

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE**

The celebration of Christian Marriage is a unique moment in the life of the Church. The community is called to rejoice in a special way when a bride and groom commit themselves to each other in faith and love for life. As the apostle Paul tells us, this is a mystery, "a great foreshadowing," of the love that God has for all his people. This list of guidelines for the celebration of marriage at Saint Peter Church has been prepared to assist couples in preparing for a marriage ceremony which will reflect the Church's understanding of the sacredness of marriage, and her desire for a ceremony which is prayerful, beautiful, and appropriate to the dignity of the Catholic Church.

### *Who may be Married at St. Peter Catholic Church*

Church law guarantees active, registered members of the parish, who are in good standing, with the faith and morals of the Catholic Church, the right to marry in their proper parish church. To be considered an active, registered member of St. Peter Church for the purpose of marriage, the bride or groom must have been "registered" and "active" in the parish for at least one year before the scheduled date of the ceremony.

#### ACTIVE-REGISTERED

1. Someone who has been registered in our parish for one year before the scheduled date of the marriage; and
  2. Someone whose contribution file indicates attendance and support; and
  3. Regularly giving to our offertory collection or fulfilling a pledge to our parish.
- Children of "registered" and "active" parishioners are considered members for the purpose of marriage and may be married in the church without the facility usage fee.

#### NON-REGISTERED OR NON-ACTIVE

1. Indicates someone who has not been registered in our parish for at least one year before the marriage; and
  2. Someone whose contribution file does not indicate attendance and support; and
  3. Someone who does not regularly give to our offertory collection or fulfill a pledge to the parish.
- If even one of the above criteria can be established, then you will be considered a non-registered or non-active parishioner.

\*\* For non-registered or non-active parishioners there is a \$200.00 facility usage fee. This additional fee is to be paid no less than seven days before the scheduled marriage.

## Documents Needed for Marriage

### BAPTISMAL RECORD

A certified copy of your baptismal certificate with notations is required. This means that you must contact the parish of your baptism and ask them to send you a copy of your baptismal certificate, with the parish seal stamped upon it. This record must be no more than six months old. The procurement of this certificate by the non-Catholic party is encouraged – at the least, the date and location of baptism is needed.

### PREPARATION

- ✓ Initial meeting with priest or deacon
- ✓ FOCCUS completed at office
- ✓ Second meeting with priest or deacon
- ✓ Theology of the Body workshop
- ✓ Pre-Cana/E. E. Weekend

Once you have attended the Pre-Cana sessions with married couples from our parish or an Engaged Encounter (E. E.) Weekend, we will require your diploma for the wedding file. Either the Pre-Cana Program *or* Engaged Encounter Weekend is mandatory.

- ✓ Follow-up meeting(s) w/ priest, deacon and/or Family Life Coordinator; Liturgy planning
- ✓ Creighton Fertility Care Course or completion of another Natural Family Planning Course

### MIXED MARRIAGE PERMISSION

If this will be a marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic, please let us know at the time of your initial meeting with the clergy. Permission from the Bishop must be given for a mixed marriage. The celebration of the wedding in such situation is normally performed in the context of a wedding service, not a Mass (thus there would be no Communion during the ceremony).

### DELEGATION

If the Catholic party is registered in another parish, he/she will have to contact their pastor at that current parish and request “delegation” from him. The clergy of St. Peter need written permission, which is “delegation”, from your current pastor to preside at the ceremony. Please have this sent to the officiating priest or deacon of your marriage.

### MARRIAGE LICENSE

The civil license for marriage is to be presented to the priest or deacon at the time of the rehearsal. It is an illegal act for the clergy to preside over the ceremony of anyone without the license in hand.

Application for License must be made under oath by BOTH parties to the Probate Court of the county in which either resides:

**Ross County Courthouse~**  
2 North Paint Street, Suite A  
Chillicothe, OH 45601-3109  
M-F 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p. m.  
Phone: (740)774-1179 & # 4

See secretary for a list of other county courthouses and their contact information.

## *People Involved in the Liturgy*

### VISITING CLERGY

It is the responsibility of the visiting clergy to read and ensure that the parish regulations are followed. Please contact the Secretary of State for information pertaining to the civil license necessary for an out-of-state priest or deacon to preside over the ceremony:

Secretary of the State of Ohio  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-466-4980  
[www.state.oh.us/sos](http://www.state.oh.us/sos)

### CHOOSING OTHER MINISTERS FOR THE CELEBRATION

Friends and relatives of the couple may participate in the liturgy in various roles. You may wish to select individuals to serve as lectors, servers, Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and gift bearers at the liturgy. So that these ministers feel comfortable, they should be properly prepared and rehearsed. Decisions about ministers may be made when the liturgy is planned. Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be Catholics in full communion with the Catholic Church

You may wish to select children to take part in the ceremony as attendants – flower girl or ring bearer. Because the acoustics of the Church create an environment in which very young children as attendants can be a distraction, children must be, as a general rule, at least 5 years old.

## *Elements Involved in the Liturgy*

### ENVIRONMENT

Floral arrangements in the sanctuary should consist of natural flowers and materials and not be higher than the Altar of Sacrifice. No decorations are to be placed on the altar itself.

It is customary at St. Peter for floral decorations to be left for the altar after the ceremony, as a gift of gratitude to the Church.

For safety reasons and proper decorum, the use of candelabras, lamps and floral displays with candles are prohibited.

Please see the Policy for Florists for more details.

### THE UNITY CANDLE

The Unity Candle is not a recognized part of the Catholic wedding liturgy, according to the liturgical documents of the Church. Therefore, it will not be used during the liturgy itself. However, it can be done at the reception.

### AISLE RUNNER

The use of an aisle runner for the ceremony is prohibited.

## DRESSING ROOM

A dressing room for the bride and her attendants is located in the Parish Center and is available upon request. **Please contact the parish office at (740) 774-1407 to arrange the time period you would like to use the room. Please do this at least two weeks before the wedding.** It is open for use on the day of the wedding. The parish is not responsible for lost or stolen items left unattended in the Center. It is expected that the wedding party will pick up and straighten up the area to the way they found it.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographers are welcome to take pictures before, during and after the ceremony. In order to avoid distractions, those taking pictures and/or video recordings are asked to check with the clergy at least 30 minutes before the celebration to arrange the locations for pictures. Since confessions in the church start at 4:00 p.m., all picture-taking must be completed by this time for a Saturday afternoon wedding. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** Please see the Policy for Photographers and Videographers for more details.

## CELL PHONES

Please do not use cell phones in the church itself, whether that be before, during, or after the rehearsal or wedding. The church is a sacred building. Please also remind your wedding party of the same. If someone needs to use the phone and cannot go outside, please direct them into the vestibule (the area between the entrance of the church building and the entrance into the church proper – this is also the area where the restroom is located).

## *Fees and Stipends*

### FACILITY USAGE STIPEND

The facility usage fee is dependent upon the status of the couple. The pastoral staff of St. Peter determines active-registered or non-active or non-registered status.

### PASTORAL MUSICIAN

Like the florist and photographer for your wedding, church musicians provide a service for making your wedding a meaningful event. Therefore, they also need to be paid a stipend for their services.

The stipend for the parish organist is \$50.00 - \$75.00. This fee includes meeting with the couple to plan and select music, practice time with the parish cantor, and personal practice time. It is customary that the organist does not attend the rehearsal; however, if the couple chooses to have the organist attend the rehearsal, then an additional \$25 stipend should be added.

The stipend for the parish cantor depends upon the person chosen by the couple at the suggestion of the pastoral musician. The parish cantor determines his/her own rate.

~ These stipends need to be given to the music ministers before the ceremony begins. ~

If there is a visiting soloist (instrumental or vocal), an additional \$25 stipend for the organist should be given. This addition reflects the necessity of extra practice time with the visiting soloist.

If there is a visiting organist, approved by the clergy, then this organist determines his/her own fee for playing for the wedding. Additionally, there should be added a \$25 stipend for the parish organist to handle musical logistics, including his/her time to meet with the visiting organist to arrange any desired practice time; and, in the case of a non-Catholic visiting musician, discuss the musical order of the ceremony and provide any service music.

#### Summary of Music Stipends

Parish Organist – a non-Mass wedding	\$50 Base stipend
Wedding within Mass	\$75 Base stipend
Attend rehearsal	Add \$25
Work with visiting soloist	Add \$25
 Parish Cantor	 Determined by cantor (approx. \$50)

#### SERVERS

It is customary to give servers \$10 - \$15 each.

#### CLERGY

Often the priest or deacon is asked about the offering given him in view of his time and counsel. There is no fee for the clergy, but if you wish to offer him a gift, you are welcome to do so.

### *Church Etiquette*

#### FOOD/BEVERAGES

No alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs/paraphernalia or firearms are permitted on the church property prior to, during and after the wedding. **Violation of this policy will result in immediate cancellation of the wedding ceremony.**

We request that food and non-alcoholic beverages NOT be brought to the Church grounds or into the church. If food/non-alcoholic beverages are brought on the premises, it is the obligation of the bridal party to clean up completely or arrange (and pay) to have the areas cleaned. All trash should be properly disposed of; nothing should be thrown inside or outside on the church property.

#### FURNITURE IN THE CHURCH

Furniture in the Church should be left in place. This applies to microphones, the individual candlesticks located in the sanctuary, and all other decorations.

#### SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the church property buildings.

## *Practices Not Allowed in the Church*

### RECEIVING LINE AND GUEST BOOK

Receiving lines and the signing of the Guest Book are to be held at the reception only, not at the church. Please relay this information to your invited guests via the wedding program. The wedding party must vacate the church by 4:00 p.m. for Saturday weddings to allow for 4 p.m. Confessions and 5 p.m. Mass.

### RICE, FLOWER PETALS, BIRD SEED

No rice, flower petals, birdseed or balloons may be used as part of the wedding celebration inside or outside of the church.

## *A Time of Preparation and New Beginnings*

Marriage is a major moment in your life, and a very important sacrament for you as individuals and as a couple.

Before your wedding day, you deserve a good experience of the mercy and forgiveness of God. At this important time in your lives, you can prepare for a better future together if you let God cleanse your souls of the sins of your past.

You can do this by going to confession to a Catholic priest and in this sacrament of reconciliation receiving the forgiveness of sins which we call absolution. You can make your confession to any priest, including your pastor, but you are free to decide whom to ask.

It is good to make your confession about one month before your wedding. That can also help you deal with the pressures of planning, and remind you to be good to the people who love you. Waiting until the final week, or hoping to talk with a priest on the day of the rehearsal, leaves too much to chance.

Your wedding is a milestone in your life and a great new beginning. Ask God to help you be worthy of your spouse's love and the many gifts you have already received. Confess your past sins and promise to avoid them in the future.

Don't miss your best chance in years to regain a totally clear conscience and a good new attitude about yourself.

## *Planning the Liturgy*

A Church wedding is not only a personal event but also a liturgy of the Church. As such, the religious nature of the ceremony must be carefully preserved.

### LITURGY

Your wedding is a part of the faith life of our parish. You, as ministers of the marriage, have chosen to express freely your love and commitment to each other. The Rite of Marriage, highlighted by the exchange of vows and the blessing and exchange of rings, best conveys the Church's desire to witness your vows, to strengthen your fidelity to them, and to prayerfully support you in your life together. As with all liturgical celebrations, the full and active participation of those present is desirable. Ordinarily, the Rite of Marriage takes place in one of two contexts: within a Mass for two baptized Catholics or outside Mass (ceremony) if either the bride or groom is not Catholic. *If both partners are Catholic but are cohabiting, there will still be no Mass due to the possibility of scandal.*

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

The Rite of Marriage includes selected scriptural readings from which you may choose those that most speak to you and to your situation.

### MUSIC

All music must be approved by the parish organist (or pastor if you are not using the parish organist) **at least one month prior** to wedding. Only liturgically appropriate music may be used at weddings. Popular and secular music, such as Broadway/film music or Top 40 songs are not appropriate liturgical music for use in the Church during the wedding Mass or ceremony. This policy also refers to vocal or instrumental music performed during the Prelude. The Wagner and Mendelssohn wedding marches associated with secular operas have not been used traditionally in the Catholic Church and therefore are discouraged.

### WEDDING PROGRAM

If you will be printing a wedding program, please allow the clergy time to review it before you print multiple copies. Program may be emailed to the parish at [secretary@stpeterchillicothe.com](mailto:secretary@stpeterchillicothe.com), but please call secretary to notify her to look for its arrival (774-1407).

### FINAL WORD

Some of these policies may seem arbitrary or unreasonable on first reading, but we ask for your patience and understanding. We know that you want your wedding to be perfect and that you have probably been planning this day in your imagination for many years; we also know that some of the things you may have imagined probably don't coincide with the expectations set forth in these wedding policies. We ask you to remember, though, that while your wedding is an intensely personal moment for you, it is not a private event; rather, it is a public celebration of one of the seven Sacraments given to the Church by the Lord Jesus. For this reason we have a solemn duty to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the mind of the Church and in conformity with liturgical law. Our policies are written to help you understand what is possible and what is not possible during the short ceremony that begins your lifetime of sacrificial love in the Sacrament of Marriage. The sacred liturgy of your wedding is above all else an act of divine worship, and our policies are designed to make your wedding a beautiful and memorable encounter with Christ the Lord for you, your family, and your friends. If you have any questions about these policies, please feel free to speak with the pastor.

## Appendix I

**This form and all forms beyond this point may be detached and used in the planning process.**

### Policies for Florists

St. Peter does not provide janitorial services on the weekends. It is therefore the responsibility of the florist or of the wedding party to remove all flowers, bows, and potted plants by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the wedding (excluding those that will be left for the weekend Masses).

1. Florists will not move the altar furnishings or existing sanctuary arrangements to accommodate floral arrangements nor place anything on the Altar of Sacrifice.
2. Flowers on the high altar shall not exceed the height of the tabernacle. **Absolutely nothing** may be placed on the high altar in the area directly in front of the tabernacle.
3. The height of floral arrangements shall not exceed the height of the Altar of Sacrifice, which is 36 inches.
4. The flower girl or other bridal attendant is **not permitted** to drop flowers or flower petals in the main aisle during the processional.
5. Throwing rice, birdseed or any other objects is prohibited inside or outside of the church.
6. Pew markers/decorations may not be attached with tape because it damages the wood finish. Rubber bands are recommended.
7. No additional candelabras, lamps or candle arrangements from the florist are permitted.
8. No floral arches are permitted.
9. Any non-artificial floral arrangements must be left for the Altar as a gift to the church.
10. St. Peter is not responsible for items left in the Church or Cephas Center.

Florist \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_



### Policy for Photographers & Videographers

We welcome photographers and videographers, both professional and amateur, for still pictures and videotapes. However, we ask that the following directives be observed. The Church itself is not a studio but a sacred place in which a community of believers worships. The photographer and videographer should keep this in mind as they plan all their decisions before, during and after the celebration of Marriage.

1. **All photography must be finished by 4:00 p.m. for weddings on Saturday afternoon. Please do not cause embarrassing situations by deciding to stay “for just one more shot!” There are no exceptions to this rule.**
2. Wedding photographs may precede the marriage ceremony. At least fifteen minutes before the wedding begins, the photographing of the wedding party ceases. At this time, the photographer may check in with the priest/deacon who is officiating the ceremony for any specific instructions.
3. Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary. They may photograph from the side or rear of the Church only.
4. When the priest/deacon is at the pulpit for the Scripture readings or the homily, the photographer must be silent and still.
5. Formal portraits with studio equipment such as screens, props, etc., are not to be done in the Church but at home, the studio or the reception hall.
6. No Church furnishings are to be moved for pictures.
7. If flowers are moved – **absolutely no** flowers or plants may be placed on the altar of sacrifice. If plants are placed on the high altar, **NOTHING** may be placed on the altar area directly in front of the tabernacle.
8. Flash photography should be kept to a minimum during the ceremony. If the wedding is within the context of the Mass, no photographs should be taken during the Eucharistic Prayer (during the consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ).
9. The photographer is not allowed to stop or slow the progress of the liturgy.
10. Photographers should be prepared to begin taking the formal pictures immediately after the wedding party leaves in the exit process.
11. Photographers and stationery video cameras are permitted in the choir loft of the Church. Please inform the priest beforehand if this will be the case so that he can have the door unlocked.

Photographer \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Videographer \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_