

# Catholic Church Marriage Policies

Diocese of Owensboro &  
Holy Name of Jesus Parish



*Policy for  
Marriage*

*Diocese of  
Owensboro*



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## DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

Catholic Pastoral Center

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November 12, 2011

Dear People of the Diocese of Owensboro,

I hereby establish the following updates to the policy for marriage preparation in the Diocese of Owensboro, effective November 1, 2011 which were originally published in 1986. Because of the immense seriousness of this matter, I am asking that all concerned adhere to the policy in its every detail.

There is nothing more beautiful to observe or be a part of than a happily married couple and a happy family. The love a married couple has for each other is a sign of the love the Lord Jesus has for His people, the Church.

I pray that this policy will help you as a couple to lay the foundation of good preparation upon which you can build a life together and help you reach your eternal salvation.

My prayers, love and support go with you as you continue to prepare for marriage and to enter into the vocation of married life.

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William F. Medley  
Bishop of Owensboro

## Introduction

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has experienced a renewal of her sacramental life. In response to this renewal, the Diocese of Owensboro has reviewed and revised its marriage policy.

While this period of history in the American Catholic Church is witnessing a surfeit of values, pressures and “alternate life style” which weaken the fabric of family life, a deeper understanding and appreciation of marriage is also emerging. It is a profound responsibility of the Church to proclaim the “good news” of marriage, to be a beacon of hope for engaged couples, and to offer continuing love and support to married couples.

This marriage policy seeks to present the ideal of Christian marriage. It offers assistance to the priest and other pastoral ministers in the area of marriage preparation. It provides engaged couples the education and formation that will allow them the best chance to succeed at marriage. The policy does not intend to make it more difficult to marry in the Church but rather to make it more possible to stay married and to find the mutual happiness and sanctification, which are God’s plan for marriage.

The policy of the diocese, in marriage preparation, is that the couples will attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend, a Pre-Cana or Sponsor Couple Sessions for first marriages or Once More With Love for second marriages. (In extraordinary cases such as long distances or military couples, an approved on-line program may be used.) These programs reflect a serious commitment on the part of priests, married couples and others in pastoral ministry, to share the responsibility for marriage preparation within their faith communities as specified in the Code of Canon Law. (C1063)

The policy also addresses the specific needs of marriages with special circumstances. Particular care and concern for these couples are essential.

1. Cohabitation
2. Delay of Marriage
3. Interfaith Marriages
4. Marriage Between a Catholic and a Non-Baptized Person
5. Marriage Preparation for Those Previously Married
6. Pregnancy Prior to Marriage
7. Validation

## **The Sacrament of Matrimony**

The beauty of God's plan for marriage is captured in the book of Genesis where God, having created man and woman in His image and likeness, charges them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it and to cling to each other and become one flesh. (Gen 2:24) Christ reaffirmed the sacredness and permanence of this age-old covenant of love and raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. St. Paul elaborated on this sacramental nature of marriage when he described the mutual love and submission of husbands and wives as the sign of the unity of Christ with His Body, the Church (Eph 5:21-33). Throughout Church history, marriage has been honored as a vocation, a grace-filled call from God. More recently, Church documents have urged further development of the theology of marriage, a greater understanding of human sexuality and a deeper exploration of the meaning of sacramentality and spirituality in marriage.

Marriage as a sacrament is a unique channel of redemptive grace, a call to form a community of life and love. More than the ceremony, it is the lifelong committed relationship of husband and wife. The married couple makes present the sacrament or "sign" that, by their life together, are called to manifest the unity and love between Christ and His Church. The love of the married couple, characterized by selfless giving, communion, compassion, understanding, faithfulness and readiness to forgive, mirrors God's love for His people and the ideal of Christian community. Not merely a contract, Matrimony is a covenant; that is, a solemn commitment to form a uniquely intimate union characterized by permanence and fidelity and to give witness to a fully Christian life of intimacy and belonging.

"And the two shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24) is believed by many Scripture scholars to be a statement which strongly affirms the sacredness of the sexual reality of married love as established by the Creator. This love, though passionate, is not self-centered but other-centered. Being sensitive to the spouses' needs becomes more important than self-fulfillment. Responsiveness, openness, tenderness, vulnerability and absorption in the other, free married lovers to experience an ecstasy in their mutual self-giving in the act of love.

The total intimacy of the sacramental couple, expressed in their sexual union and rooted in their total commitment to each other, ideally calls the rest of the Church into communion with one another. The holiness of married couples flows from their oneness in life, the special bonding of lives, hearts, and spirits, and must be understood to include their sexual union. Married love, then, is ordered to the mutual sanctification of the spouses as well as to the procreation and education of children. Through the presence of Christ in the sacrament, the spouses may be strengthened in their self-sacrificing love and will be enabled to nourish their children in a community of love.

Recognizing marriage as a true vocation then, the Church desires to address the need for preparation with depth, concern and guidance. This Policy for Marriage in the Diocese of Owensboro has been promulgated in order to provide guidelines toward that end.

## Remote and Proximate Preparation for Marriage

### **Remote Preparation**

1. The primary school of education for marriage is the family. The most basic form of remote preparation, then, is the development of better “schools” of marriage by enriching and strengthening existing marriages and family life and by addressing the needs of single-parent families.
2. Special concern should also be shown to Catholic spouses and children born of interfaith marriages so that they do not lack spiritual assistance and aid in helping to foster the unity of conjugal and family life. (C.1128)
3. The development of self-esteem, self-discipline, inter-relational skills, and spiritual and moral values depends on good parenting skills. Therefore, Christian parenting courses provide another essential phase of remote preparation.
4. In early childhood education, teachers should reinforce the efforts of parents to enhance a child’s self-esteem and encourage behavior which may influence the ability to enter into successful marriages later in life. They should stress the effect of behavior on others, communication skills, problem resolution, reconciliation, sharing and cooperation.
5. Building family-centered sacramental preparation programs for Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation lays the groundwork for the preparation of young couples for the sacramental life of Matrimony.
6. Among children raised in families of interfaith marriage, family-centered sacramental preparation may not be easily accomplished, if at all. The parish must help provide this preparation and include the Catholic parents in such a way that they are encouraged to do the best they can without putting guilt feelings on them in a difficult task.

## **Proximate Preparation**

1. The high school years are one of the most critical stages in life. The formation of strong character and personal identity will contribute to the ability to succeed in marriage.
2. Marriage and family courses should attempt to address the specific skills needed for marriage that are included in formal programs. Attention should be given to the Church's teaching about interfaith marriage, with its special areas of concern and the particular care needed in preparation.

## **Immediate and Formal Preparation**

### **Role of the Priest or Pastoral Minister**

#### 1. Responsibility for Preparation

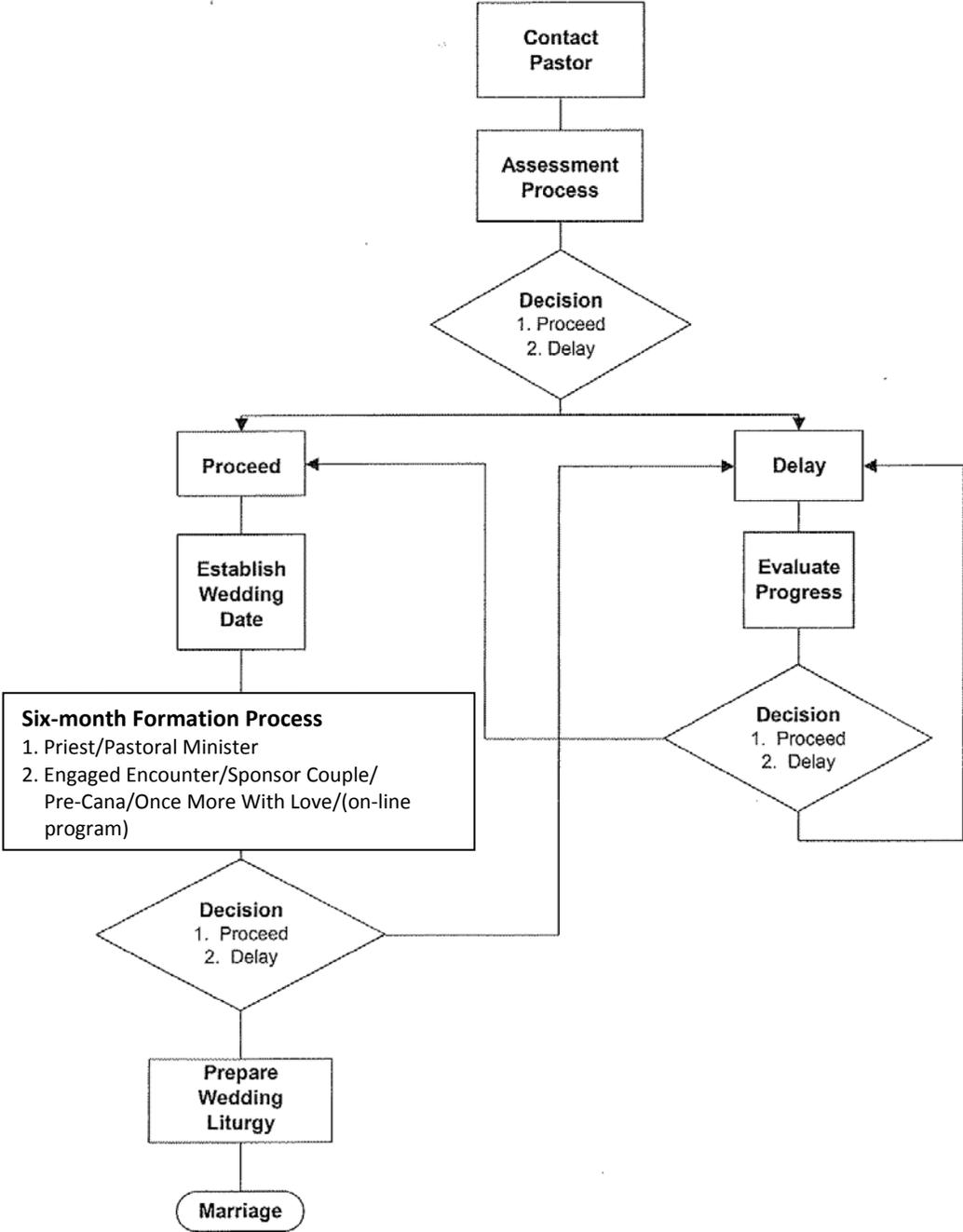
- A. The pastor of the Church of either party, if both are Catholic, or of the Catholic party in an interfaith marriage, has the responsibility to fulfill all canonical requirements, to secure adequate preparation of the couple in compliance with this policy and to assist the couple to make a prayerful and mature judgment regarding marriage.
- B. If a priest other than the parish priest will witness the marriage, he should contact the pastor. In particular circumstances, the pastor may delegate to him the responsibility for assessment and preparation of the couple as stipulated in diocesan policy. He then must furnish proper documentation to the pastor for the sake of record keeping required by canon law.

#### 2. Procedure

- A. Pre-nuptial investigation as required by canon law and explanation of the diocesan marriage policy.
- B. Assessment process of determining suitability and readiness of the couple to enter the sacrament of matrimony in light of spiritual attitudes as well as emotional, psychological, financial, and familial factors.
  - 1) The process of assessment requires the cooperation of the priest and the couple and will include the use of the PMI, FOCCUS, PREPARE or similar instrument.
  - 2) Consultation with the parents is integral to the assessment process. An interview will therefore be recommended in all cases and required for those under 21. Special tact will be required in the case of interfaith marriages. Pastoral judgment may indicate the inadvisability or impossibility of this procedure.

- 3) If the priest and couple make a decision to proceed, they continue through the preparation process and will finalize the wedding date at this time.
  - 4) If, during the assessment process, the priest has serious question about the readiness of the couple, he should refer the couple for evaluation, which is a formal procedure provided by a counselor who is properly trained and certified. The counselor will administer and interpret an instrument, discuss the results with the couple and the priest and make a recommendation to proceed or to delay. The priest, not the counselor, retains the responsibility for the decision.
  - 5) The priest must be morally certain that the couple has the right intention and sufficient stability and maturity to enter into Christian marriage. If any reasonable doubt persists after assessment and evaluation, he must recommend delay of the marriage. He would then proceed as follows:
    - a) Develop a plan with the couple to deal with the reason for the delay; e.g., pre-marital counseling.
    - b) Inform the couple of their right to appeal and the proper procedure.
    - c) Inform the pastor of the other party, if Catholic.
- C. The priest/pastoral minister will refer the couple to an approved formal program, i.e. Engaged Encounter, Sponsor Couple, Pre-Cana, (on-line program in extraordinary cases) or Once More With Love.
- D. Instructions with the priest/pastoral minister will include Church teaching on marriage, adult faith development, morality in marriage, prayer and other areas of particular interest or need.

# Steps in Preparing for Marriage



## **Role of the Engaged Couples**

1. The engaged couple has a right to expect adequate preparation for their most sacred and serious vocation. They can expect to receive assistance in assessing their readiness to marry and the level of compatibility in their relationship. With the priest or his pastoral minister, they will explore ways to identify and cultivate their strengths and to deal constructively with the difficult areas in their relationship.
  
2. In addition, they have the responsibility to:
  - A. Participate actively and sincerely in assessment and preparation
  
  - B. demonstrate sufficient maturity and stability to accept the responsibilities of Christian marriage
  
  - C. recognize that marriage is essentially characterized by unity, fidelity, permanence and openness to life
  
  - D. verify that both parties will be at least 19 years of age or one year past high school at the time of the proposed marriage
  
  - E. contact their pastor when they decide to marry and at least six months before the proposed wedding date
  
  - F. be willing to confirm the wedding date only after the assessment process has been completed
  
  - G. arrange to receive the sacrament of Confirmation if not previously received
  
  - H. demonstrate the freedom to consent willingly to the marriage
  
  - I. participate in required sessions with the priest/pastoral minister
  
  - J. attend a formal preparation program; i.e. Engaged Encounter, Sponsor Couple, Pre-Cana, Once More With Love (or on-line program in extraordinary cases)
  
  - K. participate actively and sincerely in pre-marriage evaluation and counseling when recommended.

## Role of Parents

1. The Church recognizes the unique and vital role of parents in the psychological, social, moral and spiritual development of their children. Renewal in the life of the Church has included attempts to make sacramental preparation more family-centered. The following principles apply to the family dimension of marriage preparation:
  - a. Since a person's family is truly the primary source of education for marriage, it seems fitting and proper to involve the parents actively when possible in the assessment and preparation for marriage.
  - b. The purposes of the interview with the parents during the assessment process is:
    - 1) To gain insights into the relationship of the couple through their parents or an understanding of the family structure in a single-parent situation. These insights should aid the priest and the engaged couple to better analyze their own perceptions and expectations of marriage.
    - 2) To insure that the parents of both bride and groom are informed about the marriage policy of the diocese and can be given suggestions about how they may share in the preparation of their children for marriage.
    - 3) To become aware of any tensions in the families related to the proposed marriage. By being alerted to these problems, the priest may be able to offer pastoral care to those concerned.
2. In a very special way, a priest/pastoral minister must be concerned with helping the parents of both parties in an interfaith marriage to feel comfortable.
  - a. This period between the engagement and the wedding can cause much tension, especially when parents of both parties have strong religious convictions themselves. Pastoral care should be offered to address possible needs for understanding or healing.
  - b. The wedding ceremony which takes into consideration the feelings of both families and yet preserve the religious motif of marriage can do much to ease the tension.
  - c. Pastoral judgment may indicate the inadvisability or impossibility of involving the parents of the non-Catholic party in the marriage preparation.

### **Role of the Community**

1. The faithful in each parish share the pastoral responsibility to provide support and enrichment for married couples. Since the primary “school” of marriage is the family, parishes should provide means of strengthening and enhancing existing marriages, while demonstrating particular sensitivity to couples in an interfaith marriage; promoting good parenting skills and healthy family life; and ministering to single-parent families.
2. The faith community also shares the responsibility to encourage engaged couples and to help them prepare for their life together. Married couples have a particular responsibility to witness the holiness of their sacramental life of love and commitment. They may, therefore, be invited to participate actively as sponsor couples in the marriage preparation of engaged couples in their parishes.

## Liturgical Celebration

1. Because marriage is a sacrament, the place, the music, and entire wedding celebration must reflect the sacred character of marriage. The place of the ceremony shall be chosen according to the following guidelines:
  - A. The parish church of either the bride or the groom if both parties are Catholic
  - B. The parish church of the Catholic party in an interfaith marriage
  - C. The church of the non-Catholic party after proper dispensation has been granted
  - D. Another Catholic Church if size, renovation or sentiment is a factor, after proper permission is granted
2. The celebration should reflect the faith life of the couple and of the community in which they are married.
3. Diocesan Liturgical Guidelines for marriage further supplement the general norms for wedding celebrations.

### **Specifications of Formal Programs**

1. Programs should not only offer educational opportunities but also formational experiences that enable couples to explore the various facets of their relationship before they exchange their vows.
2. Approved programs in the diocese include: Engaged Encounter, Sponsor Couple, Pre-Cana, Once More With Love and an approved on-line program in extraordinary cases such as long distance or military couples.
3. Approved marriage preparation programs address the following issues:
  - A. The nature of exclusive and permanent commitment, i.e. marriage as a covenant
  - B. The spirituality and sacramentality of marriage
  - C. Praying and worshiping as a couple
  - D. Communication skills: openness, expression of feelings, conflict resolution
  - E. Reconciliation and forgiveness
  - F. Role expectations in marriage
  - G. Intimacy, sexuality, and natural family planning
  - H. Children and family life, parenting skills
  - I. Relationships with in-laws, other relatives, and friends
  - J. Values and goals
  - K. Home and finance management

## Marriage Preparation and Cohabiting Couples

Today almost half of the couples that come for marriage preparation in the Catholic Church are in a cohabiting relationship. Cohabitation, in a commonly understood sense, means living together in a sexual relationship without marriage. Living together in this way involves varying degrees of physical and emotional interaction. Such a relationship is a false sign. It contradicts the meaning of a sexual relationship in marriage as the total gift of oneself in fidelity, exclusivity, and permanency.

Only 53% of first cohabiting unions result in marriage. The percentage of couples marrying from second and third cohabitations is even lower. It would appear that when a couple chooses cohabitation over marriage, they might be denying the probability of existing problems which one or both would prefer not to deal with. Some of the reasons why couples may cohabit include:

- Fear of or disbelief in long-term commitment, and a desire to avoid divorce (particularly for those who have experienced disruption in their parents' marriages or a previous marriage of their own.)
- Desire for economic security;
- State of personal development, escape from home, "rite of passage";
- Desire for stability for raising of children;
- Pressure to conform to current mores that having cohabiting partner is measure of social success, personal desirability, adult transition;
- Desire to test the relationship;
- Rejection of the institution of marriage and desire for an alternative to marriage.

In spite of the reasons, current statistics indicate that cohabitation is not a wise choice! Cohabiting couples still divorce at a rate 50% higher than couples that have never cohabited.

### **Some of the risks of cohabitation are:**

- Cohabitors as a group are less committed to the institution of marriage and more accepting of divorce. As problems and issues arise to challenge the marriage, they are more likely to seek divorce as the solution.
- "Sexual exclusivity" is less an indicator of commitment for cohabiters than for non-cohabiters. In this regard, cohabitation is more like dating than marriage. After marriage, a person who cohabited before marriage is more likely to be sexually unfaithful than a person who had not cohabited before marriage.
- Cohabitors identify themselves or the relationship as a poor risk for long-term happiness more often than do non-cohabiters.
- Cohabitors tend to hold individualism as a more important value than partnership. These values do not necessarily change just because a cohabiting couple decides to move into marriage.

- Cohabitors may feel pressure to marry from family and others or pressured to provide a stable home for children, if any. While family and friends are often right to encourage marriage for a cohabiting couple, a marriage made under such pressure is problematic unless the couple chooses it for more substantial reasons.
- Cohabitors often have inappropriate high expectations of marriage that can lead them to be disillusioned with the ordinary problems or challenges of marriage. There is danger that they think they have “worked out everything and that any further challenges are the fault of the institution of marriage.
- Cohabitors are at greater risk for domestic violence, conflict over money, and control issues.

The church teaches that the proper way to prepare for marriage is living chastely and separately; therefore, cohabiting couples are encouraged to separate and refrain from sexual relations until they celebrate their marriage.

The wisdom of our Christian tradition teaches us that sexual intercourse in marriage is meant to be a sign to the husband and wife that their love for each other is fully committed, faithful and life giving, and that God’s love remains the same for them. The Bible condemns not only adultery but also premarital sex. Marriage is much more than just “a piece of paper.” It is only in marriage that husband and wife publicly give themselves to each other, belong to each other, and are responsible for each other, “in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, all the days of our lives.”

## Delay of Marriage

1. The Diocese of Owensboro recognizes that it is a natural right of people to marry. This right is not absolute, however, nor is the right to receive a sacrament. Accordingly, both the Church and the state have established legitimate restrictions if the proposed marriage is shown to be in conflict with the sacramental practice of the Church or the common good of society.
2. Some conditions that may constitute just cause for delay include, but are not limited to the following.
  - A. Non-practice of the Catholic faith by both parties, if Catholic, or by the Catholic party entering interfaith marriages, with no intention of returning to the practice of the faith
  - B. Substantial lack of appreciation for the spiritual, sacramental aspects of marriage on the part of the Catholic party(ies)
  - C. Lack of readiness for marriage; i.e., insufficient stability, maturity and dating
  - D. Refusal of the parties to take part in or complete the marriage preparation programs or refusal to participate actively and sincerely in premarital assessment, evaluation or counseling.
  - E. Lack of time for sufficient premarital assessment, evaluation, counseling and preparation.
  - F. Pregnancy
  - G. Chemical dependency or mental illness
  - H. Refusal to have children
3. All canonical requirements must be observed regarding impediments and their dispensations.
  - A. Dispensation from Disparity of Worship (C.1086 & 1125)  
(For marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person)
  - B. Canonical Form (C.1108 & 1127, #2, #3)
  - C. Other Impediment: Age, Impotence, Abduction, Consanguinity, Open Concubinage, Adoption (C. 1083-1094)

Often times a prior marriage which has been declared invalid through a Church tribunal process receives from the Church Court a *Monitum* (which means warning) or a *Vetitum* (which means prohibition) regarding a future marriage. These words are printed on the certificate of nullity. *Monitum* refers to some problem condition or element which existed in the prior union. A *Vetitum* refers to an extremely serious condition, e.g., substance abuse, a psychological problem, violent behavior, etc., which caused havoc in the previous union. When a *Monitum* has been imposed, by the Tribunal, psychological counseling or treatment is almost always demanded - with verification from the psychologist that the serious condition has been arrested or cured, e.g., sobriety has been attained, anger management has been learned, etc. The Tribunal is to be informed in writing by the psychologist or professional that the former problematic area has been treated and now poses no serious threat to a new marriage. The Tribunal Judge may then lift the *Vetitum* prohibition. Then, and only then, can plans for a wedding begin to take place with the pastoral minister.

## Sacramentality and Interfaith Marriage

At the same time that the Church experiences a deepening awareness of the importance and significance of the Sacrament of Matrimony, she recognizes that aspects of this teaching on sacramentality can be a cause for concern to those who are preparing for a interfaith marriage. While the norm for marriage in the Catholic Church and in this Policy regards marriage between two Catholics, the Church recognizes that many of the marriages in the diocese do not reflect that norm.

The Church wishes to promote unity within interfaith marriages and respect for the conscience of the non-Catholic party, to avoid insensitivity to these couples in parish life and to help prepare them for a wholesome and fruitful marriage. Care will be taken to offer a preparation that stresses their common beliefs, emphasizes the teachings of Scripture, and underscores the essential properties for permanence and fidelity. Differences of belief will be discussed openly without compromising Catholic doctrine.

The *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* states that an interchurch marriage “celebrated according to the Catholic form ordinarily takes place outside the Eucharistic liturgy.” (#159) Consequently, this is a universal norm for the Catholic Church and is to be observed everywhere. The bishop may permit the wedding to be celebrated at a Eucharistic liturgy, but permission must be requested. Whether or not the party who is not Catholic receives the Eucharist should be determined according to the norms for intercommunion.

## Marriage Between Catholic and Non-Baptized

**#1. Canon 1086 - A marriage between two persons, one of whom has been baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it and has not defected from it by a formal act and the other of whom is not baptized, is invalid.**

**#2. A person is not to be dispensed from this impediment unless the conditions mentioned in Canon 1125 and 1126 have been fulfilled.**

**#3. If at the time the marriage was contracted one party was commonly held to have been baptized or the baptism was doubtful, the validity of the marriage must be presumed according to the norm of Canon 1060 until it is proven with certainty that one party was baptized but the other was not.**

The Church has long recognized that marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics pose particular dangers to the Catholic's continued practice of the faith and to the Catholic baptism and formation of children. The Church's concern is especially grave when a Catholic proposes to marry a non-Christian. As an expression of this concern, ecclesiastical law has established the impediment of disparity of worship, which invalidates marriages between Catholics and unbaptized persons.

Although marriages between Christians and pagans were prohibited by several early councils, disparity of worship was established as an invalidating impediment for the Eastern churches at the Council of Trullo in 692. Although the canons of Trullo were not received by the Church in the West, the impediment spread throughout the West between the seventh and the eleventh centuries and ultimately obtained the force of a universal custom. It was finally incorporated into church legislation in canon 1070 of the 1917 code.

As an ecclesiastical law impediment, disparity of worship binds not only Catholics but also those who marry them. Exempt from the impediment are baptized non-Catholics and those who have left the Catholic Church by a formal act.

A dispensation can be granted to permit a Catholic to marry an unbaptized person if there is sufficient assurance that the proposed marriage will not pose a threat to the Catholic's ability to continue the practice of his or her faith and to hand on the Catholic faith to their children. This assurance is given the Catholic party in the form of promises. He or she must declare a readiness to remove all dangers of lapsing from the Catholic faith and promise to do all within his or her power to ensure the Catholic baptism and formation of all children. The unbaptized party is not required to make a promise, but must be made aware of what the Catholic party has promised. If this declaration and promise are not made, a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of worship cannot be granted.

If at the time a marriage was celebrated, one of the parties was generally reputed to be baptized or doubts have arisen about his or her baptism or its validity, the validity of the marriage is to be upheld until it has been proved that one party was baptized and the other was not. However, if the doubts about the baptism of one party or its validity surfaced prior to the marriage, the impediment of disparity of worship can be dispensed conditionally if the doubt cannot be resolved.

### **Marriage Preparation For Those Previously Married**

1. Because the trauma of divorce or the death of a spouse usually requires a grief and recovery process of two to seven years, priests will encourage a two year waiting period and require one year before remarriage.
2. Preparation should generally follow the guidelines of this policy, including notification, assessment and formal preparation.
3. Remarriage after the death of a spouse:
  - A. Special pastoral consideration will be given the couple according to their ages, the length of previous marriage and their experience of the grief process.
  - B. It is particularly important to consider the couple's expectations for marriage in the light of the previous marriage(s). The uniqueness of each marriage should be stressed to prevent the disillusionment which might occur if either party expects to duplicate the first marriage.
4. Remarriage after divorce or declaration of nullity
  - A. The priest/pastoral minister must be reasonably assured that the difficulties which appeared in a previous marriage will not exist in the proposed one.
  - B. Pre-marital counseling and evaluation are recommended in all cases and required when stipulated by the Marriage Tribunal.
5. The effect of a second marriage on children deserves particular attention. A step-family program or family counseling may be recommended.

### **Pregnancy Prior to Marriage**

1. Pregnancy of itself does not constitute an exception to this policy for marriage preparation. It may, in fact, indicate a reason not to marry.
2. Since a large percentage of divorce and declaration of nullity cases occur in marriage where pre-marital pregnancy was a factor, counseling is strongly recommended in such cases.
3. If the decision to marry was made known prior to the pregnancy, plans for the marriage may proceed if the priest assesses that the couple is sufficiently prepared for marriage, and after all applicable steps of this policy, including the normal waiting period, have been completed. Counseling may be indicated in these cases because of the particular strain which pre-marital pregnancy places on a relationship and in order to prevent future recriminations which can erode trust in a marriage.

If the decision to marry was not made prior to the pregnancy, special counseling and evaluation will be obtained from a diocesan approved counselor or other trained person. These couples will be encouraged to delay or reconsider the marriage.

## Validation of Marriage

1. When a couple who has married outside the Church desires that their union be validated, the priest/pastoral minister who arranges for the validation must provide the couple with adequate preparation for the sacrament.
2. Among other concerns, the priest will explore such questions as the stability and health of their marriage, the spiritual dimensions of marriage in the Church, the implications of marriage as a covenant, the faith and prayer life of the couple and their reasons for requesting validation.
3. The following guidelines apply to the preparation process:
  - A. Ordinarily, one year shall elapse between the time of a marriage outside the Church and its validation. Sometimes, it may be appropriate to wait a longer time if the couple does not give evidence of maturity and stability or an understanding of the marriage covenant.
  - B. When the couple has been married for only one or two years, they will participate in one of the approved diocesan marriage preparation programs; i.e., Once More With Love.
  - C. When the couple has been married for a greater length of time, they are to fulfill one or more of the following requirements as deemed appropriate for their circumstances:
    - 1) Participation in one of the approved marriage preparation programs; i.e., Sponsor Couple or Once More With Love
    - 2) Participation in pre-marital counseling and evaluation
  - D. If there are marital difficulties, the couple may be asked to participate in evaluation and/or counseling; i.e., Retrouvaille. It must be emphasized that validation is not a cure for a troubled marriage.
  - E. When validation concerns an interfaith marriage, the following guidelines will be considered:
    - 1) Genuine concern should be shown for the non-Catholic party as for the Catholic party. The non-Catholic party may feel uncomfortable with the whole process of validation since he or she often comes from a background that views the attitude of the Catholic Church in this matter as unreasonable and contrary to his or her own beliefs about religion and remarriage.

- 2) It will frequently be expecting too much of the non-Catholic party to have him or her participate with dignity in those pre-marital assessments and programs which could reasonably be required of two Catholics seeking a validation.
- 3) The priest must rely heavily on the goodwill, motivation and testimony of the Catholic party in the whole process of validation.
- 4) The priest may sense much difficulty or embarrassment on the part of the non-Catholic party in the usual marriage validation process or in the requirement of the formal expression of consent in a marriage ceremony. In such circumstances, for the sake of alleviating tension, or in order to prevent undue ridicule of the Church's teaching concerning marriage, the priest should seriously consider requesting from the bishop a Radical Sanation according to the norms of Canons 1161 to 1165.

### **Appeals and Exceptions**

#### **Appeals**

If a marriage is delayed, the couple may submit a written Appeal to the bishop who will consult with a board of review appointed by him.

#### **Exceptions**

1. Exceptions will normally be submitted by the priest in writing to the bishop where the same procedure is followed as for Appeal.
2. In some cases and only for a serious reason, the priest may make a pastoral judgment to allow an exception to the policy.

NOTE: Forms will be made available through the Family Life Office to facilitate these procedures.

## Formal Diocesan Programs

**PARISH BASED PROGRAM** (Information is available in the parishes where these are offered.)

**SPONSOR COUPLE PROGRAM** pairs an engaged couple with a trained married couple in a series of private sessions, usually in the sponsor couple's home. The couples consider many practical aspects of married life. There is time for the engaged couple to share their reflections privately and with the sponsor couple. The relationship of trust and caring that may develop during preparation often continues after the wedding, thus providing on-going support for the couple.

**ENGAGED ENCOUNTER** is a weekend experience where the engaged couple has an opportunity to concentrate exclusively on each other, free from the tensions and pressures of daily life. It is a very quiet weekend specifically designed to give the couples planning marriage an opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together. It is specifically designed for communication between the couple. A team of married couples and a priest presents ideas regarding essential issues of married life and guides the engaged couples through a process of private dialogue about their relationship. Weekends are offered three times a year. Although the Engaged Encounter is Catholic in origin and orientation, it is open to all couples of any faith searching for enrichment in the quality of their life together.

**ONCE MORE WITH LOVE** is a marriage preparation program for couples preparing for marriage after one or both persons have experienced a divorce or death of a former spouse. This program is designed to address the critical issues of remarriage and to offer an opportunity to establish a solid foundation for a new intimate relationship. This is offered three times a year or as needed.

**PRE-CANA** is a one-day marriage preparation program for engaged couples entering their first marriage. This program is offered on a Saturday and includes prayer and Mass. The topics covered are: Personality/Character, Marriage as a Sacrament, Theology of the Body, Natural Family Planning, Budgeting/Finances, and Communication & Spirituality as a couple. Engaged couples are given time to dialogue after each talk. Although a one-day program is not ideal, nor meant to be the sole means of preparation, it provides a solid foundation for further preparation and discussion.

**CATHOLICMARRIAGEPREPCLASS.COM** is an on-line video program approved by the USCCB and endorsed by many dioceses. It includes a pre-marital inventory, which could be used in lieu of Prepare & Enrich or FOCCUS and covers all the topics in the other diocesan programs and more. This course offers a marriage preparation alternative **only** for those engaged couples in extraordinary circumstances such as those living far apart or where one or both parties is a member of the military. Couples must receive their pastor's approval to use this program.

**RETROUVAILLE** begins with a weekend experience in which husbands and wives are helped to reestablish communication and to gain insights into themselves as individuals and as a couple. This part of the program is presented by a priest and three married couples who have experienced disillusionment, pain, anger, and conflict. They offer hope as they share their personal stories of struggle, reconciliation and healing. This is offered three times a year.

### **Closing Statement**

The Church desires to bless her people with the love of God made real and present to us in Jesus Christ. The Church longs to support her people within a community of right relationships. We pray that all of God's people will trust the church's wisdom endowed to her by God Himself: chastity before marriage; unity and love expressed and celebrated fully within a covenant that is brought about by marriage; sex as a precious gift offered to another within the bounds of married life; children as the fruit of married love and supported and nurtured within a family that is committed and faithful.

This is the Christian Vision - we wish you God's Blessings in your marriage preparation process.



# HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

WEDDING POLICIES

2024



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## **CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT FOR MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

We are happy to be able to celebrate this moment in your lives with you. "Among the many blessings that God has showered upon us in Christ is the blessing of marriage, a gift bestowed by the Creator from the creation of the human race. Marriage is a source of blessing to the couple, to the families, and to society and includes the wondrous gift of co-creating human life." (Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

We at Holy Name are here to help you celebrate your wedding ceremony but even more importantly to help you to continue to build the firm foundation on which your marriage will stand through the years. If you have not already discovered, you will probably find that there are many details that must be taken care of in preparing a wedding ceremony. Here we offer you the important information you need to know as you prepare to celebrate your wedding at Holy Name.

### **THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Since its dedication June 14, 1891, this church has hosted the celebration of many hundreds of sacred liturgical celebrations, weddings being among the most joyful. Through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Catholic Christian's wedding is seen as a sign of his own love and fidelity to the Church, the Bride of Christ. It is Christ's faithfulness which is pledged to the bride and groom who celebrate their marriage covenant here in His name. We then look to the Lord to sustain the matrimony of his disciples as they love each other through the journey of their lives together and as parents raise their children to a mature and faithful humanity. We celebrate the joy of your vocation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **PARISH NORMS FOR WEDDINGS AT HOLY NAME**

### **WHO MAY CELEBRATE THEIR WEDDING AT HOLY NAME**

The Catholic parish church hosts only Roman Catholic weddings. All diocesan marriage preparation requirements must be met in good faith before a wedding may proceed to its celebration. In order to have your wedding celebrated at Holy Name of Jesus, at least one party must be a registered and active parish member for at least six months at the time of the wedding or must be the son or daughter of a parishioner who is a registered and active member. With your pastor's permission and with the approval of one of the priests of Holy Name of Jesus, active Catholics who are not members may also arrange to have their wedding celebrated here.

### **SETTING THE DATE OF YOUR WEDDING**

Contact the Pastor or Parochial Vicar of Holy Name whom you would prefer to officiate at your wedding. You may call the parish office at 270-826-2096. The priest will set up an initial meeting with you and your fiancé(é) to discuss a date and time for the wedding rehearsal and celebration and to discuss the marriage preparation process. No dates are secure until it is clear that the diocesan required marriage preparation will be fulfilled.

The marriage preparation process as designed by the Diocese of Owensboro requires that you contact the priest at least six months prior to the celebration. The process will include an instrument for discussion of the couple's relationship, gathering of pre-marital information and documents, participation in a formal instructional program for engaged couples and planning the liturgy for the wedding celebration. Once you have met with a priest and have decided on a date and time the priest will have the parish secretary put the wedding on the parish calendar. You will then need to meet with the parish secretary for any fees and/or contracts. **NOTE:** The civil marriage license must be obtained from a Kentucky County Courthouse which when issued is good for thirty (30) calendar days from issuance.

### **THE TIME OF DAY FOR A WEDDING & DECORATING—CLEAN-UP**

Saturday at 1:00pm is the primary option for a wedding. Saturday evening at 6:00pm is a secondary option. All weddings activities must work around our normal 4:00pm Saturday Vigil Mass, for which setup begins at 3:30 p.m. The Vigil Mass usually lasts about an hour. When selecting a time, consider your time requirements for pictures, clean up, etc., given the time restrictions mentioned below. Please be aware that it is our norm to have only one wedding on any given day. We also, on rare occasions, need to have a funeral on a Saturday in the mid or late morning. We make every effort to accommodate the needs of the faithful.

● **SATURDAY AFTERNOON SCHEDULE:** For a Saturday afternoon wedding, the wedding party may have use of the church as early as 11:00am. The wedding party needs to be out of the sanctuary by 3:00 p.m. with all wedding materials cleaned up. Please be sure your photographer is aware of this. Please ask your wedding party to be quiet and respectful as pictures are taken, as our regular worshipers start arriving about an hour before Mass for prayer.

● **SATURDAY EVENING SCHEDULE:** For a Saturday evening wedding, decorating and pictures may begin after the Vigil Mass (which ends around 5:00 pm, with some clean up time

required). Pictures should be completed and all wedding materials cleaned up as soon as possible after the wedding is over so that the church can be locked for the night.

### **CONTRACTS AND FEES**

All weddings will be charged a **\$100.00 Sacristan fee** to cover liturgical expenses. Catholics who are not registered parishioners will be charged an additional **fee of \$500** for the use of the church, which for good cause may be waived. Registered parishioners and children of registered parishioners will only be charged the sacristan fee. You are required to sign a **contract** stating that you will follow our policies as listed in this booklet. The contract is signed and fees paid when the date is placed on our calendar. Holy Name musicians (organist, cantor, etc.) will have additional fees. And use of dressing rooms are an additional contract item and require a **refundable deposit of \$100.**

### **WHO MAY PRESIDE AT YOUR WEDDING**

Weddings at Holy Name of Jesus are normally presided over by one of our parish priests. Exceptions to this are relatives or close friends who are Catholic priests or deacons with proper ecclesiastical delegation and who are qualified both legally and liturgically. A visiting priest or deacon is required to obtain the permission of Holy Name's current pastor. If from outside the Diocese of Owensboro, one must have the required letter of suitability. The Presider is responsible for all required marriage papers and preparations (our parish priests require that your marriage license be brought to the parish office before the day of your rehearsal to be properly filled out and processed). For couples entering an ecumenical marriage, we welcome the minister of the other partner's faith tradition to participate in the wedding as our wedding liturgy allows.

### **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

This is to be scheduled at a time mutually agreeable to the engaged couple and the priest and when the church is available. This must be placed on the parish calendar of Holy Name of Jesus Church. **Check with the parish secretary** immediately after determining a wedding and rehearsal time with your priest, to be sure your wedding and rehearsal are both on the parish calendar. **On the first Friday of each month, 5:00-6:00pm is reserved for a Eucharistic Holy Hour.** It is expected that the wedding participants be prompt so that the rehearsal can begin on time. The rehearsal is conducted by the Presider or a pastoral staff person designated by the Presider. Please be sure members of the wedding party know what their role is to be during the procession and the service before they arrive at the rehearsal.

### **LITURGICAL MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING**

Before planning music for your wedding, please contact our parish Director of Liturgy at 270-826-2096 (ext. 307). The Director is responsible for approving all music that is used in the church before and during the ceremony. The Director of Liturgy can help you find qualified musicians to play for your wedding. Musicians or ensembles, who are experienced at playing for Catholic church weddings, may play, as long as you get approval by our Director of Liturgy. You may also hire additional musicians to play on certain pieces, such as trumpeters, violinists, flutists, etc. Normally a cantor (song leader) is used to lead the sung portions of the liturgy, and they may

sing solos before or during the service. You are responsible paying the organist, cantors, instrumentalists and other vocalists. Check with them in advance to see if they charge certain amounts.

During the Wedding liturgy only music appropriate for Catholic worship may be used. Music that is sung during the service should be from our Catholic hymnals or vocal songbooks. Our Director of Liturgy can provide samples for you of the beautiful songs appropriate for Catholic weddings. Popular music or romantic songs may be appropriate for use at your reception or other settings outside the church, but are not appropriate for the liturgy itself.

- We do not allow the use of recorded music in the church before or during the wedding liturgy. This applies to instrumental and vocal music, including accompaniments. Music should be selected that can be accompanied on the organ or piano, or by other live instrumentalists.

- Copyright laws must be observed for all music. This means properly purchased copies of music must be used by all instrumentalists and singers. If you request (and have approved) music that the musician(s) does not have, you will need to be responsible for finding and purchasing printed copies of that music in a music store or online.

- Musicians should be paid before the day of the wedding, as agreed upon in advance. If the musician's normal fees are a problem, let us know and we will try to work something out with you.

- Our wedding music suggestions can be found on our parish website at: [www.holynameparish.net](http://www.holynameparish.net).

## CHURCH DECORATIONS

Elaborate decorations are not necessary due to the beautiful architecture and appointments of our church. Our worship space reflects our observances of various liturgical seasons and days, such as special colors, banners, candles and flowers for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, etc. These seasonal decorations are not to be removed or altered for weddings. Any additions should be planned with simplicity and good taste and should reflect the religious nature of your wedding celebration. The Director of Liturgy is to be informed of the intended decorations for approval. Some specific issues:

- Rice, confetti, birdseed, and real flower petals are prohibited inside or outside due to safety problems and clean-up costs. (If artificial flower petals are used, you are responsible for arranging in advance for someone to clean them up immediately after the wedding.)

- Candles: The large candles that are always at the altar and ambo (lectern), along with a unity candle set if you choose to use one, are sufficient. We no longer permit any type of candelabra in the sanctuary. Candles are not permitted in the windows. We ask that only liturgical items be used in the marriage ceremony.

- Flowers. These should be kept to a minimum. Flowers or other decoration or symbols may not be placed on the Altar or the Ambo (podium).

- Pew markers, if used, are to be secured to the pews with non-abrasive brackets (the church usually has some of these available). No other fasteners are allowed.

- Aisle Runners are not allowed.

- Cleanup: **Please, designate a member of your family, a friend, florist, usher or wedding coordinator as responsible for overseeing the cleanup after the wedding.** The person(s) you designate is responsible to see that the church is left in the same condition it was before the wedding,

both inside and outside. This includes removing any wedding programs (check the pews), paper, flowers, candles, boxes, outdoor decorations, etc., immediately after your wedding.

- Our Eucharistic Chapel (to the left as you face the altar) is a room for special prayer and Eucharistic Adoration and is not available for the storage or preparation of flowers or other decorations. Limited space is available for preparation and temporary storage of decorations on the day of the wedding in the sacristy (two rooms to the right as you face the altar) as long as access to the counter top and closet doors is not blocked. Space may also be available in the Parish Hall if needed. Remember that these spaces should be cleaned up completely immediately after your wedding.

### **HOLY NAME VENUE FOR REHEARSAL DINNER AND/OR WEDDING RECEPTION**

The Holy Name School Cafeteria is available for Holy Name wedding rehearsal dinners and receptions. Please contact the school secretary for scheduling as soon as your wedding date has been confirmed with a priest and the parish secretary. You may contact the church office to rent the Holy Name Parish Hall for a rehearsal dinner (but not for a reception). The facilities at St. Margaret's Chapel on Watson Lane are also available for rent through the church office for a rehearsal dinner or a smaller reception. The renting of space for a dinner or reception requires a contract to be signed. If alcohol is to be served, insurance will need to be purchased at least 3 weeks in advance.

### **WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY AND/OR VIDEOGRAPHY**

- Pictures may be taken before the ceremony inside or outside the Church as long as this does not interfere with other scheduled parish activities. If you're planning to take pictures in the sanctuary before the wedding, it's a good idea to double check with the parish secretary a few days before the wedding to be sure nothing else is going on in there at the time you plan to take pictures. The wedding party and families may also come back into the Church for picture taking after the ceremony. The picture taking must be concluded at least one hour before the next liturgy begins (pictures should be concluded by 3:00 pm before the 4:00pm Vigil Mass).

- Pictures may be taken during the procession and the recession discretely and from an inconspicuous location.

- The use of flash bulbs or other artificial lighting during the ceremony is not acceptable.

- The choir loft balcony can be used during the ceremony by photographers, but use of balcony space needs to be coordinated with the musicians.

- Photographers and videographers are not allowed in the altar area during the ceremony.

- Equipment may not be in place during our normal 4:00pm Vigil Mass (except that cameras may be placed in the choir loft in advance).

Please be certain your photographer and videographer understand these restrictions clearly when you discuss your arrangements with him/her.

### **MODESTY IN WEDDING APPAREL**

The primary focus in the Catholic liturgy of Matrimony is the love and covenant of the Bride and Groom before God. The Couple is a sacred sign of God's love for the human race. For the Christian couple, they are also and pre-eminently a sign of Jesus Christ's love for the Church. In the marriage of two Catholics at Mass, the couple shares the focus with the Most Blessed Sacrament of Christ's

gift of himself in complete love for his Bride, the Church. The sign of the matrimonial Couple points to this heavenly Sign. The physical beauty of the bride and the groom is a gift from God for their joy in their own giving of themselves to each other in honor of God and for his glory. Their beauty, and that of the wedding party, is meant to celebrate the glory of God. According to the Gospel and Catholic doctrine on the dignity of the human person, body and soul, apparel worn by the wedding party in the Church's liturgy should indeed be modest. Stylish, elegant, and tasteful accessories, if needed, may respectfully be added to wedding apparel during the liturgy.

#### **DRESSING AREAS**

If needed, two rooms in the Parish Hall basement are available for dressing: the rooms to the right and left at the bottom of the steps. Specific arrangements need to be made with the parish office, in advance, for access to these rooms. A key will need to be checked out from the parish office, during the week leading up to your wedding, to unlock the door to the basement. If you check out a key, you will need to return it to get your refundable deposit back. All boxes, paper, clothes, water or soft drink bottles, etc., should be removed immediately after the wedding because these rooms are used for other purposes during the weekend. Please remember to assign someone to be responsible for cleanup downstairs, including the bathroom. The parish and staff of Holy Name of Jesus, will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items so valuables should not be left in the dressing rooms unattended. The parish hall and sacristy rooms off of the sanctuary are not to be used for changing or storing clothes or the serving of food, drinks or snacks.

#### **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES / INTOXICANTS**

No alcoholic beverages are allowed anywhere in the church building or on church grounds on the day of your wedding. This includes dressing areas, before, during and after the wedding. Persons under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances are not allowed to participate in the wedding and may be asked to leave. Please be sure all members of your wedding party understand this.

If either the bride or the groom is under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances, the wedding cannot take place, and the service will be cancelled.

## **APPENDICES**

- **Checklist for Wedding Preparation**
- **The Sacrament of Matrimony [Catechism of the Catholic Church]**
- **Exhortation**
- **For your Florist or Decoration Planner**
- **For your Photographer / Videographer**
- **Personal Biography: Marriage Preparation**
- **Contract**

## CHECKLIST FOR WEDDING PREPARATION

Essential things you need to do in preparing for a wedding:**AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

Contact the parish office to make an appointment with the pastor or associate pastor to begin the process. Nothing should be prepared or scheduled until after this meeting occurs. Do this first and early.

Contact the priest (or deacon) you would prefer to officiate at your wedding (and assist with marriage preparations) to discuss a date and time the priest is available for your wedding and wedding rehearsal, and to discuss necessary meetings and preparation.

Meet with parish secretary to confirm dates/times, to determine fees, and to sign contract.

All weddings will be charged a **\$100.00 sacristan fee**. Catholics who are not parishioners will be charged an additional fee of \$500 for the use of the church, which fee for good cause may be waived. Registered parishioners and children of registered parishioners will only be charged the sacristan fee. You are required to sign a contract stating that you will follow our policies as listed in this booklet. The contract should be signed and fees paid when the date is placed on our calendar. Use of additional parish staff, facilities, or resources may incur additional costs and fees. The use of the downstairs rooms for dressing are a separate contract and will require a **refundable** deposit of \$100.

Review the entire Wedding Policy Manual before making any wedding arrangements. If you have a wedding coordinator, give them a copy of the Wedding Policy Manual. Photography, videographer, florists and decorations will need to follow the policies in this manual.

### **SIX MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE**

Meetings with priest should begin.

Pre-marital inventory

Begin marriage preparation requirements.

• Marriage preparation program options

Sponsor Couples Program at Holy Name of Jesus Parish

Pre-Cana Program approved by the Diocese

Engaged Encounter retreat and program conducted by the Diocese

### **THREE TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE:**

After meetings begin, contact the Holy Name Director of Liturgy to review the Holy Name of Jesus Parish liturgical requirements, to discuss use of the building, and to discuss preliminary plans for your wedding music. Book your preferred musicians for your wedding ceremony, with the approval of the Director of Liturgy.

### **TWO TO THREE MONTHS BEFORE:**

Meet with your primary musician to plan music for your wedding. Music and liturgy plans must be reviewed by the Director of Liturgy.

### **THE MONTH BEFORE YOUR WEDDING:**

Apply for and secure a marriage license from the clerk's office at the courthouse. Marriage licenses in Kentucky are only valid for 30 calendar days.

Confirm and double-check final details for your ceremony, music, etc.

## **THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY**

### **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**1601** The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

#### **I. Marriage in God's Plan**

**1602** Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding-feast of the Lamb."<sup>85</sup> Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its "mystery," its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal "in the Lord" in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church.

#### **Marriage in the order of creation**

**1603** "The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws.... God himself is the author of marriage." The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity, some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. "The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life."

**1604** God who created man out of love also calls him to love the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love. Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is good, very good, in the Creator's eyes and this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: "and God blessed them, and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"

**1605** Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone." The woman, "flesh of his flesh," i.e., his counterpart, his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help. "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been "in the beginning": "So they are no longer two, but one flesh."

## AN EXHORTATION BEFORE MARRIAGE

*Said to have been composed by James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore  
Taken from Collectio Rituum, Catholic Book Pub., New York, 1964*

Dear Friends in Christ, as you know, you are about to enter into a union which is most sacred and most serious, a union which was established by God himself. By it, he gave to man a share in the greatest work of creation, the work of the continuation of the human race. And in this way he sanctified human love and enabled men and women to help each other live as children of God, by sharing a common life under his fatherly care.

Because God himself is thus its author, marriage is of its very nature a holy institution, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. But Christ our Lord added to the holiness of marriage an even deeper meaning and a higher beauty. He referred to the love of marriage to describe his own love for his Church, that is, for the people of God whom he redeemed by his own blood. And so he gave to Christians a new vision of what married life ought to be, a life of self-sacrificing love like his own. It is for this reason that his apostle, St. Paul, clearly states that marriage is now and for all time to be considered a great mystery, intimately bound up with the supernatural union of Christ and the Church, which union is also to be its pattern.

This union then is most serious, because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and its pains, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life and are to be expected in your own. And so, not knowing what is before you, you take each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death.

Truly, then, these words are most serious. It is a beautiful tribute to your undoubted faith in each other, that, recognizing their full import, you are nevertheless so willing and ready to pronounce them. And because these words involve such solemn obligations, it is most fitting that you rest the security of your wedded life upon the great principle of self-sacrifice. And so you begin your married life by the voluntary and complete surrender of your individual lives in the interest of that deeper and wider life which you are to have in common. Henceforth you belong entirely to each other; you will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affections. And whatever sacrifices you may hereafter be required to make to preserve this common life, always make them generously. Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy. We are willing to give in proportion as we love. And when love is perfect, the sacrifice is complete. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, and the Son so loved us that he gave himself for our salvation. "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends."

No greater blessing can come to your married life than pure conjugal love, loyal and true to the end. May, then, this love with which you join your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on. And if true love and the unselfish spirit of perfect sacrifice guide your every action, you can expect the greatest measure of earthly happiness that may be allotted to man in this vale of tears. The rest is in the hands of God. Nor will God be wanting to your needs; he will pledge you the life-long support of his graces in the holy sacrament which you are now going to receive.

**HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**HENDERSON, KY**  
***FLORIST OR DECORATION PLANNER***

Due to the large number of weddings at Holy Name and their close timing in relation to our regular weekend services, we have had to develop these policies for all weddings to be held in our church.

- Simplicity recommended: Simple decorations work best due to the beautiful and elaborate architecture and appointments of our church. Too much in the way of decorations can interfere with the movement required in our Catholic wedding liturgy.

- Existing liturgical decorations: Our worship space reflects our observances of various liturgical seasons and days (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, etc.), and for these seasons we sometimes use special colors, banners, candles and flowers. These seasonal objects are not to be removed or altered for weddings. Any additions should be planned with simplicity and good taste and should reflect the religious nature of the wedding celebration. You might want to discuss the seasonal colors and decorations with the Director of Liturgy and Music before you plan your wedding colors, etc.

- Rice, confetti, birdseed, and real flower petals are prohibited inside or outside due to safety problems and clean-up costs. If artificial flower petals are used, you are responsible for arranging in advance for someone to clean them up immediately after the wedding.

- Candles: The large candles that are always at the altar and ambo (lectern), along with a unity candle set if you choose to use one, are sufficient for candles. We no longer permit any type of candelabra in the sanctuary or on the wooden floors. Candles are not permitted in the windows.

- Flowers: These should be kept to a minimum. Flowers or other decoration or symbols may not be placed on top of the Altar or the Ambo (lectern). Tables and other furnishings in the altar area may not be moved.

- Pew marker, if used, are to be secured to the pews with non-abrasive brackets (the church or florist usually has some of these available). **DO NOT USE TAPE OR NAILS.**

- Cleanup: Those getting married need to designate a member of their family, a friend, florist, usher or wedding coordinator to be responsible for overseeing the cleanup after the wedding. The person(s) designated is responsible to see that the church is left in the same condition it was before the wedding, both inside and outside. This includes removing any wedding programs (check the pews), paper, flowers, candles, boxes, outdoor decorations, etc., immediately after your wedding. The dressing areas should be cleaned up as well.

- Storage & Preparation: Limited space is available for preparation and temporary storage of decorations on the day of the wedding. The sacristy (two rooms to the right as you face the altar) may be used as long as access to the counter top and doors is not blocked. Space may also be available in the Parish Hall if needed. These spaces should be cleaned up completely immediately after the wedding. Keep in mind that it is not unusual for us to have more than one wedding on a given Saturday. Our Eucharistic Chapel (to the left as you face the altar) is a special room for prayer and it is not available for the storage or preparation of flowers or other decorations.

If you have questions, you may contact our **Director of Liturgy**, at 270-826-2096, ext. 307

**HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH  
HENDERSON, KY**

***WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER OR VIDEOGRAPHER***

Wedding Photography Policies at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church:

- Pictures may be taken before the ceremony inside or outside the Church as long as this does not interfere with other scheduled parish activities. The wedding party and families may also come back into the Church for picture taking after the ceremony. The picture taking must be concluded at least one hour before the next liturgy begins (pictures should be concluded by 3:00pm before our normal Saturday 4:00pm Mass).

- Pictures may be taken during the procession and the recession discretely and from an inconspicuous location.

- The use of flash or other artificial lighting during the ceremony is not acceptable.

- The choir loft balcony can be used during the ceremony by photographers, but use of balcony space needs to be coordinated with the musicians. (Note: it can be very warm in the choir loft, especially during late spring, summer and early fall.)

- Cameras in the altar area are not allowed during the ceremony (the only exception would be for a small remote-controlled camera, discretely placed).

- Equipment may not be in place during our the 4:00pm Saturday Vigil Mass, except with permission of the Vigil Mass musicians.

If you have questions, you may contact the **Director of Liturgy** at 270-826-2096, ext. 307

**HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**HENDERSON, KY**  
***FOR YOUR FLORIST OR DECORATION PLANNER***

Due to the large number of weddings at Holy Name and their close timing in relation to our regular weekend services, we have had to develop these policies for all weddings to be held in our church. *Give one copy of this page to your florist or planner.*

- Simplicity recommended: Simple decorations work best due to the beautiful and elaborate architecture and appointments of our church. Too much in the way of decorations can interfere with the movement required in our Catholic wedding liturgy.

- Existing liturgical decorations: Our worship space reflects our observances of various liturgical seasons and days (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, etc.), and for these seasons we sometimes use special colors, banners, candles and flowers. These seasonal objects are not to be removed or altered for weddings. Any additions should be planned with simplicity and good taste and should reflect the religious nature of the wedding celebration. You might want to discuss the seasonal colors and decorations with the Director of Liturgy and Music before you plan your wedding colors, etc.

- Rice, confetti, birdseed, and real flower petals are prohibited inside or outside due to safety problems and clean-up costs. If artificial flower petals are used, you are responsible for arranging in advance for someone to clean them up immediately after the wedding.

- Candles: The large candles that are always at the altar and ambo (lectern), along with a unity candle set if you choose to use one, are sufficient for candles. We no longer permit any type of candelabra in the sanctuary or on the wooden floors. Candles are not permitted in the windows.

- Flowers: These should be kept to a minimum. Flowers or other decoration or symbols may not be placed on top of the Altar or the Ambo (lectern). Tables and other furnishings in the altar area may not be moved.

- Pew marker, if used, are to be secured to the pews with non-abrasive brackets (the church or florist usually has some of these available). **DO NOT USE TAPE OR NAILS.**

- Cleanup: Those getting married need to designate a member of their family, a friend, florist, usher or wedding coordinator to be responsible for overseeing the cleanup after the wedding. The person(s) designated is responsible to see that the church is left in the same condition it was before the wedding, both inside and outside. This includes removing any wedding programs (check the pews), paper, flowers, candles, boxes, outdoor decorations, etc., immediately after your wedding. The dressing areas should be cleaned up as well.

- Storage & Preparation: Limited space is available for preparation and temporary storage of decorations on the day of the wedding. The sacristy (two rooms to the right as you face the altar) may be used as long as access to the counter top and doors is not blocked. Space may also be available in the Parish Hall if needed. These spaces should be cleaned up completely immediately after the wedding. Keep in mind that it is not unusual for us to have more than one wedding on a given Saturday. Our Eucharistic Chapel (to the left as you face the altar) is a special room for prayer and it is not available for the storage or preparation of flowers or other decorations.

If you have questions, you may contact our **Director of Liturgy**, at 270-826-2096, ext. 307



**HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH  
HENDERSON, KY**

***FOR YOUR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER OR VIDEOGRAPHER***

Wedding Photography Policies at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church:

*Give one copy of this page to your photographer / videographer.*

● Pictures may be taken before the ceremony inside or outside the Church as long as this does not interfere with other scheduled parish activities. The wedding party and families may also come back into the Church for picture taking after the ceremony. The picture taking must be concluded at least one hour before the next liturgy begins (pictures should be concluded by 3:00pm before our normal Saturday 4:00pm Mass).

● Pictures may be taken during the procession and the recession discretely and from an inconspicuous location.

● The use of flash or other artificial lighting during the ceremony is not acceptable.

● The choir loft balcony can be used during the ceremony by photographers, but use of balcony space needs to be coordinated with the musicians. (Note: it can be very warm in the choir loft, especially during late spring, summer and early fall.)

● Cameras in the altar area are not allowed during the ceremony (the only exception would be for a small remote-controlled camera, discretely placed).

● Equipment may not be in place during our the 4:00pm Saturday Vigil Mass, except with permission of the Vigil Mass musicians.

If you have questions, you may contact the **Director of Liturgy** at 270-826-2096, ext. 307



# Personal Biography: Marriage Preparation

*An aid to personal self-understanding and self-disclosure*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*The engaged couple is invited to reflect upon their upbringing, significant experiences, and their experience as a couple. Each should respond on a separate sheet of paper. They then respectfully share their accounts with each other and with the priest/deacon and sponsor couple helping them prepare for their marriage.*

## PRE-COURTSHIP:

1.
  - a. Please describe your parents and their relationship to each other. Describe their strengths as parents, also describe any problems in their relationship such as divorce, alcoholism, abuse.
  - b. How did they fulfill their parental responsibilities and what was their economic status?
  - c. What was your relationship like with them when you lived at home, and what is your current relationship like with them?
2.
  - a. How many brothers and sisters do you have? (include half/step brothers and sisters)
  - b. What was your birth order?
  - c. What was your relationship like with your brothers and sisters during childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood?
  - d. What is the marital status of your brothers and sisters?
3. Please describe your educational background and work history. If applicable, include information regarding your military experience.
4.
  - a. What was your prior dating experience?
  - b. Did you have any other serious relationships? Why did they end?
  - c. If previously married, to whom were you married, how long did you live together, and what was the reason that this marriage ended?
5. Have you ever experienced any problems relating to the following:
  - a. addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, sex)
  - b. anxiety or depression
  - c. abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or verbal)
  - d. eating disorders
  - e. encounters with law enforcementPlease explain.
6. Please describe your own strengths and weaknesses.

7.
  - a. Please describe your fiancé(e)'s parents and their relationship to each other. Describe their strengths as parents and any problems in their relationship such as divorce, alcoholism, abuse.
  - b. How did they fulfill their parental responsibilities and what was their economic status?
  - c. How did (does) your fiancé(e) relate with them when he/she lived at home.
  
8.
  - a. How many brothers and sisters did (does) your fiancé(e) have? (include half/step brothers and sisters)
  - b. What was his/her birth order?
  - c. What was your fiancé(e)'s relationship like with his/her brothers and sisters during childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood?
  - d. What is the marital status of your fiancé(e)'s brothers and sisters?
  
9. Please describe your fiancé(e)'s educational background and work history. If applicable, include information regarding his/her military experience.
  
10.
  - a. What was your fiancé(e)'s prior dating experience?
  - b. Were there any other serious relationships and if so, why did they end?
  - c. If previously married, to whom was he/she married, how long did they live together, and what was the reason that this marriage ended?
  
11. Has your fiancé(e) ever experienced any problems relating to the following:
  - a. addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, sex)
  - b. anxiety or depression
  - c. abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or verbal)
  - d. eating disorders
  - e. encounters with law enforcementPlease explain.
  
12. Please describe your fiancé(e)'s strengths and weaknesses.

**COURTSHIP - ENGAGEMENT - MARRIAGE:**

13.
  - a. How and when did you meet?
  - b. How old were you and your fiancé(e) when you met?
  - c. How long did you date each other prior to your decision to marry?
  - d. What sort of things did you do on your dates?
  - e. Was (is) there a premarital sexual relationship? If so, how long into the relationship did it begin?
  - f. If there was (is) a premarital sexual relationship, describe the emotional or psychological effects it has or had on you and your fiancé(e).
  
14. Please explain any challenges you have had during your courtship and engagement and how they have been managed. This could include frequent or serious arguments, breakups, alcohol or drug abuse, physical and/or verbal abuse, extreme moodiness, depression, jealousy, unreliability, problems with former girl/boy friends or future in-laws.

15.
  - a. How did the subject of marriage arise?
  - b. Describe any pressures or hesitations for either of you in making the decision to marry.
  - c. How did your families and friends react to the proposed marriage?
  - d. Have you been encouraged and supported in your decision or has anyone advised you against the marriage and if so, who was it and what were the reasons either way?
  - e. Describe any romantic involvements either of you have had with others during the engagement period.
  - f. How long has your engagement been?
  - g. What would you say are your main reasons for marrying your fiancé(e)?
  - h. What do you believe are your fiancé(e)'s main reasons for marrying you?
  - i. How has your engagement affected you overall?
  
16.
  - a. Please describe the preparations for marriage you and your fiancé(e) have had with a priest, minister, counselor, or sponsor couple so far.
  - b. During the preparation for marriage, describe any insights, discoveries, or problems which you have experienced and how they were managed.
  - c. How well are you managing your finances and financial issues as you prepare to marry?
  - d. Has the skill of conflict resolution been discussed or explored during your marriage preparation?
  - e. Describe how religion has been explored or discussed.
  - f. To what extent were you and your fiancé(e) practicing your religions at the time of engagement?
  - g. How well and how frequently do you pray individually and as a couple?

Please indicate if any of these issues affect your life or that of your fiancé(e). [S for self; F for fiancé(e)]

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abortion   | <input type="checkbox"/> Over Dependence on Fiancé(e)                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anorexia/Bulimia                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abuse in Courtship/Engagement                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blaming Others/Not Accepting Personal Responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Placing of a Child for Adoption                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brief Courtship                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Communication Skills                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children of Alcoholic/Drug Abuse Parents             | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem with Authority                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cohabitation Prior to Marriage                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive Overeating/Overweight                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Radical Disparity of Personalities of Parties              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courtship at a Distance                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Radical Ethnic, Cultural or Religious Disparity of Parties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to Escape                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Rebound from a Death in One's Family                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in Following Through                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rebound from a Previous Courtship                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in Getting Along with Coworkers or Others | <input type="checkbox"/> Rebound from a Previous Spouse's Death                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Breakup over a Fact Previously Known           | <input type="checkbox"/> Rebound from a Recent Divorce                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional/Mental Illness in Parents                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Childhood Illness                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Pressure                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Desire to Back Out                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Irresponsibility during Courtship          | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Immaturity   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Serious Boy/Girlfriend                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Severe Conflict in Home Life                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduation Time: "The Thing to Do"                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Severely Defective Model in Parent's Marriage              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt over Sexual Activity in Courtship              | <input type="checkbox"/> Severely Handicapped Party                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History of Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexually Abused  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homosexuality  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Abuse in Courtship                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identity Disorder                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Addiction   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ignoring Immature Behavior                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Short Lived Friendships/Relationships                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ignoring a Serious Problem                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage, 16 or below                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Accepting Responsibilities                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage, 17 or 18  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Old Maid" Anxiety                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage, 19  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Friends Marrying: "The Thing to Do"            | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Pornography   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over Dependence on Parents                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |

On a separate sheet of paper, please describe in as much detail as possible **each** issue(s) checked above using the following questions for **each** issue.

- a. Any information concerning the roots of the problem (childhood trauma, modeling of parents, etc.).
- b. When did you come to know about the problem?
- c. How does it affect your courtship and engagement?
- d. How did you communicate about it? Did you argue?
- e. Explain what has been done to find help for the one with the problem and how effective it was.

**HOLY NAME PARISH CONTRACT  
WEDDING CELEBRATION**

Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presider/Officiant: \_\_\_\_\_

Fees paid:

\$100.00 – sacristan fee

\$500.00 – church use, non-parishioner

\$100.00 – Deposit (if needed)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_, check # \_\_\_\_\_

In signing I agree to adhere to the policies listed in this diocesan and parish manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Holy Name Church representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Additional Notes & Agreements:

**HOLY NAME PARISH CONTRACT**  
**WEDDING CELEBRATION**  
*Office copy*

Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presider/Officiant: \_\_\_\_\_

Fees paid:

\$100.00 – sacristan fee

\$500.00 – church use, non-parishioner

\$100.00 – Deposit (if needed)

\$\_\_\_\_\_, check #\_\_\_\_\_

In signing I agree to adhere to the policies listed in this diocesan and parish manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Holy Name Church representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Additional Notes & Agreements: