

WEDDING GUIDELINES

St. Matthias Catholic Church

1200 West Sprague Road

Parma, Ohio 44134

(440) 888-8220

www.stmatthiaschurch.org



Introduction

By choosing to celebrate your love for one another through a sacred ceremony at St. Matthias Church, you have chosen to commit yourselves as husband and wife before God and before the whole community of faith. Through this sacrament of the Church your love for one another stands as a symbol of God's love for all of us. The members of your family, your friends, and all the people who gather to worship and celebrate with you recognize your love as permanent, faithful, life-giving, and forgiving. It is a true sign of the unending, ever present, creative, and merciful love God has for every one of us.

The following guidelines take into consideration Church laws, civil law, the policies of the Diocese of Cleveland, and the customary practices that this parish has established based on practical experience. If you have any questions, please contact the priest or deacon working with you in preparation for your wedding.

As you prepare for your wedding day, we pray that you will reflect well on the life you are beginning together and how your faith can strengthen your marriage. May God bless you on your journey. 2

Wedding Guidelines

Marriage as a Sacrament

A sacrament is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Every sacrament brings us into contact with the saving activity of the Lord. In every sacrament, we encounter the dying and rising of Jesus. The ministers of the sacrament of marriage are the bride and groom. When two baptized persons exchange wedding vows, they share the life of Christ that they have received in baptism. The ministers of marriage extend the Lord's presence to each other and become a sign of the Lord's presence to others.

The visible sign of the sacrament of marriage is the exchange of wedding vows. In order to have a true exchange of promises, both the bride and groom must be responsible adults, capable of forming a community of life and love. The couple must honestly and, without reservation, declare to each other their willingness to assume the duties of marriage according to the teachings of Christ and the Church.

Faith Commitment

Since Christ is the center of Christian marriage, the bride and groom should seriously review their relationship with the Lord. They should show signs of a positive commitment to Christ and should regularly participate in the parish celebration of Sunday Eucharist.

Date for Weddings

The Diocese of Cleveland has established a policy that an engaged couple must contact the parish at least 6 months before the proposed date of the wedding, although nine to twelve months is recommended. No date can be confirmed until the couple has first met with the parish priest or deacon. No date is final until all requirements have been met. In the case of a previous marriage, no date may be given until the annulment process is completed, a decree of nullity has been granted, and no restrictions apply.

The purpose of this 6 month policy is:

- To provide the priest or deacon time to assess with the couple their spiritual, personal and canonical readiness to marry.
- To allow for adequate marriage instruction and preparation.
- To allow the couple time to pray deeply and to reflect seriously upon their decision to enter into Christian marriage.

Times for Weddings

Saturday weddings are normally scheduled at 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. The possibility exists for Friday evening weddings depending on the availability of the priest or deacon and the church. Weddings can be scheduled any time of the year except during Lent.

Parishioners/Non-Parishioners

You and/or your parents must be registered members of the parish. If you are not a parishioner of the parish a letter of permission must be obtained from the pastor of your home parish. Non-parishioners may schedule a wedding if the circumstances warrant such an exception and the desired date is available.

Required Documents

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain the following documentation as needed:

Sacramental Records: Catholic parties are to obtain a baptismal certificate. These certificates may be obtained from the church of baptism and dated within the last six months. Non-Catholic parties are to obtain a baptismal certificate from the Christian denomination and/or church where they were baptized.

Previous Marriages: If a person has been married before it is necessary to provide the following:

Death certificate of former spouse or

Declaration of Nullity

Civil Marriage License: It is necessary to obtain a civil license. This license is to be obtained within sixty (60) days of the celebration of the wedding. In Cuyahoga County, a license may be obtained at:

Cuyahoga County Probate Court
Marriage License Department
1 Lakeside Avenue, Room 146 Cleveland, OH M-F 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. \$40 - cash only
216-443-8920

Both parties must be present to apply for the license with proof of age and social security number as well as a cash fee of \$40.00. The license must be brought to rehearsal. The marriage cannot take place without a civil marriage license.

Validation: If this is a validation then a certificate of current marriage is required.

Preparation Process for Marriage

Marriage preparation must be taken seriously by a couple who wish to marry. The Church's preparation for marriage is not just for a single day (the wedding day) but also for a lifetime of love and commitment. It is hoped that the couple recognizes the importance of their preparation for Christian marriage. A number of meetings are required for the preparation process:

Introduction: During the introduction, a couple will be interviewed and a preliminary wedding date will be set and the necessary paperwork prepared for marriage in the church. The priest or deacon establishes the couple's freedom to marry and explains the process and the theology of marriage.

Evaluative Tool: An evaluative tool such as PREPARE & ENRICH is administered to assess the couple's readiness for marriage and to help encourage communication on topics related to marriage.

Meeting with Priest or Deacon: The couple will ordinarily meet with the parish priest or deacon for one or more sessions to review the results of the evaluative tool, give instruction on the basic theology of the sacrament of marriage and answer any questions a couple might have regarding their marriage.

Couples Ministry: Each couple may also be asked to meet with a Marriage Ministry Couple from the parish who has been trained in marriage preparation. The name of the Ministry Couple will be given to the wedding couple to set up appointments. They will review the evaluative tool with the wedding couple and offer discussion and advice regarding marriage preparation.

Pre-Marital Program: Each couple is required to participate in one of the following pre-marital programs.

Pre-Cana Day: These one day sessions are held at many parishes in the diocese. You may attend at any parish or at the Jesuit Retreat House.

Engaged Encounter Weekend: These weekends are held in the Diocese or surrounding dioceses on a regular basis. Contact the Marriage and Family Office at 216-334-2975, for information.

Cana II: Cana II is a marriage preparation program which is designed for relationships in which one or both parties have been previously married. Specific areas of concern such as parenting issues and previous marriages are addressed. Contact the Marriage and Family Office at 216-334-2975.

Liturgy Planning: Each couple will be asked to meet with the parish priest or deacon to prepare the wedding liturgy. Resources for planning the wedding liturgy are included in the booklet you will receive.

Music Planning: A meeting with the Parish Musician is also a part of the liturgy planning process.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is usually scheduled for the evening before the wedding. The exact time must be arranged in advance. Couples must also bring the Marriage License and all fees (church and musicians fees) to the wedding rehearsal. All members of the wedding party should be at rehearsal including readers and gift bearers. It is important to be on time in that there might be more than one rehearsal the same evening. Please tell your guests to be 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled rehearsal time.

Arrival at Church on the Day of the Wedding

The wedding party should plan to arrive at the Church no later than 30 minutes prior to the time of the wedding. A room is available for the bride and her attendants. The groom and best man may meet in the library. The groomsmen will assist in the seating of the wedding guests.

Fees

The suggested offerings for a wedding are as follows:

Free Will Offering (Priest or Deacon)

\$100.00 (Wedding Coordinator)

\$20.00 (Server)

(Musician)

(Cantor)

Wedding Coordinator

The parish uses a wedding coordinator to help assist the clergy in the liturgical preparation of the wedding. She will run the rehearsal, arrive before you on the wedding day to set up, organize the bridal party and the seating of guests, and clean up after the wedding. The coordinator can be contacted for any questions regarding the rehearsal and wedding day. The selection of readings, intercessions and particulars of the wedding including the names of the wedding party, readers, and gift bearers can be given to her. You will find her phone number on the front of the bulletin.

Environment

Aisle Runner

Aisle Runners are not allowed. A carpet runner is provided by the Church.

Flowers

Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary but should never obstruct or detract from the primary symbols of the altar, couple and presider. Flowers are never to be placed on or in front of the altar itself or on sanctuary furniture and seasonal decorations are not to be rearranged.

Dropping of Flower Petals Not Permitted

The dropping of flower petals by a flower girl is not permitted as they cause a hazard for guests coming up for Communion, especially the elderly and the physically challenged. We suggest the flower girl carry a small basket of flowers to pass out to guests at the ends of the pews.

Bows

Bows or small flower arrangements may be placed on the aisle chairs with clips or string but should not be taped to the chair. Bows or arrangements should be removed after the wedding.

The Throwing of Rice, Birdseed, Flower Petals or Anything Else is Not Permitted

The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, etc., inside or outside the church is not permitted. The throwing of these items can create a hazardous situation for walkers and a maintenance problem as well. Bells or bubbles are a pleasant alternative.

Programs

Wedding programs or worship aids are not required but may be helpful in encouraging the assembly to participate and sing. An outline of the wedding liturgy with or without Eucharist (Holy Communion) follows.

Marriage at Mass (with Eucharist)

Prelude(s)

Entrance Rite

Entrance Procession

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel

Homily

Sacrament of Marriage

Exchange of Consent and Vows

Blessing of Rings

Unity Candle (optional)

Prayers of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts Holy, Holy, Holy

Eucharistic Prayer

Our Father

Nuptial Blessing

Exchange of Peace

Lamb of God

Communion

Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

Visit to Marian Shrine (optional)

Final Blessing

Recessional

Marriage outside of Mass

Prelude(s)

Entrance Rite

Entrance Procession

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel

Homily

Sacrament of Marriage

Exchange of Consent and Vows

Blessing of Rings

Unity Candle (optional)

Prayers of the Faithful

Our Father
Nuptial Blessing
Exchange of Peace

Music

It is the parish policy that the parish music director serves as the principal musician at all weddings. The couple must meet with the Music Director at least 4 months prior as part of the liturgy planning to select the music that will be used at your wedding. There may be additional fees charged for extra rehearsal or planning sessions and the use of a cantor. We recommend the use of one of our parish cantors to encourage the singing of the people gathered at your wedding celebration. Additional instruments are welcome and the music director can help you with cantor availability and the selection of other instrumentalists of which additional fees would be required. It is the policy of the Diocese of Cleveland and St. Matthias Parish that all music is religious and sacred (this includes prelude music as well). Pre-recorded material is not allowed and no secular music is permitted. Final decisions regarding the appropriateness of music selections are left up to the discretion of the music director. The Music Minister will discuss the fee for musicians when you meet with him.

Processional Music (instrumental)

Normally, the liturgical procession is accompanied by a selection of instrumental music.

Liturgy of the Word

After the greeting by the Presider and an opening prayer, the Liturgy of the Word begins. Non-Biblical texts may not be used. Ordinarily, the readings for the wedding liturgy include an Old Testament reading, a New Testament reading and a Gospel reading. The Responsorial Psalm is to be sung, therefore, it should be selected with the Music Director. Readers may be selected from among family, friends, or lectors from the parish. It is preferred that they have public speaking experience and it would be ideal if they were Lectors at their Church. The lector(s) should be given the readings well in advance of the wedding. They are also encouraged to come to the rehearsal to learn the church's protocol, acoustics and sound system prior to the wedding liturgy. Reading selections are located in the booklet TOGETHER FOR LIFE which you will receive. Please select from these options, however, other Scriptural texts may be used with approval.

Devotional Customs and Practices

Unity Candle (Optional)

The lighting of a unity candle is not an official part of the Rite of Marriage but may be included. An option is to perform the lighting of the unity candle at the reception. The candles must be supplied by the couple.

Visit to the Marian Shrine (Optional)

Though not as popular as it once was, a visit to the Marian Shrine is often included as a devotional time of prayer in the wedding liturgy. This devotional prayer does not have to be done but it remains an option for couples. When included, the couple should process together and spend time praying for Mary's help and inspiration in the married life. The couple should either kneel together or stand together.

Additional Information

Eucharistic Minister(s)

If there are family members or friends who have been trained and commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers, they may assist the priest in distributing communion to the assembly. Please discuss this with the priest preparing you for marriage.

Photographers/Videographers

We ask that photographers and videographers be given the guideline sheets that are included in this packet.

St. Matthias Fees

Donation to the Church

Musicians

Fees for additional musicians are at the discretion of the musicians themselves.

Gratuity to the Celebrant (Priest or Deacon)

The parish priest or deacon is normally offered a gratuity. St. Matthias has no set fee.

Wedding Coordinator

The wedding coordinator receive a gratuity for her services. The suggested amount is \$100.00.

Servers

There is one server present for every wedding. It is helpful to offer cash of \$20.00 each. If outside servers are used, the wedding coordinator must be notified at least one month before the wedding.

All fees should be brought to the rehearsal with the marriage license.

There are no set charges for sacraments performed, these fees are "free will" offerings. If financial difficulty is a concern, do not worry about the fees.

St. Matthias Staff Contact Information

CLERGY

Fr. Ray Sutter, *Pastor*

440-888-8220

rstrapper@yahoo.com

Deacon Ken Golonka, *Deacon*

440-888-8220

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Mr. Sig Mikolajczyk

440-582-0142

WEDDING COORDINATORS

Mrs. Karen Griffiths

440-526-2684

PARISH SECRETARY

Mrs. Chris Walter

440-888-8220

Check - List

- Meeting with Priest or Deacon**
- Initial Interview
- Set Tentative Wedding Date
- Administration of Evaluative Tool
- Discussion of Evaluation
- Subsequent Discussions of Evaluation (if needed)

- Marriage Preparation Program Completed**
- Pre-Cana
- Cana II (for second marriages)
- Couples Ministry

- Baptismal Certificate(s) Obtained and Submitted**
- Must be dated within six months of marriage

- Rehearsal Date Scheduled**
- Contact Parish Secretary and Wedding Coordinator

- Music Planning Session with Musician**

- Marriage License Obtained and Brought to Rehearsal**

- Fees Brought to Rehearsal**

- Readings and Intercessions Selected**
- Including Old and New Testaments, Gospel and General Intercessions

- Readers Selected**

- Photographer/Videographer Guidelines Distributed**

PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER GUIDELINES

We understand that photographs and videos are important to the wedding couple and their family. We ask that the church and ceremony be treated with respect. Capturing these memories should not be done at the expense of altering the solemnity of the ceremony. The ceremony, especially the procession, is not to be interrupted or delayed in any way.

Photograph as much as possible without a flash or light. St. Matthias Church has adequate light levels to record the event. Please do not block the view of the guests if at all possible, especially during the exchange of vows. Time allotted for posed pictures after the ceremony is one half-hour:

- for a 11.00 a.m. wedding pictures must be done by 12:30 p.m.
- for a 1:00 p.m. wedding pictures must be done by 2:30 p.m.

Thank you for your cooperation,
The Staff of St. Matthias Church