

Guidelines for
The Sacrament of
Holy Matrimony



Dear Bride & Groom,

Congratulations on your decision to marry! Holy Matrimony is a big commitment, but even more, it is a holy vocation from the Lord. Our most basic calling in life is to imitate God, who is love. Holy Matrimony is one very important way of following Christ and responding to this call from God that we love one another.

On the day of your wedding, you will publicly give yourselves to each other, without condition, and for the rest of your lives. With God's blessing and in the midst of the Church, you will enter into a holy covenant. Your committed, mutual love thereby will become an image (sacrament) of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves us all. In the midst of your planning, please remember that your wedding will last but a day, but that your matrimony is for the rest of your lives. Be sure to invite the Lord not only to your wedding, but also into your marriage!

This booklet is designed to provide you with the necessary information needed in the preparation of Holy Matrimony at Saint Joseph Parish. A significant portion of the booklet concerns the guidelines for the wedding liturgy. These guidelines have but one ultimate goal: to help ensure that your wedding ceremony will be a beautiful and prayerful celebration, one based on the principles of authentic Catholic liturgy.

As you prepare for Holy Matrimony, may the Lord Jesus, who himself was a guest at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1-11), continue to bless and deepen your love and commitment to each other.

Sincerely in the Lord,
Rev. Eric P. Schild
Pastor

Sacrament of Holy Matrimony Guidelines

MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

When you have made the decision to marry and to have your wedding at Saint Joseph Catholic Church, you need to contact one of the parish priests. Please call the Parish Office at 419-893-4848 to set up an appointment. There is a six month minimum between your first meeting with the priest and the day of your wedding. Please do not schedule your reception venue before talking to the parish, as the date you want may not be available.

SCHEDULING TIMES

Weddings are usually scheduled at 1:00 p.m. or 1:30 p.m. on Saturday. It is possible to have a Friday afternoon/evening wedding or a Saturday morning wedding (times for these must be approved by presider). All prelude music, including the procession of the grandparent(s) and parent(s), needs to be completed before the designated time.

PRESIDER

Our pastor, associate pastor, or deacons at St. Joseph may officiate your wedding. Should you desire another clergy member to participate in your wedding, please make this known to the priest/deacon you are working with. If you would like to invite the presider to your rehearsal dinner or reception, please send them an invitation.

VISITING PRIESTS

We warmly welcome any visiting priests or deacons whom you may desire to officiate at your nuptial ceremony. To avoid scheduling conflicts with our church, your first contact must be with a priest of Saint Joseph Catholic Church. The priest or deacon whom you choose to officiate at your nuptial ceremony is responsible for completing the preparation requirements with you; no further meetings are required with a priest or deacon of Saint Joseph Catholic Church.

Finally, if the priest or deacon is licensed to witness marriages in a state other than Ohio, please inform him that he will need to obtain an Ohio Ministerial License from the Secretary of State's Office www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/ministers.aspx.

PREVIOUS MARRIAGE

Any previous marriage that either party was involved in will require a Declaration of Freedom to Marry and may require a Declaration of Nullity (commonly called an "annulment"). Please advise the priest or deacon immediately of any previous marriages, regardless of where or when they were celebrated. We are absolutely forbidden from setting a wedding date until these proceedings are completed in their entirety.

CATHOLICS NOT REGISTERED AT ST. JOSEPH

Catholics who are not registered at St. Joseph will need to bring a letter from the pastor of the church you attend granting you permission to marry outside of that church. For convenience, this letter can also be mailed directly to the priest or deacon conducting your marriage preparation. If you do not live in the Maumee or greater Toledo area, you may also need to make arrangements to complete your marriage preparation classes at the church you attend. If you are unable to meet

personally with a priest or deacon at Saint Joseph, you can schedule your wedding by having the priest or deacon who is conducting your marriage preparation contact a priest at Saint Joseph.

SHOULD THERE BE A MASS?

There are three liturgical options for the Celebration of Matrimony: within Mass, without Mass, and between a Catholic and Catechumen or a Non-Christian.

- For Marriage between two Catholics, the Church recommends that the rite of marriage take place within the celebration of the Eucharist.
- For marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, the Church recommends that the rite of marriage be celebrated without Mass.
- For marriage between a Catholic and non-baptized person, the rite of marriage is celebrated

USE OF THE CHURCH

The use of our beautiful church is made available to you, your friends, and family for the allotted times for your rehearsal and wedding day. We hope that you and your guests feel welcome and comfortable with our parish church, and ask that all conduct themselves in a manner worthy of God's house. Please keep in mind the abiding presence of Jesus Christ in the tabernacle, and remember to demonstrate reverence and respect in His presence. Running, loud conversations, general horseplay, wandering through the sanctuary, and similar behavior is inappropriate for such a sacred space.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Saint Joseph Catholic Church is happy to provide for your wedding our own parish wedding coordinator. This person is familiar with the requirements of the parish and can be a valuable helper when there are questions or needs during the rehearsal and the wedding. The fee that you pay to the church includes the services of the wedding coordinator. Our parish wedding coordinator and presider are responsible for helping the wedding to go as smoothly as possible. **Outside wedding coordinators are not in charge at the wedding rehearsal or ceremony.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS AND PRAYERS

When you meet with your presiding priest/deacon, you will receive a planning document. You are asked to read through this together as a couple. In doing so, you will select which scripture readings and prayers are used for your ceremony. Non-scriptural readings may not be substituted for scripture. Your presider and/or the music director can answer any questions you may have about selecting the readings. Three items of the Liturgy are always sung at a wedding ceremony or Mass: Opening Antiphon, Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation; also the Gloria is sung when there is a Mass. You may wait until you meet the music director before selecting these items, so that you can hear the music in addition to reading the texts.

MUSIC

Music is an integral part of Catholic Liturgy and worship. Just as there are certain requirements with regard to the prayers and readings that may be used, there are also guidelines that must be followed when selecting appropriate music for the Wedding liturgy. The parish music director will help you make the music selections for your ceremony. It is the policy of Saint Joseph Catholic Church that our music director supervises all music for all parish liturgies. The music director can also serve as your organist and provide a cantor. You may choose to include other musicians to work in conjunction with, or in some case, in place of our music director. However, all guest musicians and music selections must be approved by the parish music director. Schedule an appointment with the music director six to eight weeks prior to your wedding. If you wish to employ additional musicians (singers, trumpet, harp, flute, strings, etc.), the parish music director can make recommendations. Outside musicians will set their own fees which should be directly paid to them according to your agreements.

PRESENTATION TO MARY

An optional devotional custom of the presentation of flowers before the statue of Mary may take place at the end of the wedding liturgy with the “Ave Maria” being sung at that time. Please indicate that to the presider and music director.

FLOWERS/DECORATIONS

The florist you choose will be responsible for placing AND removing any and all decorations placed for your Wedding Ceremony. Flowers are to be delivered in the back of the church. Because of the numerous Masses offered at this church, neither the florist nor the family will be allowed to place decorations before another Mass or activity that might precede your Wedding Ceremony. Your florist should be prepared to decorate the church in a short period of time. No candelabra or pew-end torches are allowed in the Sanctuary or in the church nave; only the candles present in the sanctuary will be used for the Wedding Ceremony. Floral arrangements are allowed on the top high altar only and in front of the altar and ambo. When placed in the sanctuary, flowers must not obstruct the view or actions of any of the ministers. If there is more than one wedding on your day, you may wish to coordinate with the other couple to share the expense of any decorations—especially flowers. Following your ceremony, you may take any floral arrangements with you to use at your reception, or you may chose to leave them in church for the parish to enjoy at the weekend Masses. No flower petals, bird seed or confetti can be thrown.

Church decor should never distract from the primary action at the altar. For this reason arches, arbors, and canopies are not allowed for Wedding Ceremonies in this church. These types of things are best set up at receptions. For safety reasons, no aisle runner is allowed. In order to protect the wood pews, any décor—floral or fabric—must be attached to the pew using ribbon and / or rubber bands—no tape, tacks, hard wire, etc., is permitted. It is very important to note that the furnishings in the sanctuary are not to be removed or rearranged. Likewise, other church appointments or furnishings are not to be altered in any way unless you have the express permission of the pastor of the parish.

UNITY CANDLE

The unity candle, the mixing of sand or colored water is no longer permitted during your ceremony. You may consider doing this at the wedding reception.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

Because it is most important that you have memories of your wedding, those persons you choose to photograph or video your wedding should be chosen with great care. Those photographing or video-recording the ceremony are expected to be quiet, discreet, and respectful of the sacred nature of the Marriage Ceremony. No one will be allowed to interrupt the service or enter the Sanctuary so as to allow the sacredness of the Sacrament of Matrimony to be protected from distractions. If you choose to video-record the wedding, you may use more than one camera, but only one videographer will be allowed on the ground floor; a second videographer must record from the choir balcony. Photographers may use the flash during the processional and recessional but not during the liturgy.

DRESSING AREA

There is an area reserved for dressing for the bride and bridesmaids two hours prior to the scheduled wedding ceremony. Please ask the wedding coordinator, priest or deacon to show you the area during the rehearsal. It is helpful to appoint one person to oversee all the belongings of the wedding party and remove all items from the dressing room before the wedding. The dressing area should be left in the same condition in which you found it. Groom and groomsmen, please come ready for the ceremony when you arrive to Church.

PROGRAMS (WORSHIP AIDS)

Wedding programs, more properly called worship aids, are designed to encourage and assist in the participation of the assembly. Their use, however, is entirely optional. They may simply and inexpensively be created on your own, or you may choose to have them professionally printed. The director of music will help you with this, and should proofread a draft before it is printed. Please bring a copy of it to the rehearsal.

REHEARSAL

Wedding rehearsals normally take place the evening prior to your wedding. The rehearsal needs to be scheduled with the presider because he will perform the rehearsal. Please be sure to schedule it when you know that all the people will be able to be present. The rehearsal will last approximately 1 hour. The only people who need to be at the rehearsal are the wedding party, parents, and readers if possible. Keep in mind that the rehearsal is in the church which is a sacred place, so please remind all those who are participating of this.

RECEIVING LINES

Receiving lines after the ceremony should be kept brief as this is the purpose of your reception. If you choose to take your formal photographs after the ceremony, please keep in mind that Saturday weddings must be finished in the church by 3:15 p.m.

AFTER WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

Because of the mess and liability, throwing rice, birdseed, or confetti are not permitted. Other alternatives include blowing bubbles or ringing small bells.

IMPEDIMENTS

Alcohol is an impediment to marriage. If a bride or groom is found to be drinking before the wedding, the wedding will be postponed to a later date. We ask that you take the wedding seriously and enter the ceremony with a spirit of reverence. It should also be noted that if members of the wedding party have been drinking before the ceremony, we will ask them to refrain from participating in the ceremony as well. There will be no use of alcoholic beverages or drugs in any form on church property. (This includes the parking lot.)

CIVIL REQUIREMENTS

Marriage License - You will need to obtain a marriage license from any probate court in the state of Ohio. More information can be found on the following web address for the Lucas County Probate Court: <http://www.lucas-co-probate-ct.org/marriage-license> or call 419-213-4750. The court is located at the Lucas County Court House, 700 Adams Street, Suite 200, Toledo, Ohio 43624. You should bring your license to the final meeting with the presider of your wedding, or at the very latest, to your rehearsal. The priest or deacon cannot perform the wedding without having this license. Following the wedding, the Parish Office will send the signed document to the court.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

It is strongly recommended that Catholics preparing for marriage celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding so that they may fruitfully receive the sacrament of marriage. The priest or deacon preparing you for marriage can help answer questions in this regard. Confession Times: Fridays after the 8:00 a.m. Mass and Saturdays from 3:30-4:45 p.m.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Required documents needed at the planning meeting prior to the wedding:

- Marriage License (bring this to the rehearsal)
- Planning Document
- Baptismal Certificates
- Engaged Couples Conference and Natural Family Planning Certificates of Completion
- Proof of Pre-marriage Counseling (if applicable)
- Permission Letter from Pastor (if applicable for non-registered Catholics)

MONETARY OFFERINGS

Wedding & Rehearsal:

- \$400 (registered parishioners)*
- \$1,000 (non-parishioners) a deposit of \$500 is due at time of the scheduling of the wedding
- Balance of payment must be received no later than two weeks before the wedding.
- Wedding payment should be made payable to St. Joseph Church.
- Please provide the presider and musician each \$150 made payable to them.

*Must be a registered parishioner for at least 6 months before a wedding/preparation may be scheduled.

NB: These are suggested offerings. No one is ever denied a Sacrament based on money.

St. Joseph Catholic Church
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