

Joint Heirs of the Gift of Life

(1 Peter 3:7)

Holy Matrimony and Weddings
at the
Basilica of Saint John the Baptist & Saint Peter Parish



Dear Friends:

Along with the people of the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Parish, I want to offer you my congratulations on your engagement and my prayerful support as you prepare for your married life together. Already in your lives you have received much love: first and foremost, the love of God, who is love itself, and then the love from family and friends, and the love you both have shared and received. Now, you embark on a journey together to be united with each other in love. As you do so, you come to the Church to seek God's blessings upon your union, a natural union, which is raised in Christ to the dignity of a Sacrament.

In this sacramental bond, your marriage will be an image of God's love for the world, and you are called to reflect the love and compassion of Christ. As St. Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians, the love of husband and wife is a reflection of the love of Christ for his bride, the Church.

As you prepare for your wedding day, you will likely experience days of joy and days of stress. One should never forget that the wedding day, as important as it is, is nonetheless, the first day of your married life. As you seriously plan for the festivities of that day, you should be preparing as well for the years of your married life. The preparation process of this parish will assist you, not only in planning for the marriage day itself, but for a joy-filled marriage and a life-long partnership of mutual love and respect.

This booklet outlines the marriage policies of our parish, to which all couples who are married in either the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist or in Saint Peter Church will adhere. They are presented to you so that you may have a dignified and worthy celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

As you enter this journey of preparation together, please know of my prayers for you.

Yours in Christ the Bridegroom,

Father Brian Smith

Rev. Brian C. Smith
Administrator
Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Parish

*The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman
establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life
and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses
and the procreation and education of offspring,
has been raised by Christ the Lord
to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized.*

Code of Canon Law 1055 §1

CRITERIA FOR MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Membership and Participation in Parish Life

To celebrate a wedding at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist or Saint Peter Church, at least one of the parties must be a practicing Catholic, who has been confirmed, and is an active member of the parish.*

Baptismal Certificates

A newly issued baptismal certificate (dated within six months of the wedding date) must be provided by the church of baptism. Catholics should contact their church of baptism and inform them of your date of marriage, and the address of The Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Parish, where they are to send the certificate. Photocopies of originals cannot be accepted for Catholics. Non-Catholic Christians also need to supply a record of baptism.

Freedom to Marry

- Both parties must be free from any known impediments.
- If either or both of the parties have been married, an annulment granted by the Catholic Church is required before a date for the wedding can be set.
- When requested, witness affidavits testifying to your freedom to marry are required from both the bride and groom. The priest will give you a form and ask that parents or close family members complete them in front of a Church Witness. The forms are then sealed by the parish seal and mailed to the parish for your file.

Additional Requirements

The church requires the Catholic party/parties to be faithful to the faith and to make a sincere promise to do all in his and/or her power to ensure that all their children will be baptized and raised in the Catholic faith.

Catholics, and especially those who are preparing for Marriage, are required to attend Mass every Sunday and are encouraged to make use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to more fully prepare themselves for entering into the sacred bond of Holy Matrimony.

SCHEDULING A WEDDING AT THE PARISH

- Only one wedding will be able to be scheduled on any given weekend. The wedding can take place on Saturdays at 1:00 PM or 6:00 PM (outside of Mass).
- Available dates will be given to the couple only after completing the initial premarital investigation with the priest (See the next page).
- Weddings will NOT be scheduled during, Holy Week, Christmas Eve or Day, Holy Days of Obligation and their vigils, including New Year's Eve and Day; they are discouraged during the season of Lent.
- During the Months of July and August, weddings will NOT be scheduled at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist.
- Weddings will NOT be scheduled on other dates when the church buildings are in use for parish activities and liturgies, at the discretion of the pastor.
- If the wedding liturgy is scheduled for a day other than Saturday, the time will be decided in consultation with the priest.

*Catholics who are members of another parish and wish to celebrate their wedding at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist or at Saint Peter Church will be expected to complete the preparation for marriage at their home parish. The Catholic party/parties should contact the priest at their home parish about this preparation before securing a wedding date here.

Preparation for Holy Matrimony

You have chosen to exchange your mutual promises of love and fidelity in the Catholic Church, and your faith is an important determining factor in how you will enter into this intimate relationship of marriage. The Church is responsible for discerning your intentions and capacities for making this promise, and is required to assemble various documents.

In order to set a date for the Wedding Ceremony, the couple must meet in person with the priest at least six months before the potential date of your wedding. At that first meeting, a preliminary investigation and assessment of the couple's readiness to marry will be completed, in order to determine whether or not any dispensations or permissions will be needed.

At least three additional meetings will take place with the priest or deacon who will celebrate the Liturgy and witness the marriage vows.

A pre-marital assessment inventory, called FOCCUS, will be administered either at the preliminary meeting or at some other time. The other meetings with the priest or deacon will be to discuss the results of this inventory, which will facilitate open communication of the couple with each other and with the priest.

At the final meeting, the readings for the liturgy will be selected by the couple in consultation with the priest or deacon.

In addition to the meetings with the priest, the Diocese of Youngstown requires that the couple attend the one-day diocesan-sponsored Engaged Couple Retreat.

It is also recommended that the couple complete a course in Natural Family Planning training.

Liturgical Guidelines

The Order of Celebrating Matrimony is a Sacred Rite invoking God's blessing upon the words and commitment made by the bride and groom. First and foremost, the wedding day is a sacred event, on which the couple comes before the Church and her minister to enter into a permanent bond and commit themselves in love to be faithful to each other, and to accept the gift of children from God. While marriage is, of course, for the mutual good of the spouses, it is also benefits the whole Church and the entire world. Because of this, the Liturgy is regulated by Church law, discipline, and custom. There may be no changes made to the official Order of Celebrating Matrimony.

There is a profound bond between the married life and the Eucharist. For a marriage between two Catholics, it is appropriate that the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is normally to be celebrated within the Mass.

A marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian is usually celebrated outside of Mass.

For a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Baptized person, a Mass is not recommended.

Our parishes are fully committed to making all our guests feel welcome as brothers and sisters in the Lord, joining with you in the prayer of this joyous occasion, even if they come from various religious backgrounds and experiences.

The bride and groom are the ones who minister to each other the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, and the priest or deacon serves as the witness of the Church to receive the consent and offer the blessing of God. Because of the important role that the bride and groom have in offering themselves to each other in this sacrament, they are the only ones who will be consulted to make decisions about the liturgy for the marriage. So as to avoid any confusion, the parish will not consider or share any information or details with anyone except for the bride and groom, including wedding consultants and even your parents. Please do not ask them to call the parish for information or details.

Participants in the Wedding

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Lectors or Readers

The use of a Lector or Lectors, who will proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, is encouraged. A person or two may also be selected to read the petitions of the Universal Prayers. These readers and lectors may be chosen from among your family and friends. Preference should be given to those who are practicing Catholics. They should attend the rehearsal, so they have an opportunity to practice their reading or prayers in the Church with the sound system.

Gift Presenters

If the Rite of Marriage is celebrated within Mass, two to four people should be selected to bring forward the gifts of bread, wine, and water. These may be parents, grandparents, godparents, other special friends or family, or the couple themselves. Those who present the gifts must be practicing Catholics.

Altar Servers

Generally, we do not employ the use of Altar Servers for weddings. However, you may choose to have altar servers. Please inform the priest if you are providing your own (for example, relatives of the bride or groom). If servers will be used, they must attend the rehearsal also.

BRIDAL PARTY

Brides and Bridesmaids

Upon your arrival at the Church, which must be at least 20 minutes before the time for the wedding, please gather in the room prepared for you, which will be pointed out at the time of the rehearsal. Please be aware that our church buildings do not have rooms for large gatherings of people or a suitable place for getting dressed. Please arrive at the Church already prepared for the wedding.

Groom and Best Man

Upon your arrival in the Church, which should be at least 40 minutes before the time for the wedding, please go immediately into the sacristy. Please be aware that our church buildings do not have rooms for large gatherings of people or a suitable place for getting dressed. Please arrive at the Church already prepared for the wedding.

Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor

These individuals are very special persons in your life, and by custom they accomplish two things: they are witness to the consent that you publicly exchange with each other; and they also support and encourage you in the practice of faith you are publicly professing. For the liturgical elements of the marriage rite, there may be only one witness for each spouse.

Groomsmen and Ushers

These gentlemen are first and foremost the ministers of hospitality. As soon as your guests arrive at the church, they are welcomed by a groomsman or usher, and accompanied to a place in the church. These men may also be the ones who hand out your programs.

Children in the Wedding Party

Please consider carefully the age of any children you might wish to include in your wedding party. Young children can sometimes be quite overwhelmed (and perhaps a little frightened) by the spectacle of the wedding ceremony, especially the opening procession. Children must be able to walk the length of the aisle, and they may not be carried or carted in a wagon or any similar vehicle. Children must be at least four years old, unless prior permission is given by the priest for a younger child. Flower Girls may carry a basket or bouquet of flowers, but may not drop petals in the aisle. Ring bearers may carry a pillow with artificial rings, but the actual rings which will be blessed and exchanged during the Rite of Marriage must be handled by a member of the bridal party approved by the priest (usually the best man).

VISITING CLERGY

Some couples have a priest or deacon in the family or among their close friends, whom they wish to invite to participate in their special day. Deacons may be invited to participate, but they may not serve as the Church's witness of a marriage if a priest is present. Catholic priests and deacons in good standing with the Church are welcome to celebrate or participate in marriage in our parishes. The visiting priest or deacon must contact the rector/pastor for permission and delegation, and, if he is from a different diocese, he must obtain a letter of good standing from his bishop or superior. Normally, the priest or deacon who witnesses the marriage vows will also conduct the rehearsal.

GUESTS

Parking is available in the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist parking lot located between the Parish Hall and Rectory, and parallel parking on right side of McKinley Avenue.

Parking is available in the Saint Peter Church parking lot on the south side of the church between the church and the school.

The limousine or bus for the bridal party can park on the street directly in front of either church.

All guests are responsible for their automobiles.

Wheelchair and Disability Access:

Handicapped parking is available in the both parish parking lots.

At the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist, there is a ramp located at the northwest entrance.

At Saint Peter Church, ramps are located at the northeast and southeast entrances.

Receiving Lines and Guest Books are not permitted at the churches before or after weddings.

OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS

Wedding Planners or Consultants:

If you have contracted someone else to help with your wedding, please understand that this person's responsibilities do not pertain to the liturgy and that they are not to interfere in any way with the responsibilities of the parish staff, which include the preparation, rehearsal and celebration of the liturgy. Your Consultants, while they may be important for your organization of the day before and after the marriage celebration, will not have any role in the rehearsal or wedding in the Church. They will adhere to the policies of this handbook, or they will be asked to vacate the premises until the end of the wedding.

Florists:

Please see **Appendix 1** regarding flowers and decorations. A copy of the instructions on that page is to be given to the florist.

Photographers and Videographers:

Please see **Appendix 2** regarding flowers and decorations. A copy of the instructions on that page is to be given to the florist.

Other Information

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

The couple must acquire a marriage license from Stark County or another appropriate county in the State of Ohio and bring it with them to the rehearsal. Without a marriage license, it is not legal to perform the ceremony.

THE WEDDING FEE

The fee for a wedding at our parish is \$2,000.

This fee assists in covering the expenses incurred by the parish in helping you celebrate your wedding day, including:

- the honorarium for the priest;
- the stipend for the organist and the cantor for their hours of preparation for and participation in your wedding day, and for the altar server;
- the flowers at the high altar; (see Page 15 about flowers and decorations)
- the upkeep of our church buildings and facilities.

The Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Church are both historical buildings that speak to the mysteries of our faith, elevate our eyes and minds to the beauty of God's Kingdom, and inspire us to continue to give God the finest of who we are, following the example of our ancestors in the faith who poured their livelihoods into the construction and preservation of these sacred spaces.

The fee is nonnegotiable and **MUST** be paid before rehearsal begins. One check is to be written to the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Parish.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Wedding Rehearsals are usually held on the evening before the marriage celebration at 4:00 PM or 5:00 PM. They typically last one hour. The Wedding Rehearsal is an important part of the preparation for the ceremony. It allows members of the wedding party to become familiar with the environment of our church and with the roles they will assume as part of the liturgy. The person directing the rehearsal (usually the priest celebrant) will give a brief overview of the liturgy to help all concerned understand the prayerful nature of the celebration.

Only those directly involved in the ceremony should be invited to the actual rehearsal in the church - all others should be directed to meet you at the rehearsal dinner site. Those who should be present at your rehearsal in the church include the bride and groom, parents, step-parents, etc.,

Bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, and gift bearers. At the rehearsal a responsible adult must accompany any children who are in the wedding party. We ask that you require all these members of your wedding party to be present for the rehearsal. The wedding rehearsal will begin at the agreed time, regardless of who is absent at that time, including the bride and groom.

We suggest that you ask everyone to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled time. The rehearsal itself is not the time for discussion and decision-making. All the decisions regarding the liturgy and logistics will be decided by the couple in consultation with the priest. Please be aware, as well, that the musicians will not be present for the rehearsal.

FOOD, ALCOHOL, AND DRUGS

It is not permitted to bring any food, alcohol or drugs into the church and smoking is not permitted inside any of the buildings. It is absolutely forbidden to consume any alcohol or to use any drugs, before the rehearsal or wedding on the part of the bride, groom, or members of the bridal party. If it is discovered that any alcohol or drugs have been used, the party or parties involved will not be permitted to take part in the ceremony. If the Bride or Groom have consumed alcohol or recreational drugs, the validity of the marriage would be questionable, and, therefore, the marriage will not take place.

THE BASILICA OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST AND SAINT PETER PARISH, CANTON, OHIO

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Florists and Decorators

1. Please check-in with the priest upon your arrival. He will review the floral/wedding décor guidelines with you, even if you have provided flowers for a wedding here in the past. You are requested to provide a current business card for our files.
2. Weddings at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Parish are scheduled at 1:00 PM or 6:00 PM. The set up time allowed is one hour before the ceremony begins, and must be completed in twenty minutes, so as not to interfere with the arrival of the bridal party and guests.
3. Flower arrangements for the High Altar are provided as part of the service of the parish. No additional flower arrangements are permitted in the sanctuary.
4. Pew-end decorations may be used at regular intervals along the entire length of the aisle. However, they may not be attached by pinning, gluing, nailing, tacking, taping or stapling. Elastic bands, plastic pew clips or ribbon may be used.
5. Pews must never be blocked by ribbons, cords, strings, etc.
6. Aisle runners are not permitted.
7. None of the parish furnishings or liturgical decorations may be altered, moved or removed under any circumstances. Keep in mind that different colors are used during the varying liturgical seasons throughout the year. This is a general calendar: Advent - purple. Christmas - white. Winter Ordinary Time - Green. Lent - Purple. Easter - White. Pentecost weekend - Red. Summer Ordinary Time - Green. Expect to find some of these colors present in the sanctuary. These items may not be moved, removed or altered.
8. Questions regarding any seasonal colors being used during the wedding may be directed to the priest.
9. Rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, sparklers, balloons, birds, butterflies, bubbles, etc., may not be used, thrown or released in the church or on the property before, during, or after the wedding liturgy. Our church buildings are in constant use, and because of safety, maintenance, and time concerns, these items are prohibited.
10. The only candles permitted are those already in place. Candles in the aisles or on pews are not allowed.
11. In accordance with the Liturgical Norms currently in force, there will be no lighting of a Unity Candle.
12. All containers used for corsage, floral arrangements, etc., must be removed from the vestibules and other rooms before leaving. This is the responsibility of the attending florist.
13. No food or beverage is to be brought into the church. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the property.
14. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to ensure that the florist and decorating personnel receive these policies and abide by them.
15. If you have any questions about these policies, they may be directed to the priest.
16. Any violation of these policies will be immediately addressed. Continued violations will result in the removal of inappropriate decorations and the dismissal of the florist and decorating personnel from the building.

This page should be removed and a copy must be given to the florist employed for your wedding.

THE BASILICA OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST AND SAINT PETER PARISH, CANTON, OHIO

**Appendix 2:
Guidelines for Photographers and Videographers**

1. Please check in with the priest upon your arrival. He will review our photo/video procedures with you, even if you have photographed a wedding here in the past. You are requested to provide a current business card for our files.
2. Weddings at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter Parish are scheduled at 1:00 PM or 6:00 PM. The setup time allowed is 1 hour before the ceremony. A maximum of 30 minutes will be allotted for pictures after the ceremony ends.
3. The photographer/videographer may not enter the sanctuary of the church (the area with the steps) at any time during the ceremony.
4. Flash photography may be taken during the liturgy, but no lighting equipment may be set up in the church until after the wedding ceremony.
5. Photographer/Videographer personnel and their equipment are to be as unobtrusive as possible. They should not interfere with any aspect of the procession, liturgy, or recessional. Posing during the liturgy, waving to the couple or distracting from the ceremony will not be tolerated.
6. No photographic equipment or personnel is permitted in the organ loft.
7. Microphones and/or electric wiring cannot be taped across the aisles. Access to the church sound system is not permitted.
8. All equipment and containers are to be kept on the floor, out of sight, and well out of the way of traffic patterns. Nothing should be placed in or on the pews.
9. Standing on any pews for picture taking or posing is forbidden. The altar is a sacred place, nothing should be placed upon it, nor should it be used as a prop.
10. Altar candles and the church furniture and decorations may not be moved or removed.
11. Because of the sacredness and formality of the wedding, proper attire is required of all personnel (general guidelines: long pants/skirt, modest top, dark clothing).
12. No Food or beverages are to be brought into the church. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the parish property.
13. All voices must be kept down during photographic sessions. Shouting is inappropriate.
14. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to ensure that photographers and video personnel receive these policies and abide by them.
15. Any questions about these policies must be directed to the priest.
16. Any violation of these policies will be immediately addressed. Continued violations will result in the photographer/videographer being immediately asked to leave the church.

This page should be removed and a copy must be given to the photographer and videographers employed for your wedding.