

GETTING MARRIED AT ST.

JULIE BILLIART PARISH



ST. JULIE BILLIART MARRIAGE PREPARATION

FIRST OF ALL!

First of all, Congratulations! We share your excitement and hope for the future. As you prepare to enter into a permanent commitment to one another, the Church journeys along with you, offering encouragement and support. A good place to begin is <http://foryourmarriage.org/catholic-marriage/planning-a-catholic-wedding/>. There you'll find everything you've ever wanted to know about getting married in the Catholic Church.

The purpose of the Marriage Preparation is to help you continue to work toward realizing your dreams and to assist you in celebrating your commitment in the sacrament of marriage. It is also meant to welcome you into the community of St. Julie as a newly married couple.

WHEN CAN WE SET THE DATE?

Marriage is part of the public worship of the Church. Though exceptions can be made, normally one member of the couple ought to have been a registered member of St. Julie parish for at least six months. Permission for others to be married at St. Julie's requires the consent of the pastor and is at his discretion, and usually is given only when parishioners have not claimed the date at six months before desired date.

Saturday weddings can be celebrated at 1:00 pm or earlier, or at 6:30 pm. The Parish schedule allows more flexibility scheduling Friday weddings. Rehearsals are usually held on Friday at 6:00 pm or earlier. Each priest or deacon will witness only one marriage each weekend.

ONLY ONE OF US IS CATHOLIC, IS THAT A PROBLEM?

It is not necessary that both bride and groom be Catholic in order to be married in the Church. As a matter of fact, under certain conditions, it is possible to ask the Bishop's permission to be married in another Church with non-Catholic minister. In any case, the Catholic party must be a practicing Catholic and be willing to make the following promise:

I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ and, with God's help, intend to continue living that faith in the Catholic Church.

I promise to do all in my power to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF US?

The process starts with an introductory meeting just to get to give the couple a chance to review the process and ask questions. Then either a counselor (Honor Otmar, 513-543-5715 or honorotmar@yahoo.com) or the priest or deacon will conduct an interview process over two or three sessions. The purpose is to help you take a look at the most significant themes related to marriage and family life. A brief summary of these sessions is written for the file. A date for the wedding can only be set after these interviews are underway. We also ask that all fees are paid before the date is confirmed. Next, you will attend at least one of the options for further preparation (*Pre-Cana* or *Engaged Encounter*). Following the program(s), you do a questionnaire on line and then meet with a sponsor couple from the parish to review the results.

It is best to finish all this several months before your wedding date. Finally, you meet with the celebrant to plan the liturgy and take care of any other details.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO WE NEED?

You will need a baptism certificate, issued within the last month by the Church where you were baptized. If one of you was baptized in a Church other than a Catholic one, we need to at least see some document of baptism. It may be necessary to have a parent or family member certify that you were never married. In addition, you need to obtain a civil marriage license.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE “SPONSOR COUPLE”?

After you attend either *Pre-Cana* or *Engaged Encounter*, call the priest or deacon and we will explain how to do the FOCCUS on line. FOCCUS is a survey instrument of 160 statements to which you respond “agree, disagree, or unsure”. The instrument facilitates open couple communication, understanding and study. It takes 30 to 45 minutes to complete. You’ll need a credit card to cover the \$15 cost per couple. We will then refer you to a sponsor couple. This couple, members of the parish, is trained in the use of the FOCCUS instrument and will work with you in considering its results. The celebrant will give them some background about you. You should contact the sponsor couple to set up a time and date for the first meeting. Normally, you will meet in the sponsor couple’s home once or twice.

It is preferable to attend either *Pre-Cana* and/or *Engaged Encounter* prior to doing the FOCCUS. That way these experiences can also be part of your conversation with the sponsor couple.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE 3RD MEETING?

After your final meeting, the sponsor couple will send the celebrant some comments about the results of your sessions with them. You should then call him to set up a meeting to review the preparation program, plan the liturgy, and attend to any other details. It is at this meeting that the couple signs the “Declaration of Matrimonial Intent”:

<p>We, in the presence of one another, individually declare our freedom to marry and our freedom from any known impediments between us. We hold marriage to be a lifelong, faithful union and process of choosing each other for the mutual and total sharing of our life and our love. It is a union which is open to children. It is a union which is modeled after and symbolizes God’s ever-faithful love for His people. It is a partnership of the totality of life and love that we seek and to which we will publicly give our consent in marriage.</p>

THE WEDDING CELEBRATION

Weddings are a special and joyful time for the bride and groom, for their families and friends and for the parish community. This new beginning, its love, promise and hope, makes their celebration a special and grace-filled time in our lives. The Church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their weddings in the context of prayer as Christians. Indeed, so important is marriage in Christian life that it is one of the Church's sacraments.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the bride and groom minister the sacrament of marriage to one another; a priest or deacon and at least two other adults are witnesses to this.

Ordinarily, the Pastor or Parish Deacon will preside at weddings celebrated in the parish. The exception to this is for non-parishioners. On occasion, parishioners may want to invite a priest or deacon who is a friend or relative to preside at the wedding. The couple should mention this to the parish minister at their first meeting. He will usually give his approval. If a visitor is the celebrant he is expected to do the necessary marriage preparation and see to it that the pre-marriage paperwork is done. If the visitor is from outside the Archdiocese of Cincinnati he must present the usual "letter of suitability" required by Church law and be licensed to witness the marriage in the State of Ohio.

The following guidelines assure that all couples are treated in the same way.

PREPARING FOR THE LITURGY

The Wedding Liturgy is integral of itself. On weekends we usually only celebrate the Eucharist in a parish context. Therefore, the Wedding Liturgy will frequently be celebrated without Eucharist.

At foryourmarriage.org under the "About Catholic Marriage" button you will find a wealth of information about the Catholic wedding ceremony. There you will find a list of Scripture readings most appropriate for use at weddings. In consultation with the celebrant, the engaged couple will select two or three passages from Scripture. If the sacrament is celebrated in the context of Eucharist, the prescribed Sunday readings are preferred. Non-scriptural passages are never used in place of the Scriptures.

THE PROCESSION

The ceremony may be preceded by the procession of the bridal party. There is no set pattern, no liturgical law about this part of the ceremony.

The bride does not have to be "hidden" from the groom or the congregation before the ceremony. Indeed, it is a gracious gesture for all members of the wedding party, including the bride and groom, to greet members of the assembly as they arrive. They can ask that they actively participate in the liturgy. In other circumstances the groom's attendants function as ushers and thus fulfill part of the ministry of hospitality.

Ring bearers and flower girls are not ministers, nor are their services required for the celebration of marriage. Couples will be asked to consider the age of children involved in these roles and

whether their presence and level of maturity will add to or detract from the joyful solemnity of the celebration. We strongly suggest that children be at least four-years old.

THE VOWS

The text for the consent (“the VOWS”) is taken from one of the options provided in the Rite of Marriage.

PARTICIPATION

In preparing the wedding liturgy, couples are urged to incorporate elements which will encourage the active participation of those who gather for the celebration. This includes participation through sung and spoken prayer. Try to make your guests a part of the ceremony, not mere “spectators”.

MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Music is an integral part of any liturgy. Only Christian liturgical music may be used during the ceremony. Because your wedding takes place in the context of worship, secular music, even before the ceremony, is not permitted.

The most important moments for music in the wedding liturgy are all times for congregational song. Instrumental music does have a place, but it is a secondary one. Music which the assembly can sing is the most important category of music to think about for your wedding. A Gathering Hymn is a part of the ceremony as well as the psalm. If Mass is celebrated the appropriate parts are also sung. The St. Julie Billiart Music Director will help you select suitable material for congregational singing.

Ordinarily the Music Director will play at all parish weddings. Soloists and/or instrumentalists are available upon request. All fees are to be worked out with the musicians. If you choose an outside soloist of your own and if rehearsal is required with the parish Music Director, an additional fee may be involved. **If you are requesting someone other than the St. Julie Billiart Music Director you must still offer her a \$200 stipend since her compensation package assumes a certain number of weddings a year. She will then be available to meet with your musician. Likewise your music selections must be approved by her or the Pastor.**

SIGN OF PEACE

Even though the Sign of Peace is not a part of the Marriage Ritual (as it is at Mass), you may want to show appreciation and love to your parents or others. The appropriate time for this is immediately after the exchange of vows. This is completely optional. When a wedding is celebrated at Mass the couple does not leave the altar at the Sign of Peace during the Communion Rite.

LECTORS/READERS

Couples who choose friends or family members to serve as lectors are asked to invite those who have the necessary gifts for proclaiming God’s Word effectively and reverently. If the couple

wishes to ask friends or family members to serve as lectors, they are asked to be present at the wedding rehearsal so that they may become familiar with the worship space. Lectors/Readers should practice reading prior to the rehearsal and the wedding. It is not necessary that lectors be Roman Catholic but they should have a firm faith in the Bible as the Word of God.

ALTAR ATTENDANTS

Altar attendants are not usually needed. However, you may ask any well trained altar attendant to participate.

HONORING MARY

Sometimes a couple will want to add a ceremony to the traditional wedding liturgy. For example, place your bouquet at Mary's statue if this is an authentic expression of your devotion. Don't do it because you've seen other brides make the same gesture.

Or consider honoring her at a moment of prayer at the end of the wedding rehearsal. The wedding party may gather then and flowers can be left at that time. Flowers may also be placed at the outdoor Marian Shrine before the wedding by the florist.

UNITY CANDLE

Within the Roman Catholic Liturgy candles symbolize the light of Christ. The so-called "Unity Candle" ceremony is ambiguous in its meaning. Its use is discouraged but not prohibited.

DECORUM

Please remember that the rehearsal, ceremony, and pictures afterward take place in a sacred place. It is not just a "hall". Loud conversation, eating and drinking, or "partying" takes place at the reception, not in church. **Conspicuous consumption of alcoholic beverages before any of these activities, especially by the wedding party, indicates a lack of due discretion and, thus, may lead to postponement of the wedding.**

FLOWERS

Seasonal decorations may not be removed but may be supplemented. Nothing is to be placed on the altar itself. You are welcome to share your flowers with the faith community by leaving them in the Church after your wedding. For weddings at 1:00 pm or earlier, the church will be open two hours before the wedding. Delivery of flowers should be arranged to coincide with that.

DECORATIONS

The traditional white runner down the aisle is certainly not required. The aisle is 80 feet long. There are to be no candelabra in the aisles or sanctuary for safety's sake. Nothing is to be attached to the pews. This includes flowers, ribbons, and aisle candles. Candelabra may be used in the sanctuary (never on the main altar) with an appropriate floor covering to protect the carpet. Candelabra are furnished by your florist.

REHEARSAL

The Wedding Coordinator will usually conduct the rehearsal and be available from a half-hour before the wedding till the procession is complete. She is also responsible for straightening up and locking the church after the wedding party leaves.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

Your wedding is both a time of prayer and an event to remember. Once the liturgy begins, to preserve the atmosphere of prayer, only non-flash pictures may be taken. Once the entrance procession is finished, photographers and videographers are not to approach the front of the church. Video cameras should be placed on a tripod either in the choir loft or in one of the side aisles. No additional lighting may be brought into the Church.

Guests should be asked within the program to flash pictures only during the processional and recessional, never during the liturgy. After the celebration, the Church will remain open for 45 minutes for photographs. **While pictures are being taken, proper behavior is expected. Please do not forget that you are in a church.**

OTHER INFORMATION

1. There is no parish dressing room. We do not recommend dressing at church. The vesting room in the back of church can provide room for the bride and one or two others to wait. You can also use the servers' room across from the vesting room. There are **no** facilities available for refreshments, either before or after the ceremony. Naturally, **NO** food or drinks may be brought into church during the rehearsal or the day of wedding. While it seems ridiculous to say so, consumption of alcohol is prohibited before either the rehearsal or wedding. An obviously inebriated bride or groom obliges the minister to cancel the wedding.
2. Please ask invited guests not to throw rice, confetti, bird seed, etc. It creates a safety hazard on the steps and sidewalk and a mess in the Church. Balloons are not allowed for similar reasons. Flower girls may not throw real or silk petals in the Church.
3. You are encouraged to have your guest book at the reception. Since many people arrive at church at the last moment, a line forms to sign the book if it is in the back of church. That can cause an undue delay in getting started. If you do place a book in the back of church, it should be removed at least five minutes before the time of the wedding.
4. Because of our parish schedule, your receiving line should take place at the reception--not at Church. Walking down the aisle, the wedding party goes to the left into the passage way that leads to the parish office building. When the Church has emptied, the photographer can begin pictures in the Church. Both the photographer and those who clean the Church appreciate this.

FEES

The Roman Catholic Church does not charge a fee for the sacraments, themselves. However, there are costs associated with your marriage preparation and wedding ceremony.

- Those who are not actively participating in the parish (and/or who do not regularly support the parish) -- such as members of neighboring parishes, inactive Catholics, those celebrating a wedding in Hamilton because it is the home of the non-Catholic party who desire a Catholic wedding, and so on, are asked for a deposit of \$500 before a date is confirmed.
- The fee for the Pre-marriage counseling is \$150 (payable to the interviewer). She is Honor Otmar. She can be reached at (614) 506-7911 or honorotmar@yahoo.com.
- The fee for the Parish Wedding Coordinator and the Music Director is \$300, payable to St. Julie Billiart Parish.
- All couples are expected to pay the fees for FOCCUS, counseling, music director, and wedding coordinator. Please speak with the pastor if hardship makes these fees impossible.

As noted above, couples are completely responsible for arrangements with all other professionals involved with the wedding (musicians, photographers, florists, etc.) All professionals are, however, expected to abide by the guidelines and regulations of the parish and the priest or minister's instructions. Professionals with procedural questions should be referred to the minister or music director as appropriate.

WEDDING LITURGY

Processional

(Instrumental or Sacred Song)

Gathering Song (Congregational)

Greeting and Opening Prayer

1st Reading

Psalm Response (Sung)

2nd Reading (Optional)

Alleluia (sung)

Gospel

Wedding Ceremony

Statement of Intentions

Exchange of Vows

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Prayer of the Faithful

Nuptial Blessing

Lord's Prayer

Final Blessing & Dismissal

Recessional

(Instrumental or Sacred Song)