



**ORDER OF CELEBRATING  
MATRIMONY**

PREPARATION

AND

POLICIES

FOR

CORPUS CHRISTI UNIVERSITY PARISH  
TOLEDO, OHIO

***Short-term preparations for marriage tend to be concentrated on invitations, clothes, the party and any number of other details that tend to drain not only the budget but energy and joy as well. The spouses come to the wedding ceremony exhausted and harried, rather than focused and ready for the great step that they are about to take. . . Here let me say a word to fiancés. Have the courage to be different. Don't let yourselves get swallowed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances. What is important is the love you share, strengthened and sanctified by grace. You are capable of opting for a more modest and simple celebration in which love takes precedence over everything else.***

*Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia #212*

*Congratulations on your upcoming marriage. Marriage is a serious and sacred commitment. Through it, husband and wife are called on to draw closer to God and to each other in a life-giving community of love. Christ enhanced the dignity of marriage by making the Christian marriage relationship a Sacrament - a living expression of His love for us.*

*Marriage is also a great and marvelous adventure. It is an understanding that holds the promise of joyful years together. People enter marriage with high hopes of a beautiful future together. It is this atmosphere that brings out the best qualities of each person in marriage.*

*Today, more than during the immediate past, the Church has a grave responsibility to help our people enter into a marriage that gives promise of being grace-filled, happy and successful.*

*Our Parish, along with the Toledo Diocese, has established a program of marriage preparation so those couples that marry in the Church may be helped to understand the Sacrament, its vocation and its responsibilities.*

*The following pages contain the Policies for Corpus Christi University Parish concerning your upcoming marriage preparation and wedding. We ask you to read these pages carefully. Hopefully you will find the answers to most of the questions you have.*

*It is our sincere hope and prayer that your marriage preparation and marriage will be filled with the grace and spirit of God. May the Lord bless you deeply.*

At first reading, you may be overwhelmed by the details and rules outlined. Please know that the intent is to help you prepare for a very important and sacred moment in your lives. Diocesan regulations and local experience are summarized here to underscore the seriousness and sacramental nature of your marriage.

**ARRANGEMENTS:** (*Who can marry us?*) Matrimony is the only sacrament not conferred by an ordained minister. Rather, the marrying couple confers the sacrament on each other; the priest or deacon is witness to their vows of mutual love. The ceremony is a public acknowledgement of their willingness to take on the responsibilities of marriage.

The Priests and the Deacon of the parish are the ordained ministers who can officiate at weddings. Another Priest/Deacon who is a relative or friend can also be delegated to celebrate your wedding. **A visiting Priest/Deacon is required to comply with all of Corpus Christi University Parish's policies for both the marriage preparation and liturgy.** Priests or Deacons from another Diocese are required to have their Bishop or Major Superior send a letter/certificate of aptitude to the Chancery of the Toledo Diocese and Corpus Christi University Parish. Requests for a celebrant other than the parish Priests/Deacon should be made early to determine who will do the instructing and paper work in the process of preparing for your wedding. Ministers of other denominations are welcome to participate.

A marriage date should not be set until you, as a couple, contact the Parish. A date can be made over the phone. (A date cannot be made when one of the parties has an Annulment case pending before the Diocesan Tribunal.) The parish secretary will let you know if the date is open and will pencil your name in. However, the date is NOT secured until you have met with the Priest/Deacon who will be officiating for your wedding. At that time, a **\$100.00 refundable fee** is also required, please see page 8. Arrangements are to be made at least six months in advance.

**LOCATION:** (*Can we get married someplace other than in the church, e.g., a park or in our home?*) Though an outdoor wedding might be desirable, the Catholic Church does not permit weddings outside the church building. The church building is the privileged place of encounter between God and His people, most especially because it houses the Blessed Sacrament, which is the "source and summit" of our faith as Catholics. Though one can certainly encounter God's presence in other places, the church building remains the central place for worship and the place that rightly dignifies the sacred commitment of marriage. Due to this, a priest/deacon may only celebrate a wedding in a church.

**PREPARATION MEETINGS:** (*What do we need to do in order to get married at Corpus Christi University Parish?*) Our marriage preparation program at CCUP combines meeting with the priest or deacon who will officiate your wedding and a mentor couple from the parish who will guide you in the process. It begins with a

meeting or two with the priest to get to know each other and to fill out the necessary paperwork. Then, there is usually one or two meetings between the engaged couple and the mentor couple. Finally, there is a final meeting with the priest or deacon to discuss the ceremony itself.

With your mentor couple, you will likely take the FOCCUS inventory. This tool, which can be given on paper or emailed online, will be useful in discussing your strengths and areas of improvement as a couple looking towards the future.

A couple seeking to be married in the Catholic Church should be practicing their faith. On their wedding day, the couples are making a faith statement to family and friends, one which should be lived weekly with the community.

Couples entering into an interfaith marriage are encouraged to meet with the minister of the non-Catholic person to discuss any pre-marriage training that may be offered. The only requirement for a marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic is that the Catholic must agree and sign that they will to the best of their ability baptize and raise any children that come from the union in the Catholic Church. There is no requirement of the non-Catholic party, other than that they will not obstruct the Catholic party's promise.

Part of your **required** preparation is participation in some kind of engaged couples conference/retreat. The preferable one is the "Joy-Filled Marriage" two-day conference hosted throughout the diocese. If you search "*Marriage & Family – The Catholic Diocese of Toledo*," then select "*Marriage Preparation*," you will see a link to the schedule and details for the diocesan sponsored retreats. These are extremely beneficial and surround you with mentor couples of different lengths of marriage as well as a number of other engaged couples to get to know. Though there is a cost to these weekends, compared with the many other expenses involved in a wedding, the cost seems to be a worthy investment. If cost is prohibitive or work situation makes a two-day conference difficult, there is also a link on the page reference above to one-day parish workshops. These also are sufficient for meeting this requirement. You will receive certification of your participation upon completion. If a previous marriage has taken place between one or both of you, a Cana II Conference is required. Please inform your celebrant immediately.

It is advisable to make the first conference available that works with your schedules since time can become more limited as the wedding approaches.

Taking a Natural Family Planning course is highly recommended prior to marriage. As you may know, the Catholic Church has always been opposed to the use of contraception as a way of prohibiting pregnancy. The Church believes that every sexual act should be characterized by both the unitive and procreative purposes of marriage, often referred to as "babies and bonding." However, the Church also understands that there are many good

reasons to forego having children at certain points in marriage. Natural Family Planning (NFP) is this endorsed method of responsible parenthood. The knowledge acquired in your NFP class will enable you to be true to your vow "to be open to children as a blessing from God" and enable you to truly consecrate your marriage. NFP is as effective as other means of birth control and can help to strengthen your marriage. More information on this topic, as well as class information, can be found on the diocesan website listed above, as well as [www.ccli.org](http://www.ccli.org). Classes are offered locally and by online virtual class.

**WEDDING TIMES:** *(What are the wedding times at Corpus Christi University Parish? Can we have a wedding during Advent or Lent?)* It is common for a couple to celebrate their wedding on Saturday at 11:30 or 1:30. The 1:30pm start time is to allow for sufficient photograph time after the wedding ceremony. If the ceremony is not a Mass, and there is limited photography after the wedding, 2pm could also be a legitimate starting time. Weddings on days other than Saturday may begin at a time agreed upon by the couple, the Priest/Deacon, and the calendar of events scheduled for the Parish.

The Church does not encourage weddings during the seasons of Advent or Lent. If either of these seasons is chosen, the couple should be aware that the Church decorations will be in keeping with the season and will NOT be changed for the wedding. During the Lenten Season, no flowers or plants are to be brought into the church so as to keep with the season.

**DOCUMENTS NEEDED:** *(What are the documents we need to give to the Priest/Deacon?)*

1. Catholic parties need a copy of a recent Baptismal Certificate (not more than 6 months old). If you were baptized at Corpus Christi University Parish, no baptismal certificate is necessary. The non-Catholic party should also bring a copy of their Baptismal Certificate. These should be brought to your second preparation meeting.
2. With the Priest/Deacon or the member couple of the parish marriage preparation team, the couple will fill out the Marriage Information form.
3. If a dispensation is required; the Priest/Deacon will attend to this. \* If you are not getting married in your present home parish, delegation from your home pastor may be needed in writing.
4. Obtain a marriage license from the Probate Court. Application must be made in the county where either the man or the woman resides. A license issued in any county in Ohio is valid throughout the state for 60 days from the date of issuance. There is a charge for a marriage license. There is no waiting period, except in cases where the age or residence is in question. If you have any extenuating circumstances, please call the Marriage License Bureau before you go so that they can advise you of any documents you might need. The Bureau is located at County Courthouses. You need a birth certificate in applying for the civil

license, and some proof of residency, e.g., current driver's license with Ohio address. NOTE: This is a license to marry not a certificate of marriage. The Celebrant of your wedding is required by law to notify the court that the marriage in fact took place. Present the License to your Celebrant at the rehearsal. Include the court's return envelope.

**OFFICIAL WITNESS:** *(Are there guidelines regarding the wedding party?)* The best man and maid-of-honor need not be Catholic, but they should believe and live according to Christian teachings regarding marriage. Please remember when planning your wedding that a large wedding party can distract from the ceremony and the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

**WEDDING COORDINATORS:** The mentor couple assigned to you will also serve as your coordinators for the marriage ceremony. Therefore, there is no need for a hired coordinator to be involved with the religious ceremony.

**FLOWER GIRL/RING BEARER:** Though it is nice to have "little ones" participate in your wedding, caution should be taken not to have a child who is too young. The wedding may cause the child undo anxiety. Because of this, any child that is below the age of 5 would need a parent to accompany the child up the center aisle. Flower girls may carry flowers, but may not drop petals of any kind.

**PLANNING YOUR CEREMONY:** *(How will we plan our wedding ceremony? Will the priest/deacon help us to plan it?)* The Priest/Deacon or a couple member of the parish marriage preparation team will provide you with a copy of the necessary documents which you will use to select readings, prayers and blessings for your wedding. If you have any questions concerning the planning of your wedding, please ask the Priest/Deacon. In the area of music for your ceremony, you need to contact the Liturgical Music Director, Luke Rosen. A complete wedding music guideline is attached for your convenience on pages 11 - 12.

Our hope is that your family and friends will take an active part during the celebration of your wedding. When both parties are Catholic, the normal ceremony is the Order of Celebrating Matrimony within Mass, but this is the choice of the couple. You will need to ask a family member or a friend to do the readings and the Universal Prayer. You may ask one or more persons to help in this ministry. However be sure to give the reading to this person(s) 1 month prior to the wedding so that they may prepare themselves to proclaim the Reading/Universal Prayer. If the marriage is inter-faith, the sensitivities of the non-Catholic party should be considered so we use the Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass. Since a spouse of another denomination may not receive Holy Communion, it appears inconsistent with the ceremonial emphasis of uniting the couple.

**USAGE OF THE CHURCH:** *(Is there anything we need to know about the usage of the church itself that would be helpful in planning our wedding? What time can we get into the church on the day of our wedding? Will there be anyone there to help us if we need anything?)*

The church is a holy place. Please conduct yourselves accordingly and alert your wedding party to do so also. There should be no unnecessary walking near the altar before or after your wedding. This area requires your utmost respect. Nothing is permitted on the altar.

The church will be open and available to your wedding party and guests for one hour before the wedding and one hour after the wedding ceremony. If extra time is needed before the wedding, don't hesitate to ask the pastor or wedding coordinators to open earlier. All weddings and rehearsals are to start on time. Thus, the normal time block for a wedding is two (2-2 1/2) hours for using the church itself. Please avoid any difficult situations by observing this time frame, which is set because of other liturgical services and the need to prepare for them.

After the wedding, it is the couple's responsibility to clean the Church and all other spaces, which were used. Please be sure that all flower boxes, aisle runners, extra programs, hangers, etc... are removed. If you are comfortable with the way you left the church, don't forget to request your \$100 refundable deposit that you submitted. We will try to remember to send it to you, but in case we forget, please remind us.

**A Dressing room** is provided for the bridal party. The coordinators will help to direct you to the appropriate rooms.. Because there is a possibility of losing or misplacing valuables at times, we ask that you appoint a person to oversee all the belongings of the wedding party and remove all items from the dressing room before the wedding begins. These things are best locked in the trunk of a car at this time. We cannot assume responsibility for any articles left in rooms before, during, or after the ceremony.

If there is a wedding before yours, we ask that you enter the dressing room quietly and show the respect that you would expect to be given if it were your wedding in progress.

Smoking is **NOT** permitted in any buildings.

If you wish to use an **aisle runner** it must be cloth and not plastic. The aisle in the Church is 38 feet long. Please ask someone to be responsible for the removal of the runner and other decorations after your wedding.

The **“unity candle”** is a secular practice that originated in the 1970's. It is **not** a part of the official Catholic wedding service and is no longer permitted during the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. If you wish to have this action be a part of your wedding day, please do it at the prayer time of your reception.

**Bells, bubbles** or other environmental healthy symbols may be used after a wedding to greet the Bride and Groom, though nothing is required. Rice, balloons, confetti, releasing butterflies and bird seed may **not** be used.

A special **Veneration of Mary** during the marriage ceremony is a longstanding custom that is optional for the couple. The intention is to entrust the newly married couple to our heavenly mother in the same way that we honor our heavenly Father during the ceremony with the praying of the Lord's Prayer. Usually, a bouquet of flowers or an individual rose is taken by the couple to the image of the Blessed Mother while the Ave Maria is sung.

**Flowers** may be placed in front of, or beside the altar, but **NOT** on the altar. Flowers also may be placed in other appropriate areas of the church. No decorations are permitted on the Baptismal Font, pillars or walls. Flowers in vases are considered a donation to the Parish and should not be removed after the ceremony. None of the sanctuary furniture is to be moved or replaced for accommodating flowers or candles.

**Tape, "stick-em" and other adhesives are NOT allowed also pins may not be used to hang things from the fabric of the church chairs.**

Florists may make deliveries directly to the church no sooner than one hour prior to your wedding. If other arrangements need to be made, please ask the priest or the wedding coordinators. If another wedding or a funeral is scheduled the same day, the florist will need to be informed. We cannot be responsible for items that are to be returned to florists. Please instruct your florist to retrieve all rented items as soon as possible following the ceremony. It is your responsibility to let the florist know these regulations.

Because of local Fire regulations, candles (even in hurricane glasses) are not permitted in the aisles.

**FEES AND STIPENDS:** The following scale is provided as a guideline for your planning.

1. A **\$100.00 refundable fee**. This fee will be returned if the church, and any room used, is left the way you found it. This will be returned to you by the Parish. This fee must be paid after you set your date with the Priest/Deacon. This will insure that you have the church scheduled. If you cancel your wedding, please contact the parish office right away and this fee will be returned. Not contacting the parish office or contact less than a week before the wedding will result in the loss of all or part of this fee.
2. This fee goes to the Parish, not to the Priest/Deacon and is to be paid to the Parish Center **one month** prior to the Wedding. Use of the church (rehearsal & wedding) the suggested amount is \$250.00 for parishioners and \$500.00 for non-parishioners or you may consider tithing 5% or 10% of your total wedding cost.
3. There are additional payments due to the musician. Please see separate file for



- fees and pay schedule for the musician(s).
4. You may offer a separate gift of appreciation to the Priest/Deacon.

**INTOXICATING BEVERAGES** are prohibited both inside and outside of the church, including the sidewalks and parking lots. It is your responsibility to inform all members of your wedding party of this policy.

If anyone in the wedding party, including the groom and bride, consumes alcohol before the wedding, they will **NOT** be permitted to participate in the ceremony. It is your responsibility to be sure everyone is aware of this policy.

**REHEARSALS** are to last no longer than one hour, so we ask you to stress punctuality with your wedding party. Schedule the rehearsal for when you feel everyone in your party can get together at a leisurely time. **Please take note that music rehearsals are NOT scheduled during the wedding rehearsal.** Musicians should arrange other times to practice. Proper casual dress is expected at rehearsal. Decisions made prior to the rehearsal will be made only by the bride, groom, and celebrant.

**MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE:** Corpus Christi University Parish will provide you with a marriage certificate on the day of your wedding.

**RECEIVING LINE:** If you decide you want a receiving line at the church, there will likely not be time for pictures after the wedding. Because of this, most brides and grooms opt for pictures and have the receiving line at the reception. Having the bride and groom “release” the guest is considered a receiving line. Please be sure to discuss all these things with your photographer before the wedding.

Pictures should be taken immediately after the couple leaves the church and returns. Any driving around in a limo or cars occur after the pictures are finished.

**SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:** Please consider spiritual preparation for receiving this once-in-a-lifetime sacrament. The Sacrament of Penance certainly is in order to help you prepare for this important step in life. Periods of private prayer by each of you as well as praying together are encouraged. Remember, Christ is at the heart of your marriage.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** If either party is 18 years of age or younger, preparation will include consultation with an approved pre-marriage counselor and no wedding date will be set until this process is completed with a positive response from that counselor. Parents/guardians may be included in this process.

If there is a pregnancy, this process is especially important, as is the diocesan regulation of a six-month waiting period for all weddings.

If both parties are at least 19 years old, and if the decision to marry was made prior to the pregnancy (that is, there was a formal engagement), plans for the marriage are left to the discretion of the pre-marriage counselor and the Priest/Deacon of the wedding. All requirements must still be fulfilled, including the marriage preparation course.

A couple may be required to see a pre-marriage counselor for other reasons. Be aware that normal professional pre-marriage counseling is usually three sessions. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible so as not to delay your wedding.

**VALIDATION OF MARRIAGE:** Couples married in a ceremony not recognized by the Catholic Church may wish to have that marriage validated by the Church. A proven period of stability (e.g., three years or more) is preferred and all the regulations listed in this document are to be observed where applicable (e.g., documents, marriage preparation course). The validation can be by way of a ceremony where new vows are made or through a request of the Bishop to recognize your previous vows.

**VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHER:** Please see separate file for guidelines. Please give this page of information to your videographer and photographer.

**DELAY OF MARRIAGE:** A Priest/Deacon may not deny witnessing the marriage of a parishioner who is free to marry. However, it is within the right of the Priest/Deacon to delay witnessing a marriage for a just cause, which would include:

- a. Lack of minimum faith (marriage is a Sacrament and presumes Catholicity is present).
- b. Severe faith conflicts (which would endanger the spiritual development of children).
- c. Lack of readiness for marriage.
- d. Refusal of the party to adhere to pre-marriage requirements. (Professional pre-marriage counseling usually three sessions.)

If the marriage is delayed, the couple may appeal to the Dean of the Deanery, who represents the Bishop of the Diocese of Toledo.

While in many instances a friendship between the engaged persons and/or their parents with the Priest/Deacon may exist or develop during the preparation of the marriage, but, this is not always the case. Therefore, the Priest/Deacon does not expect to be invited to the rehearsal dinner or reception if these are held. If you would like him to be present, please express this to him in writing during your time of preparation. Last minute invitations or presumptions that he will be present for either of these events will usually cause disappointment and/or misunderstanding.

If you are planning to continue as a Corpus Christi University Parishioner, please be sure to fill out a registration form. Ask the Priest/Deacon for one of these forms.

