

## **Introduction**

Weddings are special and joyful times for the Bride and Groom, their families and friends and for the entire parish community. The new beginning, the love, the promise and hope that weddings bring make this celebration a special and grace-filled time in our lives.

The Church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their wedding in the context of our prayer as Christians. Great care is taken to see that the prayer for this special moment is reverent, graceful, beautiful and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us. So important is marriage in Christian life that it is called a Sacrament.

The celebration of the sacraments, including marriage, is rooted in listening to the scriptures, so we can be nourished and strengthened by God's Word. We always celebrate the sacraments as a community. We gather our brothers and sisters in faith and ask for their prayerful support. These celebrations are incomplete unless they are filled with song, prayerful gestures and the silence in which we hear the voice of God in our lives.

In this spirit, St. Mary Parish provides the following guidelines for celebrating weddings in our Parish.

## Wedding Rehearsals

Wedding rehearsals normally take place the evening prior to your wedding. ***Please be prompt*** and allow forty-five minutes to one hour for the rehearsal. Only the following individuals need attend: the wedding party, readers and parents. Prior to the rehearsal we ask that you prepare a list of how the bridal party will enter the church for the ceremony.

***If anyone in the wedding party attends the wedding or rehearsal under the influence of illegal substances or alcohol, the wedding will be cancelled immediately.*** Please make sure that everyone in the wedding party is aware of this rule.

## Scheduling the Time of the Wedding

Weddings at St. Mary Church may be scheduled on Friday evenings at 5:30, or Saturday at 11:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. Please contact the parish office as soon as possible after the engagement to determine the dates and times that are available for your wedding. Scheduling books are available two years in advance. After your meeting with the priest, the wedding date will be locked in, if all requirements are met.

***If for some reason the wedding is canceled, please notify the parish office immediately.***

### **Expectation of Couples**

We at St. Mary Parish want to help the bride and groom begin their life together with all the necessary skills for a fulfilling marriage. The following are important requirements that will prove beneficial to you

and are to be completed prior to your wedding:

Contact the priest or deacon and begin marriage preparation sessions ***at least*** six months prior to the wedding date so there will be sufficient time to permit the necessary meetings with the celebrant. The final decision concerning readiness for this sacrament is made within the marriage preparation process. Call 419-447-2087 to speak with a priest.

At least one of the parties must be a ***practicing Catholic*** and have some tie to St. Mary Church.

Contact the parish in which a Catholic bride or groom was baptized and have a copy of his/her baptismal certificate *sent to the priest or deacon* who will be performing the marriage ceremony. A non-Catholic bride or groom who has been baptized in another Christian faith *must* have a copy of his or her baptismal certificate also.

Provide the priest or deacon with your marriage license ***prior to the rehearsal***. This can be obtained at the Tiffin City Annex Center or any probate court within the state of Ohio. Without your license, a priest or deacon cannot legally perform your wedding.

As a couple, you need to participate actively in an Engaged Couples Conference before the wedding. This will allow you to explore your relationship in a variety of different avenues before your final commitment. The parish will provide you with the proper information.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Ministers for the Liturgy**

#### **Presider**

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the bride and groom minister the Sacrament of Marriage to each other through the exchange of consent. A priest or deacon and two witnesses are required for the marriage to be valid. On occasion, a couple may wish to have a priest/deacon friend or relative preside at the wedding. In this instance, the couple should notify the parish early in the marriage preparation process. If the Bride or Groom is from a Protestant faith, he/her minister is most welcome to participate in the wedding ceremony and is encouraged to do so.

#### **Music Minister**

The parish liturgist/organist is normally the organist for weddings celebrated in our Church. Couples preparing for marriage should contact our liturgist to determine appropriate music for their liturgy, fees and parish music policies. Other music ministers, i.e., soloist or different organist, and your music selections must be approved by our Liturgist.

#### **Lectors**

The function of the lector is to proclaim the Word of God to the congregation. Please select individuals who have lectored previously to read at your wedding. It is recommended that these individuals attend the rehearsal, so they may practice with the sound system.

### **Eucharistic Ministers**

For weddings celebrated in the context of a Mass, it is recommended that individuals who are Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion be asked to perform this function. Friends or family members from another parish who are commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers are most welcome to assist with the distribution of the Holy Eucharist.

### **Bridal Room**

The bride and her bridal attendants are welcome to use the dressing room in the lower level of the church. Arrangements can be made as well for the groom and his attendants to dress in the server's or priest's sacristy. These rooms will be shown to those interested at the wedding rehearsal. *Please be sure the rooms are cleaned prior to your departure from the church.*

### **Alcohol and Illegal Substances at the Church**

Because our parish church is a holy and sacred place, respect and dignity need to be shown. Therefore, **no food, beverages, alcohol or illegal substances will be permitted in or around the church premises.** It is disrespectful to your guests and to the holy stature of the church.

### **Liturgical Celebration**

The wedding ceremony is a religious celebration, and a setting of prayer is to be preserved. The altar continues to be the focus of attention on which the Eucharistic sacrifice is celebrated as a representation of Christ's love for us all. We ask that you respect this with the utmost devotion.

### **Options for Liturgical Celebration**

The planning of your wedding is an important aspect of your celebration. The following optional customs are not part of the Rite of Marriage itself, but have been incorporated into the liturgy over the years:

- Unity candle
- Flowers to the Blessed Virgin
- Unity prayer for the couple
- Flowers to the parents

If you have any questions regarding these options, please feel free to ask the priest who is preparing you for marriage.

### **Photographers and Videographers**

As you and your photographer capture the wonderful moments of your wedding day, we strongly suggest that the photographer/videographer not disturb the nature and integrity of the marriage ceremony. The bridal couple is responsible for informing their photographer/videographer about the regulations of taking pictures in our church.

The staff of St. Mary Parish requests that you adhere to the following wedding photography guidelines:

Pictures of the entrance procession and concluding procession are permitted.

While we encourage pictures, we do ask that the photographer be stationed in a pew in the middle of the church only.

This will uphold the integrity of the procession and also allow for appropriate pictures.

Photographers are not permitted in the sanctuary area of the altar.

Pictures from the balcony are permitted during the liturgy.

Picture taking **after** the wedding is permitted for a period of no more than one hour, from start to finish. Therefore, a receiving line might work best for you at the reception. We have a beautiful garden! Please feel free to use our garden area.

Inappropriate pictures such as lifting skirts, laying in front of the altar, etc. are to be taken elsewhere and not in the church.

### **Aisle Runners**

Our church is beautifully carpeted, so we ask that an aisle runner *not* be used for safety purposes.

### **Candles**

*No candles are permitted along the aisle, nor are they to be used in bridesmaids bouquets because of the possibility of fire.*

### **Exiting the Church**

*Please note that no rice, bird seed, rose petals (real or silk) or confetti is to be used before, during or after the ceremony because it is hazardous to walk on, especially in case of rain. You may use bubbles or bells if you wish.*

### **Monetary Offerings**

St. Mary Parish is honored to be a part of your nuptials and the beginning of your new life as husband and wife. A donation of \$150.00 is asked to help cover the church expenses and is due one month in advance of your wedding date. Altar servers may receive a gift for their services. You may wish to consider a monetary gift to the priest/s or deacon who have participated in your ceremony. The liturgical director/organist fee is \$150.00 and is also due one month in advance of your wedding date. A cantor may be used as part of your ceremony. Please call the liturgist at the parish office at 447-2087 to request cantor names and fees.

## **Decorations**

### **Floral Recommendations**

Since flowers add to the festivity and beauty of any liturgical celebration, we encourage the bride and groom to use flowers for this joyous occasion. Flowers, plants and trees, particularly those that are natural, are appropriate for the decoration of liturgical space, since they are from nature. We recommend that arrangements be placed either in front of the altar, ambo (lectern) or on stands flanking the sanctuary.

### **Pew Bows**

Please notify your florists that there are nine rows of pews on each side of the center aisle. **Please note that scotch tape, duct tape and thumb tacks are not to be used anywhere in the church because they damage the finish on the pews.**

### **Musical Guidelines**

In keeping with the religious nature of the wedding ceremony, and in conformity with principles published by our Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the music you select is to be of a religious nature. Secular music, such as top forty songs, musical songs or other romantic ballads are not appropriate for the liturgical celebration. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission has compiled a list of appropriate songs to be used before and during your ceremony. Please contact our Liturgist at (419) 447-2087 for fees and assistance in planning your wedding music.

*May your love for each other  
grow stronger each day.*

*May it be a day you will long remember  
and share with your children.*

*The Lord bless you and keep you  
all the days of your lives.*