

Mary Queen of Peace

Marriage Guidelines



4423 Pearl Road Cleveland, OH 44109 216.749.2323
www.maryqop.org

Mary Queen of Peace Church

Marriage Guidelines

Congratulations on Your Engagement!

Congratulations on your decision to marry! By seeking marriage at Mary Queen of Peace Parish, you are choosing to give witness to your love in a community of believers who rejoice with you. Your marriage, though it is a personal celebration, is a communal celebration before and with the Church. We are happy for you, and it is our hope to be of service to you as you prepare to enter into a sacred covenant of life and love.

What follows are some helpful guidelines for your preparation for marriage which take into consideration civil law, Church law, policies of the Diocese of Cleveland, and the customary practices which this parish has established based on practical experience. Please read them carefully now, so as to avoid any confusion, which may lead to misunderstandings or disappointments later. If you have further questions, please inquire through the staff person working with you in preparation for marriage.

Setting the Date

While some couples set their marriage date a year or so in advance, the Diocese of Cleveland requires that a couple intending marriage contact the parish at least six months before the proposed time of marriage. A wedding date should not be set, or a hall rented, or other preparations begun before meeting with the parish priest.

The parish priest with whom you meet will advise you regarding the availability of the church for the date and time

you are seeking. If everything seems in order, he will pencil in that date and time on the church calendar. Please understand, however, that at this time the date is tentative and unofficial. It is not definite until the initial meeting with you and your fiancé.

Note that the marriage of two Catholics should always be a Mass and requires a priest as celebrant. *(Normally it is the clergy of the parish who preside at the parish's weddings, but exceptions may be made for special priest friends or relatives of the couple. In such cases, that priest takes care of the marriage preparation. You will be directed to contact that priest or deacon right away.)*

Marriage Preparation

The purpose of the evaluation and marriage preparation is three-fold:

- (1)** To be sure that what you intend by marriage is consistent with what Christ and the Church understand as marriage **(evaluation)**;

- (2)** To help you understand the sacramental aspects of matrimony and to reflect on the dynamics of a successful and happy marriage **(preparation)**;

- (3)** To plan the marriage ceremony itself **(liturgy planning)**.

“Church Marriage” is a far different reality from merely having one’s marriage in a church. Church Marriage implies a life of faith and the practice of that faith within a Church community. If one did not practice the faith with some regularity, and if such a one had no intention or desire to deepen his/her participation, Church Marriage would be inappropriate. The action of coming to the Church for marriage implies a specific intent, which flows from faith and the understanding of marriage as a sacramental act. These are some questions to consider:

How important in our lives is being an active part of the Church Community?

How will Catholic Christian values have an impact on how we live our married life?

As a sacrament, how will our marriage participate in the Church’s effort to present the values of faith to the world?

Process of Preparation

Initial Meeting: The priest will first meet with you to get to know you and fill out some papers. At least six months prior to the wedding, the priest will need a current baptismal certificate from each of the parties getting married. (This can be obtained by calling or writing the Church of baptism.)

Pre-Marriage Questionnaire: Every couple is required to take an online questionnaire such as Prepare/Enrich or Better Together (Dynamic Catholic) or another instrument. It will measure important areas that are of concern for the couple’s continued growth in life and love. It is an aid to discussion, not a test. The priest will review the results with you. The goal of these relaxed discussions is insight and growth.

Pre-Cana: Each couple is asked to participate in a Pre-Cana Day. Pre-Cana is a day long session on significant topics designed to lead you to share personally with your fiancé. Pre-Cana is typically offered monthly at the Jesuit Retreat House. Please call the Jesuit Retreat House at 440-884-9300 or online at <http://www.jrh-cleveland.org>.

Liturgy Planning: Toward the end of your marriage preparation, the priest will give you a booklet which will help you plan the prayers and readings of your wedding. You will be asked to choose people to read at your wedding liturgy. You may also want to select gift bearers for the offertory.

Rehearsal: Wedding rehearsals are usually held the evening or two before the actual marriage. The priest assisting in your marriage preparation will set a rehearsal time for you. Since there may be another rehearsal scheduled immediately after yours. **PLEASE BE ON TIME!**

Please remind those at the rehearsal that their conduct should reflect the fact that our church is the house of God and a place of worship. No gum chewing or any food or drink is allowed in the church. If anyone is under the influence of alcohol, he or she will be asked to leave the rehearsal.

Rehearsals are conducted on Thursday or Friday evenings. The approximate length of the rehearsal is 45 minutes. The bride and groom and the entire bridal party should attend the rehearsal. The parents of the bride and groom and anyone doing a reading during the ceremony should be present as well, if possible.

It is necessary to bring some items to the rehearsal. First of all, you will need your marriage license. It is necessary for you to bring this so that the priest or deacon may process your paperwork. **If you do not bring your marriage license, you will not be able to be married according to State of Ohio law.**

Also bring any other optional items that will be used for the ceremony such as: unity candle, programs, bows for pews, aisle runner. Please bring all the necessary fees to the rehearsal as indicated under the fee section later in this document.

The Marriage Liturgy

Times: Weddings may be scheduled for the following times:

Fridays: contact parish for times.

Saturday: 1:00 pm or earlier.

Weddings are not celebrated during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent.

Ceremony: If both parties are Catholic, the wedding ceremony will be conducted within the context of Mass. If one of the parties is not Catholic it is appropriate to plan a wedding ceremony outside of Mass.

Music: By Diocesan and parish policy, all music used in conjunction with your wedding liturgy (whether it is Mass or a scripture service) must be appropriate religious music. Popular love songs and Broadway show tunes are out of place in this sacred setting. Before you make any musical arrangements with anyone else, you should contact our parish music director, at 216-749-2323.

If you wish another musician or soloist, that person should be currently in service to some church and/or be a professional musician of good quality. If musicians other than those employed by the parish are used, they must be approved by the parish music director. Other musicians must function within Diocesan and parish guidelines.

Music fees are based on the type of service, personnel required, instruments requested or other special needs. Fees will be discussed and set at the initial contact with our parish music director.

Flowers: Though flowers are beautiful, they are not required. Be aware that the liturgical environment of the sanctuary may change with the liturgical season. During the Christmas and Easter seasons, there will likely be floral decorations already in the Church. If you decide to purchase flowers, you may take the flowers with you after the ceremony or leave them in the church.

Photography: Though you may take some pictures in church, it is important to be mindful of time. If you have a 1:00 p.m. wedding, everyone must leave the church no later than 3:00 p.m. There are confessions scheduled every Saturday at 3:00 pm. “Receiving lines” should be reserved for the reception – not the church.

Special Notes

Sacrament of Penance (Confession): This sacrament provides an ideal way to prepare spiritually for your commitment to one another. Those wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation should do contact the priest who is working with the couple to make arrangements. You may wish to have confessions available after your rehearsal.

Civil License: The State of Ohio requires a civil marriage license. In Cuyahoga County, you may obtain this at the County Marriage License Bureau in Cleveland at: 1 Lakeside Avenue, NW, Room 146 on the first floor. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m. **Both of you must appear in person to apply for the license, and one person must live in Cuyahoga County. You will want to pre-register online before your appointment at <http://probate.cuyahogacounty.us/ml/>.**

The \$60.00 fee for this license is payable by cash, money order, cashier’s check, MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express credit or debit cards. There is a \$2.95 convenience fee to use a credit or

debit card. The license is valid for 60 days. It is wise to apply several weeks before your wedding. If either party is divorced, you will need to bring a copy of your divorce decree. For further information call the Bureau at: 216-443-8920 or 216-443-8764. **You will need to bring the marriage license to the rehearsal.** We cannot marry you if you do not have a license. This is not our policy but the law of the State of Ohio.

Parish Fees/Offerings: The parish expenses for preparation have been kept to a minimum and may be paid at any time before the conclusion of the preparation process. It is customary to give an offering to the presider of your wedding. Considering the amount paid in other areas of your wedding, (tuxedos, cake, transportation, flowers, etc.) a proportion suitable to this sacred occasion is recommended. Remember there is much preparation and time required on the part of the priest for your wedding.

Cases of financial hardship should be discussed with the staff member with whom you are working. Marriage is not dependent of the ability to pay the suggested fees and offerings.

Total preparation fees are:

Priest	\$100
Music Director	\$150
Cantor	\$100
Church/Preparation Materials	\$100
Parish Wedding Assistants	\$50

Please have these fees separated by category in different envelopes.

Unity Candle: The unity candle is an option that may be used as part of the ceremony if the couple requests it.

Visit to Mary's Shrine: The local custom of visiting Mary's shrine during the wedding ceremony is not a required part of the

Catholic Wedding Rite. Those couples who wish to offer flowers to Our Blessed Mother may do so after Holy Communion.

Care of Church and Property: Since other weddings or parish services may follow your wedding ceremony, please leave the church, vestibule, bride's room and the yard as clean as you found it. For safety and aesthetic purposes, we do not permit the use of rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons, or flower petals. Your consideration and help are appreciated.

Alcoholic Beverages: Alcoholic beverages are not to be brought to church at the rehearsal or prior to the marriage ceremony.

One Month Prior to the Wedding

The following information will be needed about one month prior to your wedding.

1. The names of your three readers for Old Testament, New Testament, and Universal Prayer (petitions).
2. Will you be providing programs, bells or bubbles for your guests?
No rice, no bird seed, confetti, balloons or flower petals are permitted.
Who will pass them out?
3. Will you visit Mary's Shrine?
4. Floral Information:
Will you have floral pieces or bows at the pews?
Will you have flowers at the Sign of Peace— for whom?
Will you bring flowers to Mary's Shrine?
It is advisable to have your florist present at the church or appoint a person to pass out your flowers.
5. Will you have an aisle runner? *The main aisle is 100 feet long.*
6. If you are having a Mass, who will be bringing up the gifts?
7. Who will walk the bride down the aisle?
8. Who will walk the mother/mothers down the aisle?
9. If you choose to light a unity candle, you will be responsible for purchasing it and the two smaller candles.
10. What time will the Bride and Groom, Bridesmaids and Groomsmen arrive?

Groom and Groomsman should arrive 45 minutes before the ceremony.

Bride and Bridesmaids should arrive 30 minutes before the ceremony.

11. Remind your wedding party that there is to be no gum chewing during the ceremony and no one should be under the influence of alcohol. *NO alcoholic beverages are permitted in the church or on church property.*

12. Please be on time for the wedding rehearsal and be sure to bring:
 - Marriage License—if no license, the wedding cannot take place.
 - If applicable: programs, bubbles and /or bells, unity candle, ring bearer’s pillow, pew bows.
 - Cash in individually marked envelopes for fees listed below:

Priest	\$100
Music Director	\$150
Cantor	\$100
Church/Preparation Materials	\$100
Parish Wedding Assistants	\$50

Please have these fees separated by category in different envelopes.

After the ceremony

If you plan to continue attending Mary Queen of Peace, please be sure to contact the parish secretary (216-749-2323) to update your registration. If you will be living elsewhere, we would still appreciate receiving your updated address.

God bless your new life together!



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