



# Sacrament of Matrimony Wedding Preparation Guide

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	p.1
Guidelines.....	p.1-5
Timeline/Flow Chart.....	p.6
Interesting Facts About Wedding Traditions.....	p.7,8
Wedding Fees.....	p.9
Information For Rehearsal.....	p.10

# The Sacrament of Marriage at Our Lady of Consolation

First of all, Congratulations! The Catholic Church celebrates marriage as a sacrament, that is, as a sign of the presence of God in our world. By celebrating your marriage ceremony within the Church, you, as a couple, pledge to live marriage in a way that shows God's love present here and now, within your marriage, within the Church and within the world.

The church pledges to do what we can to help each couple make their marriage as strong and loving as possible. The various preparations, as well as programs offered after marriage, strive to accomplish this. We also help to be a prayerful, supportive community for married couples.

We realize that there are many ways and places couples can enter into marriage. Celebrating a marriage here is appropriate when:

- A. One of both parties are active members of Our Lady of Consolation Parish.
- B. The couple shares our faith and beliefs about Marriage.
- C. The couple is willing to take part in the preparation programs.
- D. There are no impediments keeping the couple from the Sacrament.
- E. The couple wishes a ceremony consistent with liturgical practices.

## Our Lady of Consolation Parish Wedding and Church Use Guidelines

### Beginning Note:

Couples wishing to be married in Church are called upon to view their marriage and the ceremony celebrating it as first and foremost a sacramental event. All parish policies reflect a deep concern for preparing couples to celebrate well the Catholic Sacrament of Marriage.

### Planning the Ceremony

Discussion Question...What is Liturgy?

The wedding liturgy should be carefully planned and should reflect the faith and personal ideals of the couple. It is a most sacred and solemn moment in life, as well as a time of great joy and happiness. Dress, music, and the total ceremony should make this evident! Clothing that is modest and dignified and music that is prayerful and in keeping with liturgy help to point to the meaning of marriage. To assist in planning, the couple will receive a book entitled "Together for Life," containing some of the possible Scripture readings and prayers, as well as other options for the ceremony.

The bride and groom may pick out the 1st Reading, Responsorial Psalm, 2nd Reading and the Gospel Reading. The Nuptial blessing, as well as the Prayers of the Faithful (universal prayers), and the Final Blessing, also may be selected.

**All selections must be given to the wedding coordinator  
one month before the wedding.**



### Setting the Date

**CAUTION: Do not rent halls, order invitations, hire the band, etc., until your wedding date is confirmed by the Parish.**

Weddings may be held on nearly any day of the year, including during regular parish weekend Masses. Weddings are not normally held during Lent, and may not be held during the Paschal Triduum (Holy Thursday through Holy Saturday). Weddings held during parish Mass times will sometimes have restrictions on the Scripture reading selection. Weddings may not displace other scheduled parish liturgies, the Sacrament of Confession, or other parish services.

The time for Saturday weddings is 1 PM. You will need to be out of the building by 3:30 PM. The rehearsal is usually scheduled for the preceding Friday evening, either at 6:00 or 6:30 PM. Friday weddings are generally scheduled between 3:00 and 5:00 PM with the rehearsal the preceding Thursday evening. The length of a wedding with Mass is approximately 1 hour. The wedding without Mass usually takes 30-40 minutes.

Normally, access to the Church for preparation and decorating is 2 hours ahead of the scheduled wedding time. Please advise your florists, makeup/hair stylists, etc. A Saturday funeral could shorten this time, but the parish generally knows of a funeral 2-3 days in advance. Again, you will need to be out of the building on a Saturday by 3:30 (this includes your cleanup time) for the Church staff to prepare for Confessions and the 5:00 Weekend Mass.

### Photography

The church is available for formal photos before and after the ceremony. In all cases, respect for the sacredness of the church space must be maintained. Informal pictures should be taken elsewhere. Photography during the wedding should be taken discreetly with no flash. Videos are allowed, provided the videographer strives to remain inconspicuous. At no time should the photographer or videographer enter the Sanctuary area (the wooden floor around the altar table). If you wish to have your wedding live-streamed on the OLC Facebook page for guests who cannot attend, we have some staff members who can provide that service to you. There is a \$100 stipend for this service.

### Clean Up

Please have someone in your party responsible for general cleanup after both the rehearsal and the wedding. This includes dressing areas, bathrooms and other areas where trash, food, makeup, flowers, or other debris may have been left. **There is a \$100 refundable cleaning fee, that will be returned to you after your wedding, if all areas of the building are cleaned and returned to the same condition you found them in.** Please take trash from leftover food out of the building to prevent odors. Please make sure that your cleanup person goes through the church itself to remove programs, tissues and to gather any items left by your wedding guests. This is non-negotiable, as we have weekend Masses immediately after weddings. The parish uses all the rooms you will be in on the weekends.

### Alcohol, Smoking, Food, & Beverages

NO alcohol may be brought onto or consumed on the church grounds. It is inappropriate and disrespectful of the Church and the Sacrament of Marriage. Anyone using or judged to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be asked to leave. A bride or groom impaired by drugs or alcohol cannot enter a valid, sacramental marriage.



Please respect our NO SMOKING (which includes vaping and chewing) policy within the building. We have receptacles outside the doors for smoking waste.

**To allow for proper respect of the sacred space, it is not permitted to consume food or drink of any kind in the Church nave/sanctuary during the rehearsal or wedding. Please make sure you communicate that with everyone in your wedding party.**

Food and non-alcoholic beverages may be brought into the dressing rooms, the Elizabeth Ann Seton room and the Guadalupe Room ONLY. Please take all trash with you upon leaving.

### **Music for Your Ceremony**

It is very important that you contact our Music Director at the start of your marriage preparations. Our director Mary Harkema, may be reached at 616-866-0931 x202 or mharkema@olcparish.net. DO NOT assume that she will be available for your wedding if you have contacted only Father and the church office. This contact to Mary should be made at least 4-5 months in advance of your wedding.

Mary will go through with you the options of music and musicians you have available through the parish. If you have a family member or friend whom you would like to be a part of the music for your wedding, Mary will be able to help you through that process as well. Regardless of your choice of musicians, Mary will need to approve your music selections and help with the use of our sound equipment.

There are separate fees associated with using musicians and vocalists from the parish, which is made available to you further back in this booklet.

### **Marriage License**

The Marriage License is applied for at any County Clerk's office in Michigan. The license can be obtained 30 days ahead of your wedding date. Since it is a good idea to get this taken care of in advance, we ask that you deliver your license to the parish office two weeks preceding your wedding date.

**NOTE: by law no wedding can take place without this document in the parish's possession.**

Immediately following the ceremony, your two witnesses will sign 2 copies of the marriage license. You will be given one copy along with the parish marriage certificate. The parish will return the remaining signed copy of the license to the county clerk.

### **Obtaining Baptismal Certificates**

For Catholics, your Baptismal Certificate is obtained from the church in which you were baptized. You will need a newly -issued Baptismal Certificate dated within six months of your wedding. You can call, write, or email the parish and tell them you are getting married. The parish of your Baptism will ask you some questions in order to locate your record. They will then send you a fresh certificate signed by the pastor there. We need a new certificate so that it shows the complete record of all sacraments received. Note that this is a Baptismal Certificate, not a birth certificate.

Non-Catholic denominations vary on record keeping for Baptisms. Many do keep records, and they should be able to send you either a certificate or a copy of the record book page. If you have some kind of a remembrance document from a non-Catholic Baptism, we can photocopy it and return it to you. If you have difficulty, consult with your wedding minister at OLC.



### **Non-Parish Catholic Clergy**

If you have a Catholic clergy friend or relative that you would like to have witness your marriage, this can be accommodated with permission of the Pastor. This could be a priest or deacon who has the proper credentials and faculties.

### **Participation of Non-Catholic Clergy**

It may be permissible to have a pastor/minister of the non-Catholic party participate in the wedding ceremony. The non-Catholic minister may participate in the entrance procession, read from the Scriptures, give a brief sermon, and bless the couple. The Catholic minister must be the one to receive the consent (vows). There can be no mixing of Catholic and non-Catholic ministers in the consent (vows) or blessing of the rings. Let us know if this is something you wish to work out.

### **Outside Minister/Priest/Deacon Stipend**

No personal stipend (payment/gift) is required or expected for an OLC Parish priest or deacon. One can be given if you feel you would like to thank the minister for his efforts. However, if you have arranged for a non-parish minister to witness at your wedding, a stipend would normally be given (perhaps not if the priest/deacon is a close relative or friend, etc.). This stipend usually covers travel costs to and from the parish for the rehearsal and wedding liturgy and time spent preparing documents and other paperwork afterward. Depending on circumstances, this typical stipend is approximately \$150.00. This is above and beyond the requested OLC Church stipend/gift.

### **Wedding Coordinator**

The parish requires utilization of a wedding coordinator. The role of the wedding coordinator is to check in with you from time to time to see if you have any questions. She will conduct your rehearsal. She will also open the church and be available the day of the wedding to be sure that everything runs smoothly and to answer last minute questions. The stipend for this service is \$300.00.

### **Decorations**

Decorations should not detract from the Sacrament. The focus should be on the center of the Sacrament—the marriage couple. We suggest that flowers or other decoration be placed, at most, by the pulpit, and altar candles. No decorations or flowers may be placed on the altar. The use of aisle runners is discouraged. Under no circumstances may the altar, pulpit, or presider's chair be moved.

Note on flowers: Because of the amount of greens/plants we typically have on the altar space, it is best not to have a lot of flowers, as it leaves little room for the wedding party to surround the couple during the vows. If you wish after your wedding, and you have no need of your flowers, the parish would be happy to incorporate them in the decorations for the weekend liturgies.

*\*Please, no rice, bubbles, bird seed, etc., thrown after wedding.*

### **Dressing Rooms**

The Elizabeth Ann Seton Room is available for the bride and bridesmaids, which has a floor length mirror and a contained bathroom. The groom and groomsmen use the Guadalupe Room which has bathrooms across the hall.



### **Parish Prayer**

We normally remember newly married couples in our intercession prayers during the weekend Masses.

### **Conclusion**

These policies are set forth to aid the couple in preparing for their Marriage Liturgy. It is not the intent of the parish for couples to feel burdened by restrictions; it is our desire that weddings celebrated here reflect true sacramental character and bring joy to all connected with the celebration.

The marriage commitment brings about the beginnings of a new family. This commitment is not only to each other but to the family of God. Couples who remain within our parish should register themselves as a new family. The couple is encourage to become involved in parish life!

### **IMPORTANT**

**Marriage planning MUST begin by meeting with the Pastor or Deacon.  
This meeting must be six months in advance of your choice of wedding date.**



# Marriage Preparation Timeline/Flowchart

## In the Beginning...

- \_\_\_ Prospective couple calls Linda at the parish office. She will direct the couple to our website to get the wedding information link.
- \_\_\_ The couple then goes to the website, fills out the Pre-Marriage file, and emails Fr. Dominic for the link to the PMI (Pre Marriage Inventory).
- \_\_\_ After the PMI is completed, the couple then emails Fr. Dominic to request a date to meet with him, to determine if consent for marriage is applicable.
- \_\_\_ Once consent is given, the date and time of the wedding is cleared and added to the parish calendar. The wedding coordinator and music director are both notified and the celebrant is recorded.
- \_\_\_ The couple then works with their clergy (either Fr. or Deacon) to schedule all Pre Cana and prescribed courses.
- \_\_\_ The Engaged Couple submits the necessary documents:
  - A. Baptismal Certificates
  - B. Marriage License ~ *Remember there is a 3 day waiting period. License is good for 33 days*
  - C. Other documents as determined by the priest

## Six Months Before...

- \_\_\_ Communicate with the music director.
- \_\_\_ Wedding coordinator will contact you regarding specifics and rehearsal information. Rehearsal date is cleared and added to the parish calendar.

## Three Months Before...

- \_\_\_ Check in with wedding coordinator. Get any questions answered. Verify all documents are in order and recorded.

## One Month Before...

- \_\_\_ Finalize music with music director. If a program is to be used; seek final review from the music director prior to printing.
- \_\_\_ Advise wedding coordinator of selected readings.
- \_\_\_ Verify time and details of the rehearsal (page 11) with the wedding coordinator.
- \_\_\_ Don't forget marriage license and get parish fees to office 2 weeks before wedding or earlier.



# Interesting Facts About Wedding Traditions

A child eating with her mother and grandmother asked, "Mom, why do you always cut an inch off the end of the Thanksgiving ham?" The mother replied, "I learned that from your grandmother. It makes the ham juicier. Right, Mama?" The grandmother giggled; "No" she said "I did it because I didn't have a roasting pan big enough!"

Some say tradition is an excuse to act without thinking. When it comes to rituals, whether religious or secular, we often simply do what we've seen and learned from others. But, not knowing where our traditions come from can lead us to do some strange things that may no longer fit the situation.

## Why the Groom Walks to the Right of the Bride

The origin of the bride standing on the left goes back to the days when the groom would capture his bride by kidnapping her. If the groom had to fight off other suitors, the groom would hold his bride-to-be with his left hand, allowing his right hand to be free to use his sword.

FYI...no swords at Mass

## Why a Wedding Veil?

The tradition is related to the days when the groom would throw a blanket over the head of the woman of choice when he captured and carted her off. The veil is also related to the arranged marriages when the bride's face was covered until the groom was committed to the bride at the ceremony, so it would be too late for him to escape if he did not like the looks of his bride. And also it was said to be used to protect the bride from evil spirits that would be floating around her on her wedding day.

.....we don't recommend carrying the bride into church with a bag over her head.

## Why the Father "Gives" the Bride Away

"Wedding" literally meant the purchase of a bride for breeding purposes. The word wedding comes from the root meaning to "gamble or wager". The Anglo-Saxon word "wedd" meant that the groom would bow to marry the woman, but it also meant the money or barter that the groom would pay the bride's father. This is why the father-of-the-bride "gives away" his daughter.

.....the price of a bride, "priceless"

## Why There are "The Attendants"

The tradition of bridesmaids evolved from the custom of surrounding the Bride with other richly dressed women, in order to confuse the evil spirits. The first marriages were by capture. The best man would help the groom fight off other men who wanted the chosen woman, and prevent her family from finding them. The "best warrior" would stand for the groom, thus the "best man".

.....witnesses to the Sacrament is a far better choice.





### **Why Rice was Thrown at Weddings**

It was traditionally thought that throwing rice would help increase the fertility of the married couple to ensure that they had children by paying homage to the gods.

...there is one God, He requires from us neither rice, nor bird seed, nor bubbles...LOVE only!

### **Why Families Sit on Opposite Sides of the Aisle**

In ancient days, fathers would offer daughters as peace offerings to warring tribes. Because of the hostility, the families were placed on opposite side of the church to avoid bloodshed.

.....again, NO swords!

### **Why it's Bad Luck to see the Bride in her Wedding Dress**

During the time when arranged marriages were custom, the betrothed couple wasn't allowed to see each other before the wedding ***at all***. The wedding symbolized a business deal between two families (romantic, huh?), and a father would have been pleased for his daughter to marry a man from a rich, land-owning family. But he also feared that if the groom met the bride before the wedding and thought she wasn't attractive, he'd call off the wedding, casting shame onto the bride and her family...and a healthy loss of revenue. Therefore, it became a tradition that the bride and groom were only allowed to meet at the wedding ceremony so that the groom did not have the opportunity to change his mind. So, you're in it together for life, why not start out that way!

**.....and now you know "the rest of the story".....**



# Our Lady of Consolation Wedding Fees

## Parish Fees

Church/Facility Use:

Parishioner .....	\$100
Non-Parishioner.....	\$300
Sacristan/Wedding Coordinator.....	\$300
Cleaning Deposit (Refundable after wedding).....	\$100
Facebook Livestreaming.....	\$100
Servers .....	\$10/child
Priest Gift: Although not required, this gift is a thoughtful gesture	

## Musician Fees

Mary Harkema Piano, Organ and Limited Vocals

Wedding with Mass.....	\$200
Wedding Liturgy No Mass.....	\$150
Hannah McCullough Piano and Vocals	
Wedding with Mass.....	\$200
Wedding Liturgy No Mass.....	\$150
Tracy Bonga Female Vocalist.....	\$125
Krissi Brott Female Vocalist.....	\$125
Tami Hjelm Female Vocalist.....	\$125

All fees to be paid 2 weeks in advance of your wedding.

\*\*Regardless of whom you choose for your wedding, please contact Mary Harkema with your music selections for the liturgy. It is my desire to help you choose music appropriate for this Sacrament, as you celebrate becoming one with your beloved through the Church and Jesus Christ.

Mary Harkema  
Director of Music

mharkema@olcparish.net  
616-866-0931 x202



# Wedding Information for Rehearsal

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Time \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bride \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Bride \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Groom \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Groom \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Party (please list in order of procession)

Bridesmaids

Groomsmen

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Maid of Honor

Best Man

\_\_\_\_\_

Florist \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Other Participants

1st Reading \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Prayers of the Faithful \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have someone bring the Offertory gifts to the table?

\_\_\_\_\_

Mistress & Masters of Ceremony

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you read through the Wedding Information Booklet?

Bride's Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Groom's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

