

**The Sacrament**

**of Holy Matrimony**

*Preparation & Policies for:*

**Most Blessed Sacrament Parish**

*2240 Castlewood Drive*

*Toledo, Ohio 43613*

*(419) 472-2288*

[*www.blessedsacramenttoledo.com*](http://www.blessedsacramenttoledo.com)

*Rev. Michael A. Geiger, Pastor*

+JMJ+

*Revised August 2022*

**Congratulations and God’s Blessings on your Engagement!**



*“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… rather than focused and ready for the great step that they are about to take…Have the courage to be different. Don’t let yourselves get swallowed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances.”* **(Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia #212)**

May our merciful God be praised that he has brought you to this moment in your lives as you approach the Church and your parish community in order to prepare to enter into the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony! Matrimony is a serious and sacred commitment.  Through this Sacrament, together you will draw closer to God and to each other in a life-giving, self-sacrificing covenant of love. Christ enhanced the dignity of Matrimony by making the Christian Matrimony relationship a Sacrament - a living expression of His love for us.

Since Matrimony is a Sacrament of the Church, it is expected that couples are getting married in either the home parish of either the bride or the groom. As a community of faith, it is our joy and responsibility to support and pray for you as a couple. It is important to clarify that normally, only registered parishioners and/or those living in the established parish boundaries of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish may be married at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. It may be possible for couples who do not fit this residency/registration criteria as outlined by the universal law of the Church to be married at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, but this must be approved by the Pastor.

Matrimony is also a great and marvelous adventure.  It is an understanding that holds the promise of joyful years together.  People enter Matrimony with high hopes of a beautiful future together.  It is this atmosphere that brings out the best qualities of each person in Matrimony.  The Church has a serious responsibility to help our people enter into a Marriage that gives promise of being grace-filled, happy and successful.

Our Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, along with the Diocese of Toledo, has established a program and process of marriage preparation so that engaged couples may be helped to understand the Sacrament and its responsibilities. The following are the Policies for Most Blessed Sacrament 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.  Should you have any questions or clarifications regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact **Mrs. Krista Gonzalez-Luce, Parish Secretary, at 419.472.2240.**

**ARRANGEMENTS**

**A WEDDING/MARRIAGE DATE IS NOT OFFICIALLY SET UNTIL APPROVED AND CONFIRMED BY REV. MICHAEL A. GEIGER, PASTOR OF MOST BLESSED PARISH, AND AFTER THE COUPLE HAS PAID THE WEDDING FACILITY FEE.**

The first step for you as an engaged couple is for you to contact the Parish Office at **419.472.2240** in order to begin the process. **Mrs. Krista Gonazalez-Luce, Parish Secretary**, or another office staff member, will assist you in this process. All necessary information will be taken and forwarded to the Pastor for review and determination if the date is approved. This process must be started AT LEAST SIX MONTHS in advance of the requested wedding date. It is important to reiterate: Other details such as reception halls and caterers should not be made until the wedding is approved and confirmed by Rev. Michael Geiger, Pastor, and after the couple has paid the wedding facility fee. If there are financial concerns or needs, please make sure the Pastor is made aware of the need.

The Priests and the Deacons of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish officiate at weddings.  It may be possible for another Priest/Deacon who is a relative or friend to be delegated to officiate at your wedding.  **A visiting Priest/Deacon is required to comply with all of Most Blessed Sacrament 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 Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. Requests for an officiant other than the parish Priests/Deacons should be made early to determine who will do the instructing and paper work in the process of preparing for your wedding.  In many circumstances, ministers of other denominations are welcome to participate.

**LOCATION**

Normally, the marriage is to take place in the parish of the bride; however, it may also be celebrated in the church of the groom. Although a “destination” or wedding outside of the church may seem desirable, the Catholic Church does not permit weddings outside the church building. The church building is the place where the faithful gather week after week to worship and to support each other as a community of faith. Only a validly ordained Catholic Priest or Deacon may officiate a wedding.

**MEETING WITH THE PRIEST/DEACON**

You will have 3-4 meetings with the Priest or Deacon of your wedding. Various documents will be needed in order to complete your marriage file; the Priest or Deacon will happily assist you in clarifying what documents are needed. A very useful tool to ascertain the perception of yourself and the person you are to marry is the FOCCUS analysis tool. It 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. It is expected that couples are attending Sunday Mass and engaging in the life of the Parish 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 or requirements.

In addition to meeting with the Priest/Deacon officiant as part of your marriage preparation, the Diocese of Toledo also requires that you as a couple complete a retreat/workshop experience known as a pre-marriage retreat and/or Engaged Couple Encounter. These experiences are scheduled throughout the Diocese of Toledo. Please check with your Priest/Deacon officiant to clarify this requirement. You will receive certification of your participation upon completion; this should be given to your Priest/Deacon officiant in order to be placed in your marriage file.

More specific information on these experiences as well as the Sacrament of Matrimony can be found by navigating to the “Marriage & Family” section of [www.toledodiocese.org](http://www.toledodiocese.org/). Taking a Natural Family Planning course, although not required, is highly recommended. This knowledge 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.  Full instruction is taught in three sessions, each 2-3 hours long.  Course listings can be found at [register.ccli.org](http://register.ccli.org/).

**WEDDING TIMES**

Weddings are normally scheduled on Saturdays at **11:00 am** or **1:00 pm**. Weddings on days/times other than Saturday may be possible; be sure to inquire with the Priest or Deacon. Weddings are not celebrated during the seasons of Advent or Lent.

**DOCUMENTS NEEDED**

1. Catholic parties need a copy of a recent Baptismal Certificate (not more than 6 months old).  If you were baptized at Most Blessed Sacrament 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 meeting with the Priest/Deacon.
2. 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.
3. Certificate of completion of a “Pre-Marriage/Engaged Couple” workshop.

**OFFICIAL WITNESSES**

The best man and maid-of-honor need not be Catholic, but they should believe and live according to Christian teachings regarding Matrimony. Please remember when planning your wedding that a large wedding party distracts from the ceremony and the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

**WEDDING COORDINATORS**

While these coordinators may be very helpful to the bride, groom and wedding party, they do not have a role in the Church and will not be permitted to participate in the rehearsal or wedding Mass.

**FLOWER GIRL/RING BEARER**

Though it is wonderful 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. It is recommended that a child be at least 6 years of age to participate in a wedding as a ring bearer or a flower girl.  Flower girls may carry, but may not drop petals of any kind.

**PLANNING YOUR CEREMONY**

During your preparation with the Priest or Deacon, you will have the opportunity to choose scripture readings and plan the details of 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, Robert Rae (419-360-3140). 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. If the marriage is inter-faith, the sensitivities of the non-Catholic party and family should be considered, so we use the Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass.

**USAGE OF THE CHURCH**

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 in the sanctuary 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 two hours prior to the wedding and one hour after the wedding ceremony.  All weddings and rehearsals are to start on time.  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, papers, water bottles, debris, etc., are removed.

A Dressing room is provided for the bridal party.  It is located below the main entrance to the Church. 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.

Smoking or eating (meat trays, fast food, etc.) is **NOT** permitted in any buildings.

**Aisle runners** are not permitted due to liability and tripping hazards.

The **“unity candle”** 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 or bubbles** may be used after a wedding or nothing at all.  Rice, balloons, confetti, releasing butterflies and bird seed may **not** be used.

Don't feel pressured to overspend in planning your wedding.  Many dollars can be wasted.  A marriage in church primarily is a religious ceremony, not a performance.  Simplicity is in order in a beautiful church like Most Blessed Sacrament.

**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 sanctuary.  Flowers in vases are considered a donation to the Parish and should not be removed after the ceremony.  Nothing in the sanctuary area is to be moved or replaced for accommodating flowers or candles.

**Only clip-type attachments may be used when attaching decorations to pews. Tape, and other adhesives are NOT allowed.**

Florists may make deliveries directly to the church no sooner than two hours prior to your wedding, 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:** A **$250.00 church facility fee for parishioners, or $500 church facility fee for non-parishioners is requested for weddings.** This fee goes to the Parish, not to the Priest/Deacon and is to be paid to the Parish Center at the time of reserving/confirming the wedding date early on in the process, when the date is officially confirmed/approved by the Pastor. Call the Parish Office for any questions.

**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:** Most Blessed Sacrament Parish will provide you with a marriage certificate issued by our parish on the day of your wedding.

**RECEIVING LINE:** If you decide you want a receiving line at the church, there will **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 the reception of 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.

**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 period of stability (three years or more) is preferred and all the regulations listed in this brochure are to be observed where applicable.  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 page 11 for guidelines. 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:

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

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 during your time of preparation.  Often, given other responsibilities, the Priest or Deacon is not able to attend the rehearsal dinner and/or the wedding reception.

**Wedding Preparation Check List**

$250/$500 Requested Church Facility Fee made to secure the date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Marriage Retreat/Workshop Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

First Meeting with Priest/Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Second Meeting with Priest/Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Third Meeting with Priest/Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Fourth Meeting with Priest/Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Acquired necessary documentation:

* Bride’s Baptismal Certificates \_\_\_\_\_
* Groom’s Baptismal Certificate \_\_\_\_\_
* Delegation from home pastor \_\_\_\_\_
* Marriage License  \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting with Director of Liturgical Music, Mr. Adam Miller – amiller@mbsptoledo.org \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Guideline given to photographer/videographer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Matrimony is a lifetime commitment. Most Blessed Sacrament Parish is happy to assist you in any way we can to help you recognize and make Christ**

**a part of your marriage.  May God continue to bless you and your families!**

**PLANNING YOUR WEDDING MUSIC**

# INITIAL CONTACT WITH THE LITURGICAL MUSIC DIRECTOR

Once you begin your marriage ceremony preparation at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, please contact Mr. Adam Miller, Director of Liturgical Music to secure the date on his calendar. You may reach Mr. Miller by e-mailing his at amiller@mbsptoledo.org or calling the Parish Office at 419-472-2288. Please note that you are personally responsible for being involved in planning your wedding music. Parents and others may be invited to take part strictly in an advisory capacity, but the Director of Liturgical Music will work primarily with the bridal couple only, and both bride and groom should take part in the planning process.

# SELECTING YOUR MUSIC

A Church wedding is not only a very personal event; it is also a Sacrament of the Church. As such, the religious nature of the ceremony must be carefully preserved. However meaningful some music may be to the couple personally, the principle that governs the sacredness and acceptability of the wedding music is the religious aspect. With all due respect to other styles of musical expression, only liturgically appropriate music may be used at weddings. Popular and secular music, such as Broadway, film music, top 40 songs, and taped music (previously recorded music) are not appropriate for liturgical use in Church during the wedding ceremony. This general policy also refers to vocal and instrumental music performed during the Prelude, Communion Meditation, and Postlude, etc. All music, sacred or classical in nature, is to be approved by the Liturgical Music Director.

The Parish requests that you also honor the tone of the liturgical season that corresponds with the date of your wedding. For instance, some types of music may not fit with the more subdued nature of the Advent or Lenten seasons of the Church’s liturgical calendar year. The Liturgical Music Director, Robert Rae, will guide you through these sensitivities as they relate to the liturgical calendar and will help you make suitable musical selections for the wedding liturgy and assist you in completing the Music Selection Form.

# MUSICIANS FOR YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY

It is the responsibility of the Liturgical Music Director to preserve the integrity of the liturgy as regards the musical portion of your ceremony. Ordinarily, the Parish Liturgical Music Director will be the primary musician leading the music program for your wedding. Outside of the Parish musicians (or those musicians contracted by the parish to play at your wedding), the Liturgical Music Director will be responsible for approving any friends, relatives or acquaintances of the bride or groom wishing to offer their vocal or instrumental assistance for your wedding at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. If there are any musicians whom you wish to have play at your wedding, please inform the Liturgical Music Director at the time of your initial phone conversation. You must also have your guest musicians contact the Liturgical Music Director to discuss the Parish’s musical guidelines, set a time for a possible audition, and schedule a meeting to rehearse the music. A rehearsal with guest musicians is mandatory and may not be omitted for any reason.

# DAY OF THE REHEARSAL

There will not be musical accompaniment during the wedding rehearsal at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. The purpose of the rehearsal is to serve as a “dry run” for familiarizing the wedding party with the flow of the ceremony. From this, you can see why it is very important that any guest musicians must meet with the Music Director before the wedding rehearsal and day of the ceremony.

# MUSICIAN’S FEES

In order to avoid any confusion on the day of your wedding, please remember to bring all musician fees for staff musicians and musicians provided by the Parish before the wedding ceremony. If you like, these fees may be paid prior to the rehearsal date. However, **all fees must be remitted no later than the rehearsal**. The schedule of Musicians’ fees for musicians from the Most Blessed Sacrament Parish Music Program is:

1. $140.00 for the Music Director or Associate Organist, if one of them plays or supervises at your Order of Celebrating Matrimony within Mass. **OR**
2. $125.00 for the Music Director or Associate Organist, if one of them plays or supervises at your Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass. **OR**
3. $100.00 for the “Bench Fee” established by the American Guild of Organists’ Code of Professional Ethics, when you request that another, properly qualified organist or musician is allowed to play at your wedding. This properly compensates the staff musicians, while allowing you to select such a musician to play at your wedding. The Parish Music Director will determine whether or not a musician is sufficiently qualified to play at your wedding. **AND/OR**
4. $50.00 for a Cantor provided by the parish. A cantor is required for all wedding liturgies at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. You may ask friend to serve as Cantor if they have vocal experience. (If you choose to ask a friend or family member to serve as Cantor, the person must be approved by the Liturgical Music Director after an audition) **AND**
5. $25.00 minimum for a required rehearsal with any approved instrumental or vocal musicians among your family or friends whom you invite to perform at your wedding.

Fees for instrumental or vocal musicians recruited by Most Blessed Sacrament Parish from **outside the parish music program** will depend on prevailing wages and local custom, as well as on the rates of the individual musicians. The Liturgical Music Director will guide you in these matters at the time that you meet with him. **Note that all musicians’ fees cited here are subject to increase. Please consult the music director inside the designated time frame to determine current fee schedules.**

Fees for instrumental or vocal musicians recruited by the bridal party from outside the Parish are the exclusive responsibility of the bride and bridal party. Most Blessed Sacrament Parish accepts no responsibility for payment of musicians recruited by the bride or groom.

**POLICY FOR VIDEOGRAPHERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS FOR A WEDDING AT MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH**

We welcome you to Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. You have been asked by the couple whose marriage you will video or photograph to help them remember this special day.

Video and still pictures of a wedding are a lifetime treasure. As the videographer /photographer you should be aware of several things. There are specific locations in the church for taping/picture taking: anywhere in the rear of the church, or middle of side aisles, side aisles by pillars. If the wedding has the celebration of the Eucharist, the videographer/photographer is not permitted to set up a tripod in the side aisles.  The sanctuary may NOT be used.  You may set up in the choir loft, so long as you **adhere to requirements established by the Liturgical Music Director.**

Neither the groom nor the bride **may** be “wired for sound”. There are speakers in the choir loft; the sound quality is excellent.

Please be mindful that when we gather for a wedding it is first and foremost a prayerful experience.  Because of this, you are asked to respect our worship. As such, we ask that:

1. All set up pictures of the wedding couple need to be completed 30 minutes before the beginning of the wedding.  You have a sense of how long it will take to complete these pictures, so please inform the couple so that they will have everyone present at the needed time.
2. Extra lighting, flashes, ladders and other such equipment are **NOT** permitted **DURING** the wedding.  Photographer/Videographer(s) are asked to be discreet and professional.  Video/picture-taking should not distract from the ceremony.
3. Processions are **not** to be slowed or interrupted for taking pictures/video.  Flash pictures may be used as the people are coming down the aisle and as they leave.  **NO other flash photography or extra lighting is acceptable during the wedding.** You, as the professional photographer/video operator, need to be aware that others might take pictures with a flash. However, this does not give you permission to use a flash.
4. During the wedding**, videographer/photographers** are **NOT** permitted in front of the front pews, on the stairs or in the sanctuary.