



Parish Guidelines for Weddings



**St. Michael's Parish
Canton, Ohio**



So you are planning to get married.
*Congratulations! Your celebration of
the Sacrament of Matrimony will be
both a very personal moment, and a
time you share with family and friends,
and with the broader community of
believers. The following considerations
are offered as an aid to you as you plan
your wedding at St. Michael's.*

Fr. Don King



Marriage in the Catholic Church

The sacramental nature of Marriage and the exchange of vows by the couple are the most significant aspects of the marriage celebration and planning. Preparation and ceremonies should give these factors the attention they deserve. All elements of the ceremony, including the music, should reflect the distinctive quality of Christian faith and give witness to our Christian values regarding marriage, family life, and Christ-like simplicity and love.

Anyone considering sacramental marriage is challenged to share the conviction of Jesus regarding the sacredness of marriage. Christian Marriage is not only a commitment between a man and a woman, but a life-long commitment of the couple to God and the community of believers. When you come to Church and vow, “I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, I will love you and honor you all the days of my life,” you make a commitment to God and the church as well as each other. In this covenant of love you vow to be an example of God’s love for his people as symbolized in your love for one another. In return, God and the community of believers joyfully commit to supporting you.

Diocesan policy requires engaged couples to contact the parish at least six months prior to the planned wedding date.

No other plans or reservations should be made before securing a time in the parish calendar and the assurance of one of the parish priests that the date is acceptable. Permission to have an outside priest or deacon as celebrant of your wedding can be obtained from the pastor at St. Michael’s, especially if the priest or deacon is a close friend or relative. If arrangements are changed, or if the wedding is to be cancelled, the parish should be notified immediately so that the time may be made available for other couples.

A non-Catholic marrying a Catholic is not required to join the Catholic Church or to sign any promises. The Catholic party is required to be a practicing Catholic (i.e. regular attendance at

Mass) and to promise in writing to do what is in his/her power to have their children baptized and raised as Catholics. Priests who are family members or friends, and also non-Catholic ministers are welcome to have a part in the marriage celebration.

If either party has been previously married, the disposition of the previous marriage(s) is to be discussed before setting a date. A marriage may not be scheduled if there is a previous marriage to be annulled. **Please note: The Catholic Church considers marriages between non-Catholic couples to be valid.** Therefore even non-Catholics are required to have previous marriages annulled by the Church before marriage in the Catholic Church. A civil marriage license must be obtained at a courthouse in Ohio no sooner than two months before and no later than one day before the wedding. The license should be given to the priest at the rehearsal.

Getting Married at St. Michael's

You are asked to sign and return the "Wedding Checklist" along with a deposit in order to secure your requested date. A deposit of \$400 is required to hold the date and time. \$125 of that deposit is a stipend for the priest, \$125 for the services of the Parish Music Director, \$50 for the Cantor and \$100 for the use of the church. Non-parishioners who are Catholic may request to be married at St. Michael's with a letter of permission from their pastor. The deposit for non-parishioners is \$500, \$125 of which is for the priest, \$125 for the Music Director, \$50 for the Cantor and \$200 for the use of the church.

Weddings are usually scheduled no later than 1:30 p.m. or after the 4 p.m. Saturday Mass (5:45). Weddings are not scheduled for Sundays. Other times and days may be arranged. Weddings are not celebrated during Lent. Due to the Saturday 4:00 Mass, we ask that if you are scheduled for the 1:30 p.m. wedding, you finish at the church by 3:30 p.m. The parlor is available for the wedding party 1½ hours prior to the ceremony.

Engaged couples are required to participate in the parish's pre-marriage program or an Engaged Encounter. Marriage

preparation at St. Michael's includes several meetings with one of the parish priests (at which you will be asked to take the FOCCUS pre-marriage inventory) or with the priest who will be officiating at the wedding liturgy. You are asked to participate in some form of pre-marriage program, preferably a series of meetings with a sponsor couple in the parish and to meet with the Parish Director of Music. It is our hope that by providing this service to you, you may be better prepared not only for your wedding day, but more especially for your married life. A couple who participates in an "Engaged Couples Weekend" or pre-Cana program in another diocese may be dispensed from some of the sessions indicated above. Couples are also encouraged to participate in the Diocese of Youngstown one day retreat for engaged couples.

The Wedding Celebration

The parish will provide you with a booklet that will help you choose readings, prayers, etc. for your wedding. Please review it carefully before your planning meeting with the Parish Music Director. Good taste, good sense, and good faith should lead you to plan a wedding that is a true celebration of faith. The Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated within Mass or without Mass. Decisions regarding readings, blessings, etc. should be reviewed with the celebrant before being included in a wedding program.

All music for the wedding is to be selected and planned with the assistance and approval of the parish's Director of Music. Sacred music is appropriate for the church. Popular music, show tunes, etc. should be saved for your reception. Much of the music chosen for the wedding should involve the congregation in the singing. If a cantor/soloist is desired, the Director of Music can provide a list of available cantors from the parish. You may also use cantors from outside the parish, as well as other musicians in addition to the Director of Music to add to the ceremony. Regardless, you are asked to work with the Director of Music to come to any of these decisions. The cost of all musicians and cantors, apart from the Director of Music, should be discussed with the musicians themselves.

Brides and grooms are encouraged to consider celebrating their wedding in a way that is consistent with our community's worship and with the dictates of good hospitality. The use of children younger than four years of age is discouraged. Use of friends or relatives as readers, gift bearers, etc., is encouraged. In the case of a second marriage for either bride, groom, or both, good taste and respect for your guests dictates that the celebration be kept simple.


The church space is usually decorated in greenery. Please **do not move** the arrangements that are in the sanctuary. Floral arrangements need not be elaborate. Artificial or silk or plastic flowers are not acceptable as sanctuary flowers. When there is more than one wedding on the same day, arrangements may be made between the two families to share the flowers. Flowers placed in the Church should be taken with you immediately following the ceremony. Additional candelabras for the aisle may be rented from the Church. Please contact the sacristan. The use of an aisle runner is not permitted.

A rehearsal is usually held the evening before the wedding at a pre-arranged time, but another time may be selected if it is more convenient. The bridal party, the parents of the bride and the groom, and those who will read the scriptures (two readings and the intercessions) should be invited. The marriage license should be brought to the rehearsal. After the wedding ceremony, the license will be returned to the best man and court will be notified of the wedding. The bride and groom are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to their wedding.

Photographs, the use of flash, and videotaping of the wedding liturgy is permissible. Please advise your photographer to exercise discretion so that he/she neither delays the liturgy nor becomes conspicuous and detracts from the solemn and reverent nature of the rite. The photographer should never be in the sanctuary area. Pictures should be completed at least 30 minutes before the next function in church. Rice or bird seed are not permitted in wedding celebrations. Bubbles, balloons and bells are acceptable.

If the wedding is celebrated within the Mass, all Catholics in good standing with the Church are encouraged to receive the Eucharist. Ecumenical directives permit reception of the Eucharist by Catholics only. Please advise your guests of this regulation. Two altar servers will be provided by the parish for these weddings. It is appropriate to tip the servers. The amount of the tip is up to the couple. In the case of an inter-faith marriage or a marriage where one person is not a practicing Catholic, the Catholic marriage Rite without Mass is acceptable and may be preferred.

Our Fannon Center, Helman Community Center and Hartman Gymnasium are available for wedding receptions and rehearsal dinners. Please contact Mrs. Jeanne Ryder, Parish Secretary at extension 220, to reserve these facilities. You will need to make the proper arrangements with a caterer.



Parish Office: 330-492-3119

Pastor: Fr. Don King, ext. 212

Music Director: Mrs. Libby Saxton, ext. 215

Sacristan: Mrs. Diana Lillich, ext. 221

Sponsor Couples: Mrs. Jeanne Ryder, ext. 220

