



**Saint Michael's** Catholic Community  
17150 - 88TH Ave., Coopersville, MI 49404 Phone (616) 837-8158 • Fax (616) 837-7893

## *Guidelines for the Rite of Marriage*

“The sacrament of marriage signifies a union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994)

Congratulations on your Christian engagement! As you prepare for this celebration and lifetime commitment, the parish will assist you in your preparation. To enhance and preserve the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage, these requirements and important notes are listed.

We maintain high standards in our sacramental preparation and worship life at Saint Michael's. A sincere respect and reverence for the traditions and rites of the Roman Catholic Church is expected of all involved. Please study these guidelines, and feel free to bring any questions or comments you have to the parish staff.



## **1. REQUIREMENTS:**

(The wedding date always remains contingent on the fulfillment of these requirements, up to the wedding date itself.)

- 1.1. Either the bride or groom must be a practicing, registered member of Saint Michael's. If one has been a previous member and has moved away and wishes to be married here, a letter from the pastor of the parish in which he or she is now worshipping is needed.
- 1.2. The couple takes an active part in their preparation for marriage. Normally this preparation will take at least six months. It is the responsibility of the couple getting married to arrange an initial meeting with the pastor. At this meeting, you will fill out church documents; discuss the Catholic faith and sacrament of marriage, and the process annulments if necessary.
- 1.3. The couple will take the FOCUS Pre-Marriage Couple Inventory. They should contact our Pastoral Associate, Dr. Allan TenEyck to set up a time to answer the questions.
- 1.4. The Diocese and Parish require that there be a mandatory preparation at either a Pre-Cana workshop or other approved preparation program. (A certificate of completion of the workshop is required.)
- 1.5. The Parish will assign mentor couples to each engaged couple. They will set up roughly 5-6 meetings with these couples. Throughout the marriage preparation, the couple will learn about the sacrament of marriage and the commitment that each is making to God, each other, and the Church. There will be time to pray and reflect on the sacred Scriptures for the marriage liturgy; discuss the couples relationships and experiences of God, family, friends, and of course, each other.
- 1.6. The couple, along with the pastor and music ministers, will prepare and rehearse the wedding liturgy. (In a marriage between a Catholic and a person not of the Catholic faith, the marriage is ordinarily celebrated outside the Eucharistic Liturgy.)
- 1.7. The civil marriage license (obtained from the county) must be brought to the parish office at least 2 weeks before the wedding date. No wedding can legally occur without the marriage license.

## **2. SCHEDULING**

- 2.1. Must be scheduled through the parish office at least six (6) months in advance.
- 2.2. Wedding time options on Saturday: Between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.
- 2.3. Wedding time options on Friday: Between 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
- 2.4. Wedding must start on time – no exceptions!
- 2.5. Visiting priests are welcome with permission and delegation of the pastor.
- 2.6. The details of the wedding liturgy, liturgical ministers, dates and times for rehearsal and wedding, etc. are to be arranged with the pastor. This is also required when a visiting priest, musician, or vocalist has been asked to participate in the wedding.

## **3. REHEARSAL**

- 3.1. Held one or two nights before the wedding. Lasting roughly 1 hour.
- 3.2. Please make sure your wedding party and anyone participating in the ceremony is on time.
- 3.3. All fees are due prior to the rehearsal.
- 3.4. The rehearsal dinner may take place in the parish hall. Additional fees and paperwork will apply. Contact the parish office for Hall Rental details.

#### **4. DRESSING**

- 4.1. You may get dressed at church in the ladies or men's restrooms located in the Family Center entrance.
- 4.2. If the ladies need additional room they may use the family center and close the partition.
- 4.3. Please be respectful and leave the bathrooms/family center exactly as you found it.
- 4.4. It is preferable that men get dressed at home and carry their jacket to church.

#### **5. MUSIC**

- 5.1. You are responsible to contact a musician for the ceremony.
- 5.2. You may contact one of our parish musicians or you may use a guest musician.
  - Anna Jonaitis (Piano/Guitar/Vocal) 616-498-3480
  - Craig Bleckley (Guitar/Vocal) 616-997-9875
  - Jennifer Mapes (Piano/Vocal) 302-448-6798
  - Barb Rohen (Organist) 616-997-6838
- 5.3. If you have a guest musician, you are responsible to contact Anna Jonaitis so she can explain the sound system and instruments.
- 5.4. No pre-recorded music allowed.

#### **6. DONATIONS/FEES**

- 6.1. There is no church fee required, however, it is customary to make an offering to the parish on the occasion of a wedding. The parish relies on such donations to defray some of the expenses such as utilities, insurance, and maintenance. This offering does not cover the cost of musicians, gifts to the priests, or liturgical ministers.
- 6.2. Musicians Fees – Contact Musicians for fees.

#### **7. PICTURE AND VIDEO**

- 7.1. During the wedding please ask the photographer to not block the view of the congregation and to stay at a respectable distance. They are NOT allowed on the Altar area.
- 7.2. The altar and lectern are not to be moved for pictures or for the ceremony.
- 7.3. Flash pictures are permitted of the bride and groom and wedding party only coming up or going down the main aisle. No Flash photography during the ceremony.
- 7.4. Video cameras are allowed but please use discretion.

#### **8. FLOWERS AND DECORATION**

- 8.1. Weddings scheduled near special times such as Easter or Christmas seasons have floral arrangements pertaining to these feasts. If you would like to add or detract from them, contact the parish office.
- 8.2. Please remove your flowers and decorations after the ceremony and replace the plants and/or flowers the church was decorated with.
- 8.3. Please do not place any decorations or plants on the altar and please do not entirely block the view of the altar.
- 8.4. Do not use tape on the pews. Rubber bands or wire, etc are appreciated.
- 8.5. Runners are discouraged as they create a tripping hazard.
- 8.6. The parish has portable kneelers for the couple.

8.7. Rice, Confetti, Balloons and Bird Seed are discouraged because of environmental harm and these items are hard to clean after the ceremony. There are also liability concerns with these items making surfaces slippery. The use of bubbles outdoors seems to be a good alternative.

## 9. UNITY CANDLE (OPTIONAL)

9.1. Please purchase dripless candles to avoid wax falling on ground or burning your hand.

9.2. The parish has a unity candle holder that you may use. The candle base is 3 inches.

9.3. Make sure the unity candles are extinguished immediately after Mass.

9.4. Replace unity candle stand to the storage room to the left of the Altar.

## 10. OTHER GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

10.1. No Alcoholic beverages are to be consumed before the rehearsal or the wedding liturgy. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a postponement or cancellation of the liturgy

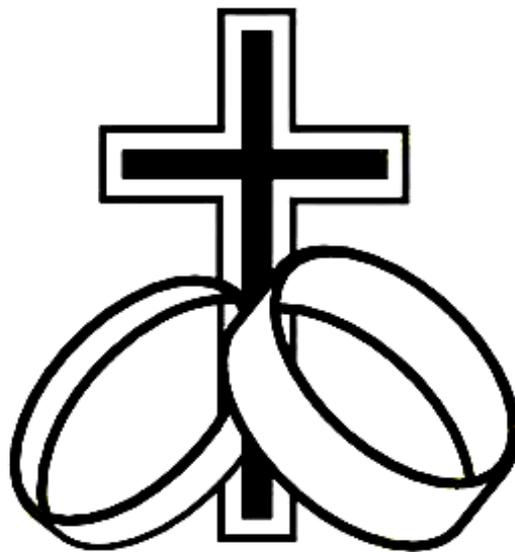
10.2. No Smoking in any of the buildings.

10.3. There is no food, beverages, or gum allowed at any time in the church or narthex.

10.4. It is your responsibility to leave the building as you found it.

10.5. All waste must go into the garbage dumpster located in the parking lot.

10.6. Please appoint someone to assist you in making sure that everything is in good order before you leave. Please make sure that someone is in charge of returning all rented items. We have no space for storing these items over the weekend.



**\*Please make sure your Master and Mistress of Ceremony receives these guidelines.**

*Revised on 04/20/16*