

Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church Trenton, Ohio Wedding Guidelines Effective March 1, 2012

“By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligations, they are penetrated with the Spirit of Christ, who fills their whole lives with faith, hope, and charity.”

(Familiaris Consortio, 56)

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming marriage!

To be married in the Church is a sign to the community at large, that the bride and groom are persons of faith and they wish God's blessing on their marriage. Your desire for a church wedding should reflect your commitment to your Christian faith and the practice of your Christian faith.

Because marriage is such an important and sacred step in your lives, it is essential there be some time of reflection by the engaged couple as well as a time of preparation. This preparation is a discernment process in which the irrevocable consent of the sacrament may be freely chosen, maturely considered, and clearly understood. Please be sure to read all of the wedding guidelines. Remember, the wedding is one day; marriage is for a life time.

Marriage preparation is essential for entering into the Sacrament of Marriage. Marriage preparation is not a series of hoops to jump through. Rather, the process is intended to help couples prepare for a life long healthy and happy marriage.

The parish must be notified 9 months prior to the wedding date. Priority of date will be given to parishioners, over non-parishioners. No date will be set or marriage preparation can begin until you meet briefly with the priest/deacon beforehand to ensure there are no impediments or problems that might prevent you from marrying in the Church.

Marriage Preparation Classes- MPC:

Do to the fact that we have a small parish, with limited resources. The classes are offered to all couples in the parish who are preparing for marriage, thus, there may be multiple couples taking the classes together, at the same time.

Each couple is required to attend all five classes, if a class is missed it must be made-up at the discretion of the Priest/Deacon.

First Class- will be an introductory session: where general information is gathered, an introduction is given on the purpose and goal of marriage, general view of what will be discussed in the five sessions, an introduction to NFP (National Family Planning), and the taking of a personality test known as FOCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding & Study).

Second Class - will cover the basic teaching on marriage: what is love, what are the 4 goods of marriage. Why marriage is a sacrament, as well as other basic Catholic teachings.

Third Class- will address marriage and the Bible- God's plan for a successful marriage.

Fourth Class- will cover the basics of living out a good marriage: communication, finances, sex, values, "good practices", trust and most important forgiveness.

FIFTH CLASS- Each couple will meet one on one with the priest or deacon, addressing your personal relationship. This meeting will be scheduled on a day that works for both you and the priest/deacon. During the session you will go over questions (M-1) that you received in your packet at the first class as well as review the FOCUS test that you took during class 1. This class is a discussion to address concerns or issues of your relationship. It is also at this meeting that you will be preparing for the wedding ceremony. Questions about the wedding date will be addressed in this session, not before. Marriage Preparation is about preparing for marriage, not the wedding. So, it is designed to make sure couples are ready for marriage, thus planning is withheld until the end of Marriage Preparation.

Additional Requirements of Marriage Preparation:

- Couples preparing for marriage are also required to participate in a Natural Family Planning (NFP) program. Those who do not fulfill this requirement will not be married at Holy Name, no exceptions! To sign up for an NFP class, please refer to handout.
- A couple can also choose to attend a multi-day program on Theology of the Body or God's Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage. These programs are offered at Ruah Woods on the Westside of Cincinnati. Please contact them for current dates and times either by phone 513-407-8672 or on the internet at ruahwoods.org.
- Both of the above programs should be contacted prior to beginning marriage at Holy Name, so that you are aware of dates and times to attend

so that the programs can be completed before the end of your Marriage Preparation. The responsibility to connect them is yours. You must obtain and turn into Holy Name a letter confirming you completed one of the required programs

- Copy of Baptismal certificate- a recent copy of your baptismal certificate is required by the Archdiocese for your marriage file
- Completing the M-I questions that will be reviewed in Class 5, this will also be placed in your marriage file
- Marriage License by the State of Ohio- which can be gotten within 60 days of the wedding. No wedding can occur if a couple fails to get a marriage license.
- Contact Music Director 4 months before the wedding to get together

Wedding taking Place with the context of a Mass

A wedding may take place within a Mass if both parties are faithful practicing Catholics. What does this mean? Both must be actively living out their faith and attending Sunday Mass on a regular basis.

Mass is a symbol of unity, where we as the One Body of Christ share in the mystery of Christ, most especially in the Eucharist. Since non-Catholics or nonpracticing Catholics cannot receive Communion. Therefore the Church does not allow for a Wedding Mass between a Catholic and non-Catholic, so it won't cause disunity, when the point of the marriage rite is to celebrate unity.

Catholic couples are also free to choose to have the ceremony outside of Mass.

Shortage of priests: do to the shortage of priest, a priest may not be able to celebrant your wedding. In that case, the marriage will be performed by a deacon outside the context of Mass since deacons are unable to celebrate the Mass.

Wedding celebrated within a ceremony

- 1) If one or both are not faithfully practicing Catholics there seems to be no reason why they would want a Mass, since they are not living according to the teachings of the Church, since the Eucharist signifies the ultimate act of unity with Christ.
- 2) If one of the parties is not Catholic, weddings between a Catholic and a

nonCatholic are celebrated in the context of a ceremony. This does not keep the wedding from being beautiful or keep the marriage from being Sacramental, that is, if the other party is validly baptized.

The Catholic party will sign a statement during Marriage Preparation promising to continue in the practice of the faith and to raise their children as Catholics.

3) Cohabiting couples- If the couple is cohabiting (Living together while engaged in sexual activity). The wedding will not take place in the context of a Mass, even if both are Catholic. Why? Because if the couple were really faithfully practicing their Catholic faith, they would not be cohabiting. If you are wondering why, it's because the couple is boldly living contrary to the Church's teaching on this matter. Having a wedding while this is occurring, would make a mockery of the core of the faith, which the Eucharist fully represents. Engaging in sex prior to marriage is a mortal sin and as such cannot receive Holy Communion anyway. At Mass it would be very strange if the couple was not receiving communion, and if they received communion, when forbidden, would lead others to scandal.

However, if the couple during the marriage preparation repents after seeing the error of their ways and no longer cohabit, the wedding may take place within a Mass.

Prior Marriage

Only couples who are free to marriage, meaning they have never been married or the spouse as died. If someone has been married and received a divorce, which is an unfortunate a reality in our fallen world, one is unable to get married in the Catholic Church, without first receiving a Declaration of Nullity (Annulment). If you have not gotten an annulment please speak to a priest or deacon, to discuss if this is possibility.

Refusing a Marriage

Marriage is a public event and has certain requirements both in Church and civil law. The priest or deacon can refuse to marry a couple if he believes there are serious reasons - why a couple should not be married in the Church. Hopefully, the couple will recognize this (on their own), before the priest/deacon has to make the decision.

The Wedding Liturgy

The celebration of Christian Marriage within the context of a liturgy has a long tradition in the Catholic Church.

The Wedding Liturgy as well as all liturgies are sacred and belong to the entire Church. Therefore it is important that the Wedding Liturgy reflect what we believe about **the beauty of marriage and its relationship to Jesus Christ and His Church**; and that this relationship is the **central focus** of the Wedding Liturgy.

Who is involved in the planning of the Wedding Liturgy?

The priest or deacon will plan the liturgy directly with the couple. The music director will plan the music directly with the couple. The priest, deacon or music director will not plan the Wedding Liturgy with other family members or friends. We will work directly with the couple. Please share this with your family to prevent any confusion.

No weddings in Lent

Because Lent is a penitential season, the Church does not allow weddings to be celebrated during Lent, check the calendar to see when Lent begins and ends. Although, Advent is time of preparation for Christmas, the Church does not forbid weddings during the season of Advent.

Wedding Liturgy Times

Wedding Liturgy times are at **11:00 am, noon, or 1:00 pm on Saturday**. Only one wedding will take place on the day. The rehearsal is on Friday evening at 4:00, 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. If the couple decides to have the Wedding to take place on Sunday at Mass, this would occur at the 10:30 a.m. Mass. The Wedding Liturgy would be handled differently since it would take place during a regularly scheduled Mass. (This could become a normal practice in the future since we have fewer priests.) .

The Wedding Party

The members of the Wedding Party are determined by the couple. Please keep in mind that two people must serve as official witnesses. They must be of sound mind, of sufficient maturity and at least the age of fourteen. When selecting a flower girl or ring bearer please consider the age and attentiveness of the child. If the child is too young to perform her role, consider choosing someone different.

No special considerations will be given, for example: allowing her being brought in by a wagon.

Our recommendation is she should be at least 5 years old. Please always designate a care taker should the child need special attention during the Wedding Liturgy.

It is important to note that members of the Wedding party including parents are not to have other roles in the liturgy such as a lector or cantor.

The Wedding Procession

The Church envisions that the procession will begin with the servers, the priest or deacon, the wedding party, the parents and finally the Bride and Groom. The Bride and Groom coming in together expresses fully that the husband and wife are equal partners in the marriage. **However**, there has been a long tradition of the Bride being escorted by her father, and the Groom greeting the Bride and father.

Lectors

Lectors are those who proclaim the OT and NT readings and if desired the petitions. The Gospel is reserved to the Priest/Deacon. For Wedding Liturgies at Mass the lectors must be Catholic. For Wedding Liturgies outside of Mass the lectors do not have to be Catholic. Lectors will practice the readings and petitions during the Wedding Rehearsal.

No Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Holy Name is a small parish, so there is no need for anyone but the priest to distribute Holy Communion and no Precious Blood will be offered to the congregation. Within Mass only the Priest and the Couple will receive both the Body and the Precious Blood. Let it be clear that only faithfully practicing Catholics can receive Holy Communion, so make sure this is clear to your wedding party and guests. It is your responsibility, as a Catholic, to make the effort to keep those who are not faithfully practicing Catholics from receiving Holy Communion. The priest will also announce this at Mass before the distribution of Communion.

Gift Bearers

For weddings that take place during Mass the couple should select two people to bring forth the bread and the wine that will be used for the celebration of the Eucharist.

Wedding Coordinators

The parish does not have wedding coordinators, if you would like to bring your own this is fine, but make sure they speak to the priest/deacon beforehand, for direction and practices.

Altar Servers

The parish has servers available to assist at the Altar during a Wedding Mass, but this has to be communicated to the priest prior to the wedding. Servers from outside the parish are permitted, provided that they are practicing Catholics who regularly serve at their own parish church.

Music

Music at any worship service is integral to the purpose of the liturgy and should be chosen to express the fundamental understanding of the ceremony. However, no matter how personally meaningful some music may be to the bride and groom, the principle that governs its usage, is its sacredness and acceptability in the religious aspect of the wedding. Music that is not appropriate will not be allowed in the church, we suggest you play it at reception. **For example No CD's or artificially music is allowed in the liturgies.** You are **required** to meet with a musician from the parish, generally this is Brenda Hicks. You are responsible for contacting Brenda **four months prior to the wedding**. Brenda is to be paid for her service, even if you have chosen another musician, she still needs to be consulted. A fee of no less than \$100.00 is to be paid- make check payable to Holy Name. No music can be used unless it has first been approved. Brenda Hicks can be reached at 513867-0501.

Flowers

Flowers have always been a traditional decoration for a wedding ceremony. Keep in mind that during certain liturgical seasons, the church is already appropriately decorated with flowers. This is especially true during the Christmas and Easter seasons. No one may move any plants or flowers that are already in place. A fresh

flower arrangement is permitted on the floor in front of the Altar. Flowers must be real, no artificial flowers are allowed.

No plastic clips, metal hooks, pipe-cleaners or tape may be used. No candles or small vigil lights are permitted to be attached to the pews. Flowers are to be placed and removed from the Church at times that will not interfere with other parish services.

Sometimes couples present flowers to Mary during the Wedding Liturgy. The origins of this custom are not well understood. Many times couples themselves are not really sure why they are presenting flowers to Mary.

The presenting of flowers to Mary is **not** part of the Catholic Wedding Liturgy and is not permitted at Holy Name. Should couples have a special devotion to Mary it is suggested that they present flowers to Mary privately before or after the Wedding Rehearsal or on the day of the Wedding. This way the flowers are then present for the entire Wedding Liturgy.

The Aisle Runner

No aisle runners are allowed. This is a safety issue.

Candles

Only the candles normally used in Liturgy will be used.

No unity candle- this is not a Catholic liturgical symbol and it is not a part of the Roman Catholic Marriage Rite. The unity candle has enjoyed widespread acceptance but its origins and meanings are confused and how it worked its way into the Catholic marriage ceremony is somewhat of a mystery. Thus, Holy Name does **not** permit the use of the unity candle during the celebration of marriage both within and outside the mass. You can make better and more appropriate use of the unity candle during the rehearsal dinner or at the reception.

Pictures

Pictures are permitted during the procession and the recession of the bridal party. Wedding guests are instructed to refrain from taking pictures during the ceremony. Video cameras may be used anywhere before and during the procession. Some photographers wish to take pictures before the ceremony. This is permitted if arrangements are made ahead of time. Photographers must not move any sanctuary furnishings nor are they to stand on any pews or chairs. If the wedding

takes place in the context of a Mass, no flash photography is allowed once the Mass begins. Please discuss these guidelines with your photographer so there are no misunderstandings with our policies.

Receiving Line

Due to time constraints a receiving line after the Wedding Liturgy is discouraged. This can be done at the reception. No throwing of birdseed, rice, confetti, and flower petals, as well as the blowing of bubbles is allowed. It creates a hazard to those attending the wedding and later liturgies. In addition, clean-up is the responsibility of the wedding party; please leave the Church as clean as you found it.

Alcohol

NO ALCOHOL is permitted anywhere on the church property. Any member of the wedding party showing signs of alcohol use before the rehearsal or at the wedding will be asked to leave the church and its grounds. This could cause the wedding to be cancelled or delayed!

Dressing Area

Holy Name does not have a dressing room. However, the basement of the Church may be used. Please make sure that people in the Wedding Party are not going into other rooms or into the Church until it is time to do so.

Fees

There is no fee for the church for parishioners; a wedding is a part of the normal sacramental life of the parish. However, there is a fee for non-parishioners of \$750.

There is a fee for the organist \$100 - payable to Holy Name.

The fee for servers is \$20 per server – cash is preferred

Please make arrangements to pay all fees prior to the day of the Wedding.

The Timeline

The newly engaged couple must make arrangements to meet with the priest or deacon **nine months** prior to the anticipated date. No date will be set or reserved until the priest or deacon has met with the couple. Please be sure to bring your

calendars with you. **Please be aware that no weddings will take place during Lent and weddings during Advent are discouraged.**

- Any Weddings during Advent will have **minimal** decorations and music.
- Weddings during Christmas and Easter are welcome, however depending on where the date of the Wedding falls the selection of readings may be limited. The priest or deacon can be helpful in this area.
- Four months before the Wedding the couple needs to contact the director of music to set a date to meet and go over the music.
- The day of the Wedding Rehearsal make sure all fees are paid and the Marriage License is given to the priest or deacon.
- The day of the Wedding take time to pray and thank the Lord for the gift of your spouse. Pray for your spouse and pray with your spouse. Relax and do not become stressed out. Enter the marriage with a peaceful spirit. Finally, it is suggested that the Bride and Groom together welcome their guests to the Wedding. Since we are people of faith it is okay for the Bride and Groom to see each other on the day of the Wedding.

Closing

We hope you find these wedding guidelines helpful as you prepare for a life long marriage together. Remember, **the wedding is one day; marriage is for a life time**. May the Lord bless you, your family and friends as you prepare for marriage in the Catholic Church.

The couple must sign below and bring a copy of it, before a wedding can be scheduled. Your signature indicates that you have read, understood, and accepted the terms of the guidelines. If you do not sign the form, you will not have your wedding at Holy Name. Your signature also states that you have accepted these terms and that if you later contradict or refuse any of the rules, proceeds, or policies set forth in the guidelines your wedding may be cancelled, without any financial or legal recourse on your part – i.e. Holy Name is not responsible for expenses occurred, if the wedding was terminated because of your rejection to the rules/policies of the fore-mentioned Guidelines. It is sad that this has to be stated in this way, but there are some couples who do not take seriously the nature of marriage, the Teachings of the Church, or the policies of Holy Name parish.

Bride to be

Date

Groom to be

Date

Priest/Deacon

Date