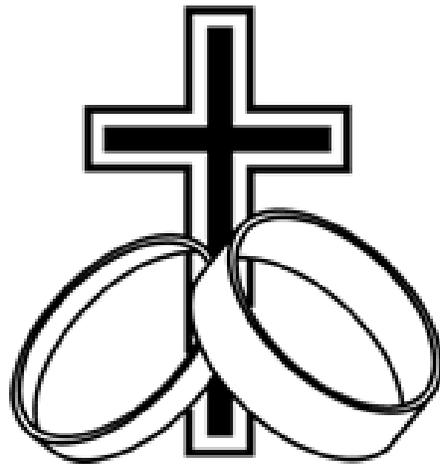


# THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE



## ST. PETER'S PARISH

CLINTON-GODERICH-KINGSBRIDGE

### Planning a Christian Wedding Celebration

**\*Important:** Please refer to the section on planning the Liturgy before you make any arrangements regarding musicians, lectors, flowers, etc.  
**This is policy, not just a guideline.**

## **THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

### **POLICY FOR PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION**

#### **St. Peter's Parish**

Congratulations on your engagement to be married! Thank you for approaching us to journey with you in preparing for your life together. Please find below helpful information to assist you in planning for your wedding.

#### **WHERE DO WE GET MARRIED?**

The Canon Law of the Catholic Church directs that a marriage should take place in the Parish of the bride or groom. Even though a young woman or man is living away from home, they can be married in the parish their parents reside in. If getting married in a parish other than your own, the permission of the pastor of that parish is needed. In the case of interfaith marriage, the marriage generally takes place in the parish of the Catholic party.

#### **INTERFAITH MARRIAGES**

Marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic requires that certain conditions be observed. There is no obligation that the non-Catholic become Catholic. The Catholic party promises that he or she will do all in their power to have the children brought up in the Catholic faith, and that the marriage will be celebrated according to the form of the Catholic Church, that is, before a Catholic priest and two witnesses.

Along with the promises made by the Catholic party to do everything in their power to raise the children Catholic, explanations of the Catholic faith must be given to the non-Catholic party. Once again, we are not trying to make the non-Catholic become a Catholic, but to give them a general knowledge of the faith that the life partner to be has and practices.

#### **HOW FAR IN ADVANCE SHOULD A DATE BE RESERVED?**

Make an appointment with your priest well in advance. In large parishes, six months at least and preferably one year is not an excessive time to reserve a date and time. Too often, the hall and band are booked and the Church is expected to fit in as regards to time and day. We cannot always do this.

We suggest you start with setting a Church appointment well enough ahead, so that other arrangements can be made around that date. Since explanations of the Catholic faith are to be given for interfaith marriages, generally taking up to six months, you can understand that seeing the priest well ahead of time is most necessary.

## **MARRIAGE INSTRUCTION**

You are planning to spend the rest of your lives together in the love of marriage. Every step then, must be taken to ensure your happiness. To this end, a series of marriage Preparation Courses is available, and it is expected that you will avail yourselves of this opportunity to grow together in love. Our parish may have a Marriage Preparation Course each year. Announcements concerning other opportunities in the area appear in the parish bulletin from time to time. The instruction should be received considerably in advance of the marriage date, lest other preparations, parties, etc. make concentration and even attendance difficult. The priest-celebrant will want to meet the couple on one or two occasions to discuss any matters which relate in a particular way to their marriage.

Engaged Encounter retreats are special weekends given to engaged couples. These weekends are offered different times during the year and they are highly recommended. Reservations are required months in advance. Engaged Encounter weekends begin Friday evening and end Sunday evening and cost more than our local Marriage Preparation Course mentioned above.

## **PRAYER**

Since your marriage is a vocation, prayer together is a great and necessary means of preparing to receive the Sacrament. Reception of the Eucharist and of the Sacrament of Reconciliation often during your engagement lays the solid foundation of faith which will see you through many difficult moments that are part of all marriages, and deepen your times of joy. It makes great sense, that if marriage is built on love, then a couple should go to the source of love - God.

## **CHILDREN**

There has to be a good understanding of the Church's teaching on procreation, that is, bringing children into the world, since this is one of the essential parts of the marriage covenant. What it means to have children, when and how many, the teachings of the Church on birth control, the spacing of children - all these should be covered in your marriage preparation.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

In Ontario, persons may be married either by License (obtained at City Hall), or by the Publication of Banns. The Publication of Banns is not a social announcement; it is a legal means of establishing a couples' freedom to marry. By using Banns, the parish community becomes responsible for declaring the couple free to marry. This demands intimate knowledge of the persons seeking marriage. Due to frequent relocation of families and unfamiliarity of persons in our large parish communities today, the use of Banns is almost impossible. Because of this reality all couples will be married by License.

## **CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM**

The certificate can be obtained by a personal visit to, or, by writing to the parish of Baptism. The date of issue must be no more than 6 months prior to the wedding date.

Both parties, regardless of denomination, are required to obtain a record of Baptism, if baptized.

## **CERTIFICATE OF CONFIRMATION**

When a baptismal certificate is obtained from a Catholic parish, it is very important to ask that the record of Confirmation be noted on it. (Notice of Confirmation is always sent to the parish of Baptism). If the Confirmation is not recorded there, the certificate can be obtained from the parish where the Sacrament was received.

A certificate of Confirmation is not required for non-Catholics.

Sometimes difficulties arise in acquiring these documents. For this reason, the parties should move to obtain them without delay. It would be helpful if they were given to the priest as soon as they are obtained. It is necessary that the priest have them at least 6 months before the wedding date.

## **PLANNING THE LITURGY**

The bridal couple meets with the priest-celebrant in order to plan the liturgy of their marriage.

### **A. MUSIC**

In selecting the music for your wedding, please remember that the ceremony is religious in nature, and thus the music must be sacred in character. Songs from the movies, T.V. shows, or stage productions find no place in the wedding liturgy. Favourite popular songs meaningful to the bride and groom, would be better suited to the wedding reception.

The above paragraph is the policy of the Diocese of London in regards to wedding music. It is the policy that is observed in our parish communities, therefore before music is selected for a wedding, the bridal couple should discuss the matter with the appropriate musician.

If a couple would like outside musicians to come and play particular pieces of music prior or following the celebration one must still consult with a parish musician and pay a consultation fee. The parish musician will ensure all the necessary equipment is available and will set them up for the celebration.

**All couples are required to use one of the musicians provided by our parish. These musicians are:**

Marianne Hogan, organist, pianist and soloist, (529-7062)  
Laurie Dalton, guitarist, pianist, organist and soloist (529-3178)  
Eleanor Robinson, pianist, organist and soloist (524-2400)  
Cecelia Denomme, organist, (524-6621)

**All fees are set by the musicians. We suggest that you contact one of our music ministers well in advance to arrange their services.**

## **B. CELEBRATION**

We encourage you to involve your family and friends in this special celebration of faith. If you have readers at your marriage celebration, you should select a person who is experienced speaking in public.

Only Roman Catholics may receive the Eucharist. However, all guests should be encouraged to participate in the wedding Mass as much as possible by congregational singing. Also at Communion time, non-Catholics are invited to come up for a blessing by crossing their arms in front of their chest.

On the occasion of a marriage of mixed religion, the Eucharist may or may not be celebrated. This decision is made by the bridal couple in consultation with the priest-celebrant.

## **C. DECORATION OF THE CHURCH**

The purchase of flowers for the sanctuary is the responsibility of the bridal couple. If there is more than one wedding on the same day, perhaps the cost of flowers could be shared. Please note that the church does not provide floral stands or candelabras.

The florist, or someone from the bridal party, should arrange with the parish office, prior to the wedding, a suitable time for delivery of floral arrangements. (e.g. the previous evening or early the morning of the wedding.) Pew bows and flowers are permitted but must be removed at the end of the celebration - including any tape used to fasten them to pews. Aisle coverings are not permitted (white or red carpets).

## **D. REHEARSAL**

The rehearsal is usually, but not necessarily held on the evening prior to the wedding. It requires the presence of the bride, groom, bridesmaids, the ushers, and both parents of the bride and groom. It must begin sharp at the appointed time.

## **HOURS FOR WEDDINGS**

Weddings take place on Saturday at 2:00 p.m. or almost any weekday afternoon/evening. Weddings never take place on Sunday.

## PUNCTUALITY

As a sign of courtesy to all, everyone should be on time for the rehearsal and the wedding. Lateness inconveniences many people.

The ushers should be at the church thirty minutes before the wedding and the bridal party ten minutes ahead of the wedding. Remember it is neither fashionable nor polite for the bride to arrive late. Keep in mind that usually there are other events taking place in the Church on the same day, consequently lateness inconveniences any events that follow the wedding.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

A professional photographer or one amateur is to work with a minimum of distraction to those present at the wedding ceremony. This person must check before hand with the priest as to where and when pictures may be taken. For these reasons, only the one photographer commissioned by you will be permitted to take pictures. Please inform relatives and friends of this policy. Once the marriage liturgy begins, pictures may only be taken from a fixed place and never from the sanctuary. Equipment requiring the use of photo flood lights is forbidden at all times.

## CONFETTI

Confetti is a serious janitorial and environmental problem. **Its use inside and outside the church is absolutely forbidden.** Please inform your guests that confetti, rice, etc. are not permitted. **A cleaning fee of fifty dollars** will be charged to cover additional janitorial services if this request is not honoured.

## FEES

1. The parish communities ask for a donation of \$150.00 as an administrative fee. This fee is used for general operating expenses, and is collected by the church secretary or at the rehearsal prior to the celebration.

2. Musicians: Fee is set by musician.

3. Soloists: to be determined between couples and soloist.

## **IMPORTANT**

For the other sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, a faith background is needed. It is the same for the Sacrament of Marriage. The priest is bound to deter a sacramental marriage to persons who are not practicing the faith. He may also refuse to marry someone if in conscience he judges they are not mature enough.

Both parties must not be under any outside pressure of any kind that would impair their freedom to marry.

It is a privilege for us to journey with each couple preparing for marriage. We are willing to give of our time for instructions, direction, guidance and support. We see marriage as a vocation, a state in life by which together, a couple grows in holiness and enriches the faith community.

Please be assured of our prayers and support.

Father Gary Ducharme  
St. Peter's Parish  
(updated July 2010)