

*St. Mary of the Assumption
132 S. High Street
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-653-0997*

Dear Friends,

Congratulations! We welcome your inquiry about marrying in St. Mary of the Assumption Church. It is a privilege and a joy for us to assist you as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony in our parish.

The Catholic Church esteems marriage as very sacred - one of the seven sacraments of the real presence of Christ Jesus among us. Sacred Scripture compares marriage to the covenant relationship of God with us. Saint Paul says the union of husband and wife is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church.

In witnessing your marriage, our Church community wants to uphold and support you faithfully for the rest of your lives as you grow together in God who is Love. We undertake this ministry with you now, as you begin preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. This document outlines the procedure we need to follow. We look forward to serving you as we share our faith together.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Your Parish Priest and Deacon

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INTRODUCTION

We at St. Mary of the Assumption want your wedding to be a faith-filled, beautiful and memorable occasion. Our wedding preparation program has been designed to assist you in preparing your wedding Mass or ceremony in our parish. This document is your first source of information about the wedding preparation process and for planning your wedding liturgy. Please read these pages carefully as they are designed to assist you in the process. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

WHO MAY OFFICIATE AT YOUR WEDDING

Normally, the parish priest/deacon who has assisted in your preparation for marriage will officiate at your marriage ceremony. Priests who are relatives or friends are welcome to concelebrate the ceremony if it is arranged with the parish priest. It is understood that the principal officiant conducts the marriage preparation process unless other arrangements are made with the Pastor. Therefore, you will want to consult with priest relatives very early in the preparation process before you make a decision.

If either the bride or groom is not Catholic and would like to have the minister from their own church participate in the ceremony, they are welcome to invite him/her. This should be arranged beforehand with the parish priest/deacon so that suitable hospitality may be extended to the participating minister.

WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT ST. MARY?

Church law guarantees active, registered members of the parish, who are in good standing, with the faith and morals of the Catholic Church, the right to marry in their proper parish church.

An Active-Registered Member of St. Mary is:

1. Someone who has been registered in our parish for six months before the scheduling of the wedding and
2. Someone who attends Mass regularly and
3. Someone who gives to the offertory collection or fulfills a pledge to our parish according to contribution records.

The children of long-time “active” and “registered” parishioners are considered regular members for the purpose of marriage and are permitted to be married in St. Mary Church. They may be asked to get permission from the pastor of the parish in which they are registered.

SETTING THE DATE AND TIME

Date

You should make an appointment with a priest or deacon at least six months prior to the anticipated wedding date. Due to the number of weddings at our parish, it is advisable for you to contact the priest or deacon as soon as possible in order to ensure the desired date and time of your wedding. If either of you have been previously married and divorced, you will have to obtain an annulment; a process that may take a year to complete. No wedding date may be scheduled until the annulment is obtained.

A date may be placed on the parish calendar after

1. Initial interview with a priest or deacon
2. Completion of FOCCUS
3. Initial review of FOCCUS result
4. Return of signed portion of marriage regulations
5. **Priest/Deacon has received appropriate baptismal certificates issued within the past 6 months
6. Freedom to marry with an affidavit may be requested if the bride or groom is not well known by the Priest/Deacon

**A copy of your baptismal certificate issued within the last six months is required for the wedding file. You will need to contact the parish of your baptism and ask them to send a copy of your baptismal certificate with the parish seal stamped upon it. Baptized non Catholics are also asked to provide a proof of Baptism. Accommodations can be made if this is not possible.

You as a couple can expect to attend a series of meetings with a priest, deacon or a married couple to assist you in your preparation for marriage. You will be asked to take part in discussions of topics related to personal history, communication skills, married and family life, and the religious dimension of marriage.

Time

Weddings are celebrated on Saturdays either 11:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. Rehearsals are scheduled the night before the wedding any time between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR MARRIAGE

1. Baptismal Record ** see information listed on page 2

2. Pre-Cana Certificate

A formal marriage preparation is required for all couples. Your certificate of attendance at the Pre-Cana Weekend or an Engaged Encounter is to be placed in your wedding file.

3. Marriage License

The civil license for the marriage is to be presented to the officiating clergy at the time of the rehearsal. Marriage licenses are valid throughout the State of Ohio beginning five days after the date of application until sixty days from the date of application.

4. Completed Wedding Planning Sheet

This should be returned and discussed at the last session with the priest or deacon within one month prior to the wedding.

PREPARING THE LITURGY

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a sacred ritual of the Church. As such, the religious nature of the ceremony must be carefully preserved.

Your wedding is a part of the faith life of our parish. You, as the ministers of the Sacrament, have chosen freely to express your love and commitment to each other. The Order of Matrimony is centered around the exchange of vows, the blessing and exchange of rings and the nuptial blessing. This ritual best conveys the Church's desire to witness your vows, to strengthen your fidelity to them, and to support you prayerfully in your life together. As with all liturgical celebrations, the full and active participation of all those present is desirable.

Liturgy

Ordinarily, the Rite of Marriage takes place in one of two contexts: within Mass for two baptized Catholics or outside Mass if either the bride or groom is not Catholic. If the wedding is a ceremony outside of Mass a deacon may be invited to preside and officiate. This is encouraged here at Saint Mary Parish.

Procession

Since the Rite of Marriage is a Sacramental Ritual of the Church the opening procession should involve all of the principal ministers of the Wedding Ceremony. The order of the opening procession consists of Servers (cross and additional server), Presider, perhaps Groom alone or accompanied by his parents (or he may immediately proceed the bride), Bridesmaids escorted by Groomsmen, Flower Girls / Ring Bearer **(If you wish to select children to be part of the wedding party, they must be at least 5 years old)** and the Bride accompanied by her father / parents. A well-orchestrated procession sets the tone for a faith-filled, participating ceremony.

Readings

The Order of Matrimony includes selected scriptural readings and prayers. You may choose those that are most expressive of your understanding of marriage. You will find these selections in a special booklet, "Together for Life" that you will receive from the clergy.

Music

Only liturgically appropriate music may be used at weddings. All music, sacred or of a classical nature must be approved by the Director of Music. All weddings will utilize the parish organists and cantors. All weddings (ceremony or Nuptial Mass), will have three parts that are always sung: the Gloria (if Mass)/Gathering Hymn, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Gospel Acclamation. These elements are led by a St. Mary cantor. The Wedding Liturgy begins with the Prelude Music. Ushers should reverently and quietly escort family members and friends during this time.

Popular and secular music are not appropriate for use during the Wedding Mass or Ceremony. This also applies to vocal or instrumental music played during the prelude. Recorded music of any kind is not permitted.

Contact the Music Director at least six weeks prior to the wedding to set up an appointment to plan the music.

PARTICIPATION IN THE LITURGY

The Presider / Priest or Deacon

The Presider of the Sacrament of Matrimony is a Priest when it takes place within Mass, a Priest or Deacon when taking place outside of Mass.

Friends and relatives of the couple may participate in the liturgy in various roles. You may wish to select individuals to serve as Readers, Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Servers and Gift Bearers at the liturgy. So that those serving in these roles feel comfortable, they should be properly trained and should attend the rehearsal. Decisions about these roles may be made when the liturgy is planned with the parish clergy.

The Readers

Friends or relatives are encouraged to read the First and Second Readings, and the Universal Prayer. Please give them early notice and provide a copy of the readings in plenty of time to practice.

Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

You should consult with the priest presiding at your wedding Mass to see how many ministers will be required. For weddings outside of Mass, Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are not needed.

Altar Servers

The couple may choose friends or relatives as Altar Servers, provided they are experienced in the ministry. The parish will furnish servers if requested. A \$20.00 stipend is customary for each server.

Gift Bearers

Gift Bearers are used only for weddings within Mass. There may be two or three people invited to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine.

OTHER DETAILS

Sacristan

St. Mary Parish employs a sacristan to help you with your immediate preparation for the wedding ceremony. Also, the sacristan is familiar with the regulations for wedding ceremonies and is responsible for enforcing them. The presider gives final approval to the plans of professional wedding consultants on matters pertaining to the ceremony in the Church.

Food/Beverages

No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the Church property prior to and after the wedding. We request that food, beverages or gum not be brought to the Church grounds, including the conference rooms or into the Church.

Photography

Photographers are welcome to take pictures before and during the ceremony. (See Rules for Photographers and Videographers on page 11). If you wish to have posed pictures taken after the ceremony, you must complete them within 30 minutes. Those taking pictures and/or video recordings are asked to check with the priest, deacon or sacristan at least 30 minutes before the celebration to arrange for locations for pictures. Photographs must be completed by 12:30 p.m. for 11:00 a.m. weddings and 3:00 p.m. for 1:30 p.m. weddings. A funeral may be scheduled the day of the wedding and always takes precedence. Funerals are usually scheduled at 9:00 a.m. on that day.

Environment

Very simple decorations only are needed to enhance the beautiful liturgical space of St. Mary Church. Normally, two live flower arrangements placed near the altar are sufficient for a Wedding. The flowers are to be kept in the Church for all weekend Masses. Seasonal decorations (e.g. Easter) provide the environment for all weddings during those seasons. No decorations are to be placed on the Altar.

For safety reasons, the use of candelabra, lamps, floral displays with candles, and the use of an aisle cloth are prohibited.

The dressing room for the bride and attendants is located on the ground floor of the rectory and is available upon request. It is open two hours prior to the time of the wedding. For security reasons, the dressing room MUST be cleaned and locked ten minutes prior to the wedding. The wedding party is responsible for thorough clean-up and removing all of their belongings, before the start of the wedding.

Because of limited space, Ushers/Groomsmen should arrive dressed.

Receiving Line & Guest Book

Receiving lines are most appropriately held at the reception venue, not at the Church. Please relay this information to your invited guests via the wedding program. The wedding party should vacate the Church by 12:30pm for an 11:00am wedding and by 3:00pm for a 1:30pm wedding.

The Unity Candle

The unity candle is not a part of the Catholic wedding liturgy and is prohibited. It is best used during the reception.

Elements for the Reception

No rice, flower petals, bird seed, balloons, butterflies or birds may be used as part of the wedding celebration inside or outside the Church. It may desirable to include these elements at the reception.

FEES AND STIPENDS

Parish Priest /Deacon and Servers

A gift for the clergy is a donation made in view of the time and service the clergy has provided in the preparation process. It is customary but not required to offer the clergy \$200.00 for his assistance. The two servers are given \$20 each.

Director of Music

The stipend for the parish organist is \$175.00. This fee includes meeting with the couple to plan and select wedding music, practice time with the parish cantor, and personal practice time.

If there is a visiting soloist (instrumental or vocal), the stipend for the organist is \$200.00. This fee reflects the necessity of extra practice time with the visiting soloist.

The stipend for the parish cantor is \$100.

The rates for the Spirit Center can be obtained by calling the Parish Office during office hours.

It is customary to give a stipend of \$75 for the rehearsal for the one assisting when there is a visiting priest who agrees to follow our guidelines.

**These fees are expected to be paid.
Payment is due three weeks prior to the wedding.
Please simply write a check payable to St. Mary Church**

PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

Please Share these Rules and Regulations with your photographer.

We welcome photographers and videographers, both professional and amateur, for still pictures and videotapes. The Church itself is not a studio but a sacred place in which a community of believers worship. The photographer and videographer should keep this in mind before, during and after the celebration of Marriage. We ask that the following rules be observed:

1. Wedding photographs may precede the marriage ceremony, keeping in mind that a funeral takes priority.
2. Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary. They may photograph from the side or rear of the Church only.
3. Formal portraits with studio equipment such as screens, props, etc., are not to be done in the Church but at home, the studio, or the reception hall.
4. No Church furnishings are to be moved for pictures.
5. All photography must be finished by 12:30 p.m. for 11 a.m. weddings and 3:00 p.m. for 1:30 p.m. weddings.
6. Flash photography may be taken during the processional and recessional only and not during the ceremony itself.
7. The photographer is not allowed to stop or slow the procession or any other part of the liturgy.
8. Photographers should be prepared to begin taking the formal pictures immediately after the wedding party leaves in the recessional. Pictures may be taken while the congregation departs.
9. Stationery video cameras are permitted in the choir loft of the Church as long as it is not in the way of the Organist.
10. Any videographer new or unfamiliar with the church should check with the priest or deacon at the rehearsal.

AGREEMENT OF COUPLE

I have reviewed this document and agree to follow the rules contained in it.

Signature of Bride _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Signature of Groom _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Date _____

SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION

1. It is the expectation of the Church that those Catholics who are seeking to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony are active and practicing Catholics, i.e. that they are attending Mass faithfully and are living out to the best ability the teachings of Christ and his Church. When one or both of the Catholics are not practicing their faith, extra care and time will be taken in preparing the couple, so they may show good intentions to restore their connection to the church and once again become practicing Catholics.
2. If either or both parties have been married before, either civilly or in a religious ceremony, an investigation into the validity of the first marriage will need to take place. This may require that the first marriage be declared null by a church tribunal. No date for a wedding may be set until both parties have proved they are free to marry. If there has been a previous marriage, please tell the preparing clergy at your first meeting.