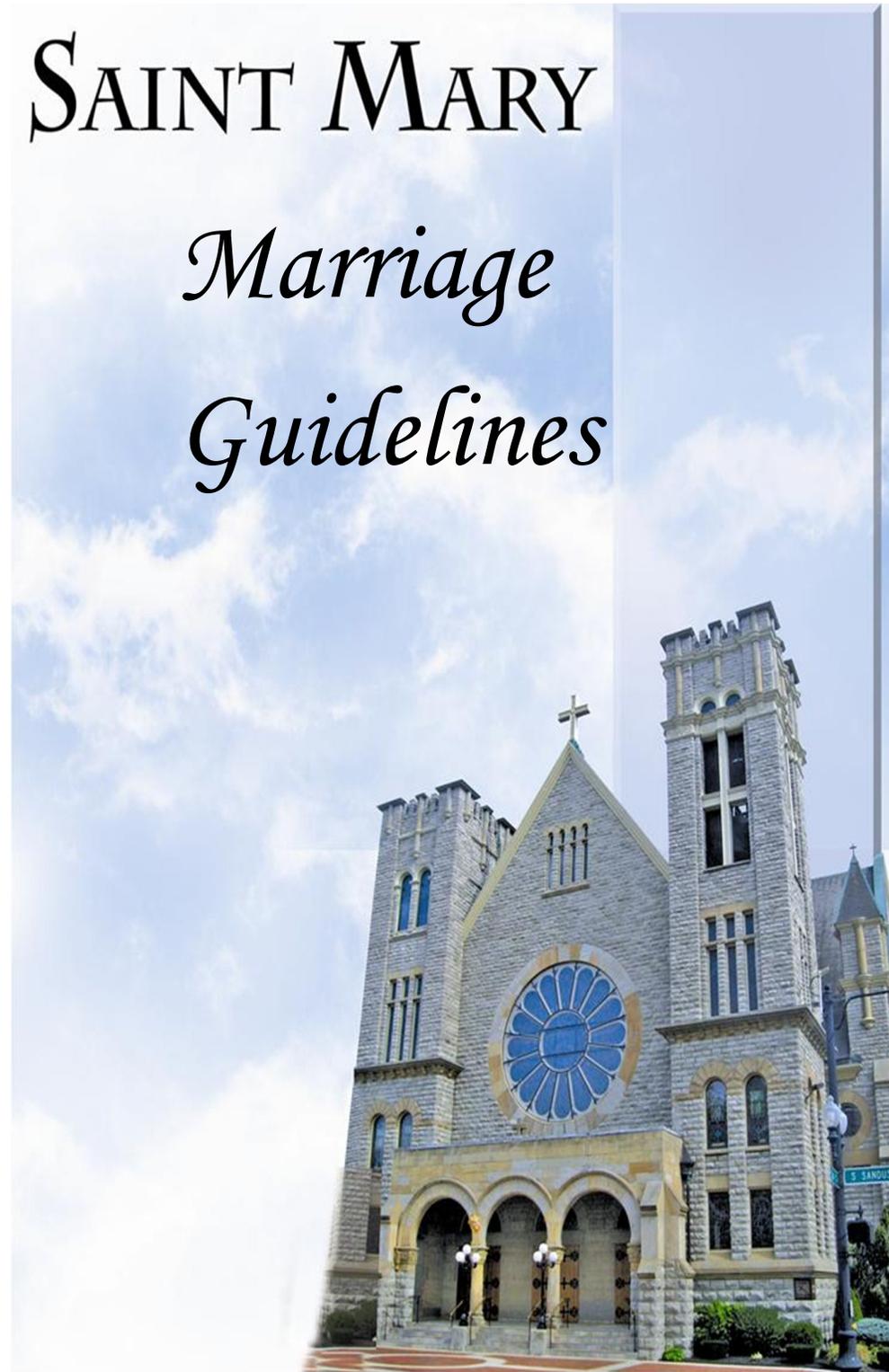
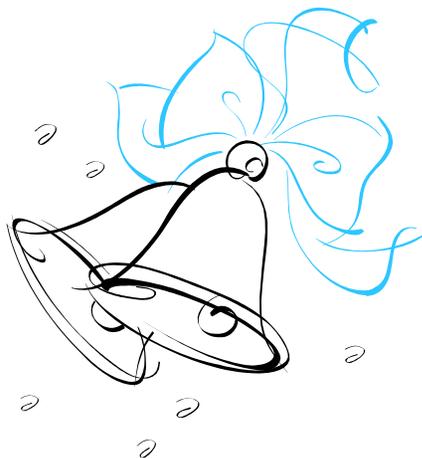


SAINT MARY

Marriage

Guidelines



Introduction

May your love for each other

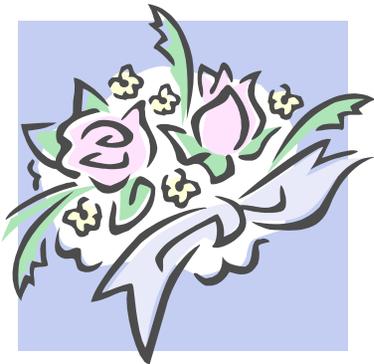
Grow stronger each day.

May it be a day you will long remember

And share with your children.

May the Lord bless you and keep you

All the days of your lives.



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.



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:

- At least one of the parties must be a practicing Catholic and have some tie to St. Mary Church.
- Marriage preparation sessions are necessary and should begin at least six months prior to the wedding date. Once you have contacted a priest or deacon and they have agreed to do your wedding, the church will be reserved.
- As a couple, you both will need to participate actively in an Engaged Couple Conference before the wedding. This will allow you to explore your relationship in a variety of different avenues before your final commitment. The priest or deacon will provide you with upcoming dates.
- If Catholic, the bride or groom should contact his/her parish of baptism to have a recent copy (within 6 months of wedding date) of his/her Baptismal, Holy Communion, and Confirmation dates sent to the priest or deacon performing the wedding ceremony. A non-Catholic bride or groom who has been baptized in another Christian faith must have a copy of his/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.

Church Information

- The church will hold 550 guests and an additional 50 in the balcony if necessary.
- The church is air conditioned in the summer months.
- Aisle runners are prohibited due to insurance regulations.
- Candles are not permitted along the aisle, or in bridesmaids' bouquets because of the risk of fire.
- Please note that rice, confetti, birdseed, rose petals, (real or silk) are not to be used because they cause unsafe walking conditions. You may use bubbles or bells if you wish.
- Pew bows may be used. There are nine rows of pews on each side of the center aisle. Scotch tape, duct tape, and thumb tacks are not to be used anywhere in the church because of the damage to the wood finish.
- Flowers, plants, and trees are appropriate for the decoration of liturgical space. We recommend that arrangements be placed either in front of the altar, ambo, or on stands flanking the sanctuary.
- The Bridal Room is located on the lower level of the church where the bride and her attendants are welcome to dress. The wedding coordinator can make arrangements as well for the groom and his attendants to dress in the server dressing area. Please be sure to ask someone from your family to clean up both areas upon leaving the church.
- ***No food, beverages, alcohol, or illegal substances will be permitted in or around the church premises.*** It is disrespectful to your guests and the holy stature of the church.
- It is asked that someone be in charge of cleaning up all areas of the church upon your departure so as to not be invoiced for a clean-up fee.

Photographers and Videographers

As your photographer captures 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 of the regulations of taking pictures in the church.

- For your convenience, St. Mary has a videographer and your wedding can be taped for \$50.00
- Pictures of the entrance procession and concluding procession are permitted.
- Please refrain from using extra lighting, floodlights, or flashes during the ceremony.
- While we encourage pictures, we do ask that the photographer/videographer be stationed in a pew in the middle of the church only.
- Photographers/videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary area of the altar.
- Pictures from the balcony are permitted and encouraged during the liturgy.
- Picture taking after the wedding is permitted for no more than one hour from the end of the wedding. The church must be clear of all wedding party members at 3:30. A receiving line may be best at the reception.
- Inappropriate poses such as lifting skirts, laying in front of the altar, etc. are to be taken elsewhere and not in the church.
- Feel free to use our beautiful garden area for your photos.

Scheduling the Time of the Wedding

Weddings are normally scheduled on Friday evenings at 5:30 or Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m.

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

Wedding Rehearsals

Rehearsals normally take place the evening prior to your wedding. Please be prompt and allow 45 minutes to one hour for the rehearsal. Only the following individuals need attend:

- Members of the wedding party
- Readers
- Parents of the bride and groom

Prior to the rehearsal we ask that you prepare a list of how the bridal party will enter the church for the ceremony. Please be respectful and attentive while you are in the church so that the practice runs smoothly.

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.



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.

Presiders

In the Roman Catholic tradition, 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, his/her minister is most welcomed and encouraged to participate in the wedding ceremony.

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.

Options for Liturgical Celebration

Optional customs that are not part of the Rite of Marriage itself, but may be incorporated into your ceremony are:

Unity candle

Flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Flowers to the parents

Please feel free to ask the priest preparing you for marriage if you have any questions regarding these options.

Musical Guidelines

Our parish liturgist/organist is given priority for playing at all weddings celebrated in our church. If someone other than St. Mary's organist is considered, they must be a certified organist/pianist and be approved by our parish liturgist/organist. If they wish to practice prior to the ceremony, they must arrange a time through the church office.

In keeping with the religious nature of the wedding ceremony, the music you select is to be of a religious nature. Secular music, such as top ten songs or other romantic ballads are not appropriate. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission has compiled a list of appropriate songs to be used before and during your ceremony. Couples preparing for marriage should contact our liturgist/organist ***at least three months*** in advance of the wedding to determine appropriate music for their liturgy. Our liturgist/organist can be reached by calling the parish office at (419)447-2087.

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 \$200.00 is asked to help cover the church expenses and is ***due one month in advance of your wedding date***. The liturgist/organist fee is \$150.00 and is also ***due one month in advance***. Two altar servers are required for a full Mass and they 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.

- **Church fee \$200.00 due one month in advance**
- **Organist fee \$150.00 due one month in advance**
- **Servers (suggested donation, \$10-\$20.00 each)**
- **Priest, Deacon**