

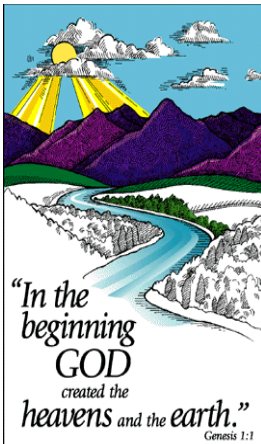
Church of Our Lady of Lourdes

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage



The Catholic Church expresses the hope that married couples, by being faithful to their nuptial covenant, may day by day come to lead holier and fuller lives in their families. In doing so, they will also be recognizing and freely accepting their vocations to follow Christ and to serve the kingdom of God in the married state.

Congratulations of your Engagement



You are in love. Moreover, the two of you have decided to step into the future by promising, with faith in each other and in God, *to marry for life*. In addition, you as a couple, probably for the first time, have accepted the main responsibility for a major social event, one which will demand a significant outlay of money, time and energy. You want your marriage to work and your wedding to be wonderful. The Priests and Deacons of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish are here to help you achieve both goals.

The Church recognizes that each of you is a unique individual and, together, thus form a unique couple. Consequently, we hope you will actively plan and participate in a nuptial ceremony which will be distinctly your own, while still following a pattern standard for all Catholic weddings.

Getting Started

Preparing for your wedding day is no small thing; it takes much planning, coordination, and effort to make the day a special one. However, you can't put all that time and energy into the wedding day and neglect preparing for the days after the marriage. Preparing for your marriage is vitally important. In order to begin the formal preparations for marriage, you need to contact the parish office to schedule a meeting with a priest or deacon. Only after you have had your initial meeting will the priest or deacon reserve a date and time for the celebration of your wedding. **Please do not make arrangements with a catering hall or other facility until after your preliminary meeting.**

How many meetings are we expected to attend?

You will meet with a priest or deacon at least four times. The first of these meetings gives you a chance to meet the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage, to discuss your desire to be married in the Church and provides an opportunity for the exchange of information. Your second meeting will introduce you to the theology of marriage and allow time for the administration of the FOCCUS inventory. Your third meeting will review your FOCCUS inventory and your Marriage Prep Program experience. Your final meeting serves to review the liturgical preparations for the wedding and provides time for answering any remaining questions.

What Paperwork is required?

For Catholic Persons:

A newly issued Certificate of Baptism (not a Xerox or faxed copy) dated not more than six months prior to the wedding date, from the Church in which you were baptized. If you were baptized here at Our Lady of Lourdes and are being married here at Our Lady of Lourdes, no certificate is required.

For Non-Catholic Persons:

If a non-Catholic person is a baptized Christian, a photocopy of his or her Certificate of Baptism is required. In addition, two affidavits of freedom to marry are required (the priest or deacon will explain this during your initial meeting with you and provide the necessary documentation). If the non-Catholic person is at the same time un-baptized, affidavits of non-baptism and affidavits of freedom to marry are required.

All Couples:

Parental permission is required if either party has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Marriage Prep Program (Pre-Cana) certificate of completion (this will be given to you at the end of your program). A civil marriage license obtained from the township clerk where the bride resides (if the bride resides in New Jersey). This must be received by the Officiant no later than the rehearsal.



Parish Guidelines and Policies

1. Catholics are expected to be married within a Nuptial Mass, especially when both parties are themselves Catholic. The Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage outside of Mass may be appropriate, especially when a Catholic is marrying someone from another faith. Please speak to the Priest or Deacon about this option.

2. The Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage during Advent and Lent must take into account the liturgical prescriptions for these seasons. Flowers, rich decoration should be limited.

3. Weddings are traditionally celebrated on Saturdays throughout most of the year. The times are limited to 11AM or 2 PM., Weddings may be celebrated on Friday's up to 6:00 PM. The Deacons are available for Sunday Wedding Ceremonies, (no Nuptial Masses are celebrated on Sunday). Kindly ask the Priest or Deacon for assistance with days and times.

4. A priest or deacon from another parish or diocese is welcome to preside at your wedding Mass or Ceremony. The priest or deacon must write a letter to the Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes stating his intention to preside at your wedding. **Outside or visiting Clergy are responsible for all the paperwork (dispensations if necessary) and preparations for the wedding.**

5. A wedding rehearsal is mandatory for all celebrations. This will be scheduled during your initial meeting. Rehearsals are subject to scheduled events on the parish calendar. In most cases rehearsals are scheduled on the Thursday prior to the wedding.

6. Photography and videography are welcomed during the ceremony. We ask that you instruct those hired for these tasks to speak with the officiant prior to the ceremony. Photographers and videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary of the church. In addition, a spirit of reverence must be maintained during and after the ceremony due to the sacred nature of the church building.

7. While bridal parties are permitted to have pictures in the church following the ceremony, please be aware that the church is needed at 4:00 PM for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

8. The bridal party is expected to dress appropriately and modestly. What might be considered acceptable at the reception may not be appropriate in church. Traditionally women's shoulders should be covered.

9. Reverence for God's House and for the parish community is a priority at all times. Food and drink are not permitted in the church for any reason.

10. We do not allow the use of a bridal runner in church, the scattering of flower petals or any other substance in the church is not permitted.

11. Nothing is to be affixed to the church pews with tape or other adhesives; flowers or bows may be held in place with rubber bands or wire.

12. The throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, etc is NOT PERMITTED due to slip and fall hazard it poses. In addition, balloon launches are not permitted due to their detrimental effect on the environment.

13. Alcoholic beverages are never permitted in the church or on the church grounds. Toasts prior in the limousine is also prohibited. If a member of the bridal party is intoxicated they will be asked to leave the church.

Stipends and Fees?

Church Fee: In thanksgiving for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the couple presents the parish with a stipend in support of the ongoing mission of the Church. Please note this fee is not a gift to the Priest or Deacon who has assisted you with your wedding plans.

2006 thru 2008 Weddings	2009 thru 2011 Weddings	2012 thru 2014 Weddings
Active Parishioners* \$400	Active Parishioners* \$500	Active Parishioners* \$600
Inactive Parishioners \$600	Inactive Parishioners \$700	Inactive Parishioners \$800

*Registered in parish for at least one year, regularly practicing the Faith and supporting the parish through the use of envelopes. Please note that Catholics are expected to register on their eighteenth birthday if they enter the workforce or upon their graduation from college. Church Fees are due at least 30 days prior to the wedding

Altar Server Fee: \$10.00 stipend for each server (Due by Rehearsal)

Celebrant: While there is no set fee for the Priest or Deacon who has helped you prepare for your special day, it is a courtesy to give a stipend of your choosing as a token of appreciation

Flowers and Musicians:Special arrangements need to be made with whomever you choose to help you with these services. Fees and costs vary.

Clergy at your Reception

Due to the busy schedule of services at Our Lady of Lourdes on weekends, our priests and deacons cannot promise to attend your reception. If you wish to invite the priest or deacon to attend, it is proper to send him a printed invitation with a reply card.

Music for your Wedding

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their document Music in Catholic Worship, state that “among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of pre-eminent importance. As sacred song united to words it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn plan for your wedding liturgy in such a way that it speaks of your life together and your love”

Your wedding day is yours but not your exclusively. You have chosen to celebrate this solemn event in the midst of the Church community. The liturgy should be a prayerful event for you, for your families and for your guests.

The parish church is a special place where the sacred events in the lives of the Christian people take place. It was here that you formally entered the community through the waters of Baptism, and nourished at the Eucharistic table of the Lord, were sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, are reconciled with God and one another in the Sacrament of Penance, and now make public your life-long commitment. It is also the place where the community gathers to give thanks and praise to Almighty God each Sunday.

You have given much thought to those items that will be used to celebrate the occasion of your wedding (flowers, attire, reception, honeymoon, etc.) It is with the same degree of attention that you should select the readings, music, and liturgical texts for the Mass or ceremony. The parish priests and deacons will help you to make selections that best reflect your love for each other and the Faith of the Catholic Church.

According to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (#121), the lyrics of songs used in any Catholic liturgy are to be “drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.” As such, music of a secular nature (e.g. popular show tunes, love songs and secular ballads) is not deemed appropriate for use in the Sacred Liturgy.

The Wedding Liturgy and Musical Considerations

Below you will find a brief outline of the wedding liturgy and its musical requirements.

Gathering Rite - the purpose of the gathering rite is to bring all the people together so that they can focus on the prayer that is to follow. Festive instrumental prelude music is appropriate. Music for the procession need not be a march. The music should be joyful and dignified in nature.

Liturgy of the Word - the Responsorial Psalm that follows the First Reading must be sung. Your Organist or Cantor will assist you in choosing an appropriate setting. The Gospel Acclamation is never spoken text, it must be sung. Please note that during Lent, the “Alleluia!” is replaced by a more somber acclamation.

Rite of Marriage - the rite itself does not call for music

Offertory –an instrumental piece, solo or an offertory hymn should be selected while the altar is prepared and the gifts are brought forward.

Liturgy of the Eucharist –since all of the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer are the assembly’s part of this prayer, they must be sung. Your Cantor will assist you in selecting an appropriate setting.

Rite of Communion –during the exchange of peace a short instrumental or solo may be chosen, especially if the newly married couple will greet their parent(s).

The “Lamb of God” must be sung. A hymn during the distribution of Holy Communion should be sung, however a solo could also be appropriate.

Concluding Rites –it is customary for the Bride and Groom to dedicate themselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary on the day of their wedding; if this is done, a solo selection or instrumental piece would be appropriate.

Recessional –a hymn may be sung or an instrumental played. It should be festive and serve to “send off” the newly married couple.

How do I arrange for music?

You have the option of choosing musicians and singers from the Music Ministry here at Our Lady of Lourdes. The parish will gladly provide you with a list of musicians etc. If you choose to hire musicians and singers from outside the parish, you must check with the priest or deacon.

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage.
We appreciate your cooperation with these guidelines
and look forward to assisting you in the months to come.

