

Saint Paul Catholic Church
241 S. Main Street
North Canton, Ohio 44720
330 499-2201

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Wedding Guidelines



- † Wedding times and dates
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- † Floral Arrangements

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To the bride and groom: Please give these notes to your florist, or to whomever you place in charge of church decorations for your wedding.

- If the church is decorated for a liturgical season - Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter, these decorations are to remain. Decorations that you bring should complement those already in place.
- No flowers or decorations are permitted on the altar of sacrifice. Decorations may not impede movement around the altar.
- No decorations taller than the altar.
- When two or more weddings take place the same day, couples may wish to share the cost of flowers and decorations.
- Absolutely no tape or sticky substances may be used to fasten flowers, decorations, or ribbon to the pews or to any other church furniture.
- The center aisle is 35 feet long. Starting at the baptismal font to the first pew. **However, aisle runners are highly discouraged.**
- Because of the number of weddings and services at Saint Paul Church, decorating the church often cannot be done until forty minutes to a half hour before the wedding. If decorations are brought before that time, they may be put in the space between the confessional rooms on the south side of the church.
- Rented candelabras, aisle candles and other rented decorations are to be removed immediately after the ceremony and picture taking.
- Plastic coverings must be placed under all rented candelabras and decorations that drip. The carpet and other surfaces must be protected when live plants or other decorations that leak are used. Decorative foil around the pots or containers is not adequate protection.
- The use of water or glass containers such as floating candles or flowers is not permitted.
- For a reasonable cause, the celebrating priest or deacon reserves the right to remove or otherwise alter any decorations, both at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding.
- Please assign an individual from the family to clean up programs, flower petals, and other items after the ceremony or Mass.

Notes

WEDDING GUIDELINES

SAINT PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH NORTH CANTON, OHIO

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.
(Ephesians 5:31)

These words of St. Paul indicate the great reverence the Church has for the union of man and woman in the sacrament of Marriage. Marriage is a gift from God rooted in the creation of humankind as male and female, *in His image and likeness*. (Genesis 1:27).

Marriage establishes a sacred covenant between man and woman for the whole of life and calls them to participate in the creative love of God as a witness to God's love in the world. By its very nature, marriage is closely woven into the divine plan of creation and redemption. It is the duty of the Church to uphold the sanctity of marriage, and to guide married couples into the fullness of the life God intends for them in marriage. The Church takes seriously this responsibility towards God and the couple themselves. Her many requirements surrounding marriage exist to preserve the holiness and beauty of this union.

These guidelines are in compliance with general Church and liturgical law, diocesan regulations, and policies in effect here at St. Paul's. They seek to provide answers to most of the questions commonly asked during marriage preparation.

Congratulations! We look forward to celebrating with you this joyful moment in your lives.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A. The Place of Marriage

1. Ordinarily the wedding of a Catholic person will take place in a Catholic Church.
 - a. When both bride and groom are Catholic, the wedding may take place in the parish of either one, as they choose.
 - b. For certain reasons, permission may be obtained for an ecumenical wedding (between a Catholic and a Christian of another denomination) to take place in a non-Catholic church.
2. Permission may not be given for home, garden, or studio weddings.

B. Official Minister at the Wedding

1. With few exceptions, a priest or deacon of St. Paul will officiate at a wedding held in St. Paul's Church.
 - a. A priest or deacon who is a relative of the bride or groom or who has received one of them into the church, will be delegated to officiate at the wedding.
 - b. When permission is obtained for the wedding to take place in a non-Catholic Church, the minister of that church will be the official witness.
2. Other Catholic or non-Catholic clergy may be invited to participate in a wedding held at St. Paul. Likewise, a Catholic priest or deacon should be invited to participate when permission is obtained to have the wedding in a non-Catholic church.
3. Whoever officiates at a wedding must be licensed to perform marriages in the State of Ohio.

C. Wedding Dates and Times

1. Weddings may be scheduled for any day except Sunday, during Holy Week and a few liturgical celebration days.

I. Wedding Fees

1. **For registered members of St. Paul Parish (bride/groom and/or their parents)**, a fee of \$125.00 is required.
 - a. This covers the actual expenses the parish incurs in the preparation and planning of weddings.
 - b. The check should be made payable to St. Paul Church and should be paid at the time the church is reserved.
 - c. The marriage license should be given to the priest or deacon at the rehearsal.
 - d. Musicians are at the personal expense of the couple.
 - e. A separate stipend should be made to the priest and given to him at the rehearsal.
2. **For Non-registered Catholics** wishing to get married at St. Paul Parish, a fee of \$200.00 is required when neither the bride/groom, nor their parents are registered, active members of St. Paul Parish.
 - a. The church reserves the right to refuse the marriages of non-members.
 - b. This fee is to be paid at the time the church is reserved.
 - c. Marriage license should be given to the priest or deacon at the rehearsal.
 - d. The fee will be refunded if the wedding is canceled by the bride and/or groom.
 - e. Musicians are at the personal expense of the couple.
 - f. A separate stipend should be made to the priest and given to him at the rehearsal.

PLEASE NOTE: The all inclusive fees are non-refundable when ceremony is canceled due to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. (reference H.8., page 8)

If you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification on information contained in this booklet, please call the parish office at (330) 499-2201.

H. Other Incidentals

1. Room is available on the lower level for the bride and her attendants.
2. The use of the unity candle is not permitted since it is not a part of the liturgical rite. This is because within the liturgy, candles are always a symbol of Christ, rather than the individual. It should also be noted that the definitive sign of the couple's unity within the Marriage Rite is the blessing and conferral of rings.
3. Photographers and videographers are permitted.
*Pictures during the ceremony are permitted at the discretion of the officiating priest or deacon.
*Posed pictures may be taken before or after the ceremony as time allows. All photography for 2:30p.m. Weddings must be completed by 4:00p.m.
4. The couple may choose to have a receiving line at the church or at the reception. In either case, time constraints should dictate when it occurs.
5. The custom of releasing soap bubbles as the couple leaves the church is permissible. The custom of throwing rice, birdseed, etc., is prohibited.
6. Gowns and dresses worn by the bride and her attendants should be appropriate for a church environment.
7. Excessive glitter on garments or decorations should be avoided as it is very difficult to clean up after.
8. Because our Catholic understanding of marriage requires the full and rational consent of each party, **the consumption of alcoholic beverages in any amount before a wedding is strictly prohibited and grounds for cancellation of the wedding ceremony.**
9. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to return rooms to a clean and orderly state after use, disposing of any trash on tables or the floors and replacing any chairs or tables that may have been moved. St. Paul Parish is not responsible for the loss of any personal items left behind.
10. The groom and groomsmen normally prepare for the beginning of the ceremony in the altar servers' sacristy just off the church. No food or drink other than water is permitted in this area.

2. Weddings are permitted during Lent, though the celebration should reflect the penitential nature of the season. In the event of a wedding during Advent or Lent; please note that the church decorations, altar cloth colors, etc. *cannot be changed*.
3. Wedding times on Saturdays at St. Paul are 12:00 Noon and 2:30p.m.
 - a. These times are for the beginning of the ceremony, not the beginning of the musical prelude.
 - b. Times on other days will be scheduled with the priest or deacon.
 - c. Wedding times may never interfere with regularly scheduled church services.
4. Wedding dates and times must be scheduled at least six months prior to the wedding. The wedding date cannot be confirmed until the couple has completed the Wedding Information Form **and it has been reviewed and approved by the pastor.**

D. The Rehearsal

1. Rehearsals are ordinarily held the evening before the wedding at 5:00pm and 6:00p.m. They should be scheduled well in advance of the wedding date.
2. All members of the wedding party, plus the readers and the parents, should be present for the rehearsal.
3. The time allotted for the rehearsal is one hour.
4. The civil marriage license and all unpaid fees must be brought to the rehearsal.

E. Marriage Preparation

1. Diocesan law requires a six-month period of preparation for a wedding. This preparation will include the following:
 - a. 3-5 in person meetings with a priest or deacon, including a pre-marital inventory administered by the priest or deacon with subsequent counseling if indicated.
 - b. Participation by the couple in an approved Sponsor Couple Program, or a one-day diocesan Engaged Couple Retreat.

E. Marriage Preparation (continued)

2. This preparation is also required when permission is obtained for the wedding to take place in a non-Catholic church of the bride or groom.
3. Couples who are unable to participate in this preparation at St. Paul must have certification that they have completed an approved Catholic marriage preparation program elsewhere.
4. Professional marriage counseling may be required by law or by the judgment of the priest or deacon in some cases.

F. Documents Required

1. For Catholics, a recently issued certificate of baptism from the church of Baptism, with all the appropriate notations.
2. For a baptized Christian not of the Catholic faith, a certificate of Baptism is requested if it is available.
3. Where there has been a prior marriage or marriages on the part of either the bride or groom, there is required:
 - a. A death certificate when the prior spouse is deceased.
 - b. A Declaration of Nullity or a Declaration of Free State from an appropriate Catholic Church Tribunal in the case of any and all marriages when the prior spouse or spouses are still living.
 - c. In the case of a prior marriage, no wedding date will be scheduled until the above documentation has been provided. (In this case, please contact your local parish priest and he will be happy to explain and guide you through the process of seeking a declaration of nullity.)
4. A Marriage License from the Probate Court of Stark County or of the county of Ohio where the bride or groom reside.

G. Planning the Ceremony

1. The norms of general Church and liturgical law and diocesan and parish regulations and guidelines are to be followed for every wedding held at St. Paul Church.

2. Due to the nature of a Catholic wedding and the fixed form of marital consent, private vows are not possible before, during, or after the ceremony in the church.
3. Scripture readings and prayers for the wedding liturgy are to be selected from approved sources by the bride and groom.
 - a. A planning book for the ceremony will be provided during the marriage preparations, or is available from the parish office.
 - b. The planning sheet listing the selections, is to be given to the priest or deacon officiating the ceremony **at least two weeks before the wedding**.
4. Music is to be fitting and suited for use in a religious ceremony.
 - a. The parish music minister will assist the couple in carrying out diocesan and parish policies and practices, and must be consulted for every wedding at St. Paul Parish, even when other musicians or vocalists are engaged. When making final arrangements, the couple is asked to submit a copy of their printed program to the parish music minister.
 - b. The parish musicians and vocalists of St. Paul will be the music ministers at all weddings in the parish. The only exception are musicians who are employed as church musicians elsewhere and/or those who can demonstrate an expertise in, or reverent appreciation of, liturgical music.
 - c. Due to the sacred nature of the Rite of Marriage, secular music such as Broadway musical selections or popular songs cannot be permitted. This includes instrumental versions of popular songs. Although there are many pieces of music that may reflect beautifully upon the themes of love and relationship, all music at a Catholic wedding must reflect the religious nature of the event, which is primary. Couples who wish to use more popular pieces of music may do so appropriately at the wedding reception.
 - d. Additionally, not every piece of music with religious themes is suited to the liturgy, since not all religious music is set apart for the purpose of worship. Please consult our parish music minister in discerning which pieces will be appropriate.
 - e. Pre-recorded music is not permitted.
 - f. A Musicians fee is a separate payment from the church.
 - g. These guidelines apply to music before the liturgy as well as during it.