats. Because we celebrate our liturgies in God's house, respect is expected for the persons 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 Church. If you select a strapless or low-cut gown, we ask that you also select a shawl 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

The worship area of our church is a sacred place and should be treated as such, i.e., no loud talking, excessive movement or distractions to the quinceañera service. These instructions apply to all videographers, photographers, and recording engineers.

1. The areas allowed for use of those recording or photographing the quinceañera service are primarily the side aisles. Under no circumstances are VIDEOGRAPHERS to stand in the center aisle of the church. Photographers can stand in the middle aisle, from the side doors and behind or the side aisles but they can never stand or MOVE in front of the sanctuary. Entrance and recessional shots may be taken from the rear of the church.
2. You may not take pictures at ANY time while the Eucharist is being consecrated or during communion. (From the offertory to the prayer after communion.)
3. Flash photography is not allowed at any time during the Mass or ceremony.
4. The Quinceañera will exit and return immediately to the front of the Altar for photos (The first photo can be with the priest, followed by everyone else.) Photography must be finished 30 minutes before the next Mass.
5. While taking pictures after the quinceañera service, ensure that there is no talking other than quiet instructions to the quinceañera party.

Flowers

Flowers in the Church, if desired, are provided by the quinceañera party. They should neither be placed on the altar itself, be on stands higher than the altar, nor block the view of the young lady, nor that of the guests.

Other Options & Concerns for the Quinceañera Ceremony

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., are not to be thrown inside the Church.

Communion Line - The time of communion during mass is not the time to greet the quinceañera.

Liturgical Texts

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

Candle Lighting

Traditionally, the birthday girl's Baptismal Godparents light the first candle, then they hand the candle to the quinceañera. During the ceremony, the priest renews the birthday girl and the rest of the congregation their baptismal vows.

Music for the Ceremony

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. You may choose a selection from the parish hymnal book. Some classical music, when appropriate, is also permissible. A variety of styles is permissible. *By way of clarification, the principles and directives we follow 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.

Music must be suitable for the sacred nature of the Liturgy. Families must discuss music options not in the hymnal book with the priest before making any other music arrangements or plans. We have a choir with whom you can make arrangements for the music. If you choose to engage guest musicians or instrumentalists for your quinceañera, please keep in mind the following consideration:

[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?

Most guest singers and instrumentalists are comfortable with a brief rehearsal on the day of the quinceañera. 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.

