

*Your*  
CATHOLIC  
WEDDING



St. Mary's  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
*est. 1855*

## Dear Couples,

Congratulations on your decision to marry in the church. Marriage rightly is described in varied ways: a great work, a great adventure, a great responsibility and a great joy. Above all, marriage is a great vocation, a lifestyle full of grace. Scripture tells us that Our Lord Jesus blessed the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee with his first recorded miracle (John 2:1-11). Surely, Jesus thought the occasion to be a worthy one.

The Catholic Church requires special preparation for marriage because of Her insistence to take to heart the words and actions of Jesus Christ. We hold marriage to be of God's design (that is, Sacramental). Married couples commit to offering themselves to God and one another so that they may grow together in happiness and holiness.

We are glad that you are seeking to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at our parish. It is our earnest desire that your preparation for this Holy Sacrament will be an experience which is as meaningful as it is memorable.

May God bring to fulfillment that good work which He has begun in you.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*Fr. David W. Nuss, S.T.L.*

Pastor



# Choosing Your Wedding Date

## *Setting Your Wedding Date*

There are many factors that go into choosing your wedding date, and from the Church's perspective we require at least six months notice to allow time for your preparation, and we discourage weddings during the Lenten season (generally six weeks before Easter) unless there is a serious reason. Our regularly scheduled wedding times are 11:30am and 1:30pm on Saturdays.

You may consult the parish calendar at [www.stmarysandusky.org](http://www.stmarysandusky.org) to pre-select two or more dates that you are interested in. When you have some possible dates, please call the parish office at 419-625-7465 to see if your dates are available.

## *Meeting With Your Priest or Deacon*

At the same time that you are setting your date, our staff person will also ask for your faith backgrounds and other important information to assess your freedom to be married, and so that a priest or deacon can be assigned to you. Generally, two Catholics marrying will be assigned a priest to preside since a Wedding Mass is most appropriate. A Catholic and a baptized Christian or unbaptized person will be assigned a deacon to preside since a Wedding Ceremony Outside of Mass is most appropriate.

It is important to note that only your presider can officially approve and enter your wedding date on the Church's calendar after you meet with him. Generally, you will be contacted within two days for this meeting. When you meet with your presider, you will be given a Wedding Contract that will confirm your date and time. We recommend that you do not enter into any other contracts before this meeting, if you do; you do so at your own risk.

# Preparing for Marriage

## *The Process*

The goal of our wedding preparation process is to prepare you both to live a healthy, happy, and holy marriage as husband and wife, that is open to children, until death do you part. God truly does have a plan for you to do this, and it is through His Church that He makes this plan a reality. We affirm your decision to marry and to ask to receive the Sacrament of Marriage and we will do everything possible to support you now and in the future.

Please remember that it is your responsibility at all times to stay in touch with your presider and to schedule the appointments necessary to complete your preparation on time.

## *The FOCCUS: Pre Marriage Inventory*

An important tool that we use in our preparation is FOCCUS. This personality profile will assess each of you individually and as a couple to see where your strengths are and where more communication and compromise may be necessary. Your results will become the basis for future sessions with your presider.

## *The Pre Cana Day*

In addition to your private sessions with your presider, you both will be required to attend an all-day session with other engaged couples preparing for marriage. This day is hosted and presented by other Catholic married couples and covers a variety of topics that deal with married and family life.

A schedule of these Pre Cana Days will be given to you at your first meeting.



“...Scripture readings, prayers, vows and blessings that will help make your wedding special to you.”

## Planning Your Wedding Day at Church

### *Planning Your Wedding Rite*

Your presider will guide you both through the plans for your wedding. This will happen approximately six to eight weeks before the big day. We use a special planning booklet that will help you personalize the Scripture readings, prayers, vows and blessings that will help make your wedding special to you.

### *Planning Your Wedding Music*

Our Music Director will meet separately with you to discuss and plan the appropriate music, soloists, and other musicians available for your wedding. Soloists and musicians you know can also be discussed at this time. You should schedule this meeting about six to eight weeks before your wedding day.

During this meeting you will hear different selections for the various parts of the Mass or ceremony and be able to choose your favorites to personalize your wedding. Remember, because a wedding is a liturgical celebration, only approved liturgical songs and music can be used during the wedding. We suggest you find a special time at your reception for your favorite popular songs.

### *Planning Your Wedding Party*

Church law requires only two witnesses for your wedding. Today, most wedding parties are larger than that, but they don't have to be. As a practical matter, wedding parties of up to eight couples, including the bride and groom, fit well within our space. A wedding party of more than eight couples

becomes crowded and difficult to stage and photograph during the wedding.

Ring bearers and flower girls, if you choose to have them, should be of sufficient age that they can understand what they are to do and be able to be on their own and away from their parents for the length of the wedding. In our experience children four years of age or older are usually able to handle what is expected of them. Remember, the children will likely not remember being in the wedding, and their behavior should enhance, and not detract from your special day.

### *Building Use Times*

Of course, your wedding is the most important event of your lives so far, and certainly a very important event in the life of our parish, but especially on Saturdays, your wedding may be one of five different events that day here at St. Mary's! Although we thank God that we can be of service to so many, it does require us to plan very carefully so that everyone can have the appropriate use of the facilities for their event.

Your Wedding Contract will detail the specific times you will have access to the Church building and facilities, but in general, you can plan to have one hour in the bride's room and thirty minutes to seat your guests in Church before the wedding and thirty minutes after the wedding for formal pictures in the Church. Please plan accordingly, as we are unable to make any

exceptions to this timeline.

### *Bride's Room*

We do have a private Bride's Room that is available for use by the bride and her party. You may not leave anything overnight from the rehearsal or bring anything early. We recommend that all valuables be kept elsewhere at all times. We cannot be responsible for items lost or stolen.

The groom and his party should plan to arrive dressed, fed, and ready. We do not have any dressing facilities for the men.

### *Photo & Video*

Both photography and video are allowed before, during and after, to record your special day. However, all of this must happen within your Building Use Times as detailed in your Wedding Contract. The time for pictures is tight, and this should be planned carefully with your photographer. Please review and share with your photographer and videographer our Photo & Video Policy for Weddings:

### *Welcome to the Professional*

You have been asked by our couple to photograph or video their wedding to help them remember their sacred wedding day. We welcome you and look forward to working with you here at St. Mary's Church.

Of course, when we gather for a wedding, it is first and foremost a sacred rite. To maintain this sacred atmosphere, we have developed these policies and guidelines and require you to follow them in a most professional and discreet manner.

### *Your Timeline*

The couple has been allotted a specific period of time known here as the Building Use Times in their Wedding Contract. Since their wedding may be one of five different events that day, it is important that you adhere strictly to this schedule. In general, you will have a two-hour window of time, including the ceremony. You will have about thirty minutes before and thirty minutes after the ceremony to complete your activities.

Weddings at 11:30 AM must depart the building by 1:00 PM. Weddings at 1:30 PM must depart by 3:00 PM. No exception to the departure time is ever allowed; please plan carefully.

### *Approved Locations*

Before and after the wedding you may shoot anywhere in the Church or on the grounds. During the wedding you may shoot in the Church from the balcony, the rear, and the side aisles.

At no time may you or the wedding party enter the sanctuary (altar platform area) for pictures or video.

### *Approved Equipment*

Before and after the wedding you may use flash and extra lighting, etc. anywhere in the Church or on the grounds. To protect the sacredness of the moment, no flash or extra equipment is ever allowed during the wedding itself.

Thank you for taking the time to read and understand our policies and guidelines. If you need further clarification or have questions, and would like to contact us before the wedding day, please call the parish to speak with your president.

May God bless you for sharing your talents with our wedding couple!

### *Flowers and Decorations*

We are happy to offer you well maintained grounds and a beautifully decorated Church in the colors that are appropriate for our current liturgical season. Depending on the season, our floral decorations range from subdued to stunning, but it is always perfect for your wedding.

Flowers for the Church is certainly one area where you can save on your budget, but if you choose, you may add to our design, but you cannot move or remove anything we have placed. Nothing should ever be placed on the altar.

Pew decorations are allowed, but must be attached with elastic or clips that will not mark the pew. All flowers and decorations you bring in must be removed immediately following the wedding.



### *Local Customs*

Please incorporate into your wedding plans the following local customs. All are time-tested to contribute to a sacred, beautiful, and safe wedding day for you and your guests.

#### *Please Do...*

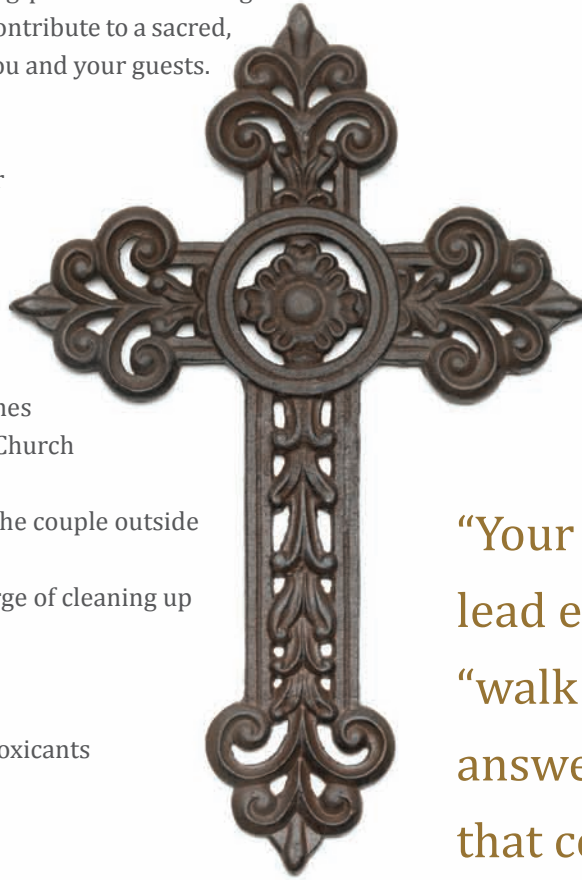
- Take the initiative to schedule your appointments with your presider
- Dress appropriately and act respectfully in the sacred space of the Church
- Be on time, but not too early according to your Building Use Times
- Only bring bottled water onto the Church building and grounds
- Use only bells or bubbles to greet the couple outside Church after the wedding
- Assign a guy and a gal to be in charge of cleaning up after your wedding party

#### *Please No...*

- food, smoking, alcohol or other intoxicants on Church property
- aisle runners
- flower petals in the aisle
- reception line in Church after the wedding
- ushering the guests out after the wedding

#### *Please Ask...*

- About inviting other clergy you personally know to participate



“Your presider will lead everyone in the “walk through” and answer any questions that come up.”

wedding process and staging. Your presider will lead everyone in the “walk through” and answer any questions that come up. We do not rehearse the music at this time; music rehearsals with soloists and musicians will be scheduled separately by the Music Director.

## Your Rehearsal Day

### *Setting Your Rehearsal Time*

A rehearsal is not only traditional but very helpful. Typically, the rehearsal will last about one hour and is scheduled for the evening before your wedding, but other arrangements can be made. Your presider will confirm your rehearsal time with you.

### *Who Should Be Invited?*

We recommend that all those who will have any part in the wedding Mass or ceremony be invited so that they can rehearse their part. You certainly can invite any other family or friends as you wish.

### *What Do We Do?*

We begin with prayer and introductions. Next, we review the

### *Local Customs*

#### *Please Do...*

- Give good directions to everyone coming; it seems we’re hard to find for some
- Be on time
- Have a written bridal party plan: who will be paired with whom and in what order

## Your Wedding Day

### *Building Use Times*

By this time, you have completed your preparation and rehearsal, and your big day is here! You have your Building Use Times as detailed in your Wedding Contract, and you have discussed all of this with your presider. Please be prompt, but not too early so that others may have their time too.



“We are all here to be of service to you and we will do all that we can to ensure your wedding day is all you hoped it to be.”

#### *Flowers and Decorations*

Flowers and decorations are to arrive and be placed within your Building Use Times. No early florist deliveries are allowed, and if early deliveries occur they are at your own risk. The building is open continuously, but is not supervised continuously.

#### *Photo & Video*

Pictures before the wedding are encouraged if there is sufficient time. Please see our Photo & Video Policy on page 3 for Weddings for full details.

#### *Clean Up Policy*

As part of your Wedding Contract you are required to pay a \$150 refundable cleaning and security deposit. Our Building Use Fee does not cover any labor to clean up after you. Our

policy is “leave it like you found it”. All flowers, decorations, packaging, programs, etc. that you bring in with you should be put in a trash can here or taken with you. The costs for any clean up or repairs will be deducted from your deposit.

We recommend that you assign one guy and one gal to assist you in making a tour of the facilities and pick up and take care of anything left behind. A couple in the wedding party or two friends who are attending are ideal candidates.

#### *Local Customs*

Please see our list of local customs under Planning Your Wedding Day at Church. Following these customs will ensure a happy, safe, and holy wedding day for you and your guests.

# Church Etiquette

## *Invitation to Clergy*

If you would like to invite your presider to your rehearsal dinner or wedding reception, please do so as early as possible and it is always in good taste to send them a formal invitation. You can mail invitations to all clergy in care of St. Mary's Church at 429 Central Avenue, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.

Should your presider's schedule allow them to attend, they are always willing to provide a blessing before the meal, or a prayer of some kind. Please let them know if you would like them to do this, they will not assume so unless asked.

## *Personal Conduct in a Sacred Space*

Weddings are always a happy time of getting together and getting reacquainted. It is also a sacred time, where we put ourselves in the presence of God and ask Him for His blessing. The Church understands both sides of our wedding experience and has designated spaces where each should take place.

The outside grounds, our vestibules just inside the doors, and our Commons gathering space are all appropriate areas of the Church where we can meet and greet our family and friends.

Once inside the sanctuary, the body of the Church itself, we should quiet ourselves and realize we are literally in God's house. Particularly during your rehearsal, some talking is expected in Church, but in general an attitude of reflection and prayer is most appropriate here.

# Paperwork & Fees

## *Your Wedding Contract*

To confirm your wedding date on our parish calendar, you will be asked to sign our Wedding Contract. This contract will detail the date and time of your wedding, the fees that are due, your specific Building Use Times, and other important details.

## *Building Use and Deposit Fees*

Everyone who asks to be married here is asked to pay a Building Use Fee to help us offset the expenses of maintaining our building and grounds. You will also be asked to make a refundable Cleaning and Security Deposit. Please refer to your Wedding Contract for the exact amount of each and when they are due.

As Catholics, we all have a right to the Sacraments and money

is never the object. If any of our fees cause a financial hardship, please speak with your presider about having them reduced or waived.

## *Professional Musicians Fees*

Beautiful music and song serve to enhance any wedding, and we are blessed here at St. Mary's to have very talented musicians and soloists. During your meeting with our Music Director, you will learn your options for music and song and what the professional fees are for each musician or soloist. For budget purposes please allow between \$200 and \$500 or more depending on your choices. These Professional Musician Fees are paid directly to the professional at the time of the wedding and are in addition to the Building Use and Deposit Fees.

Although this is how our musicians and soloists earn their living, they see their work as a ministry and are willing to offer their talents to you if a financial hardship exists. Please speak with the Music Director if this is necessary. Using other musicians must be approved through our Music Director.

# Required Documents

An authentic copy of your baptismal certificate is required for both Catholics and other baptized Christians. The Catholic should personally contact their parish of baptism and request a recent copy of their baptism certificate, including "notations", within six months of the wedding date. This copy should be mailed directly to St. Mary's Church. The baptized Christian should provide a copy of the baptismal certificate or a letter from the church where the baptism took place showing the place, date, and presider.

Your marriage license from the State of Ohio is valid for sixty days. Please contact the Erie County Courthouse to secure your license within sixty days of the wedding date. You can drop your marriage license off at the parish office the week before the wedding.

In this booklet, we've given you some general policies and guidelines that will help you plan for and enjoy your wedding day. If you have any questions at all, do not hesitate to contact your presider or the parish office immediately.

We are all here to be of service to you and we will do all that we can to ensure your wedding day is all you hoped it to be.







# St. Mary's Parish

429 Central Avenue, Sandusky, OH 44870

419.625.7465

[www.stmarysandusky.org](http://www.stmarysandusky.org)

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