*MARRIAGE POLICY*

**

*Guardian Angels Church*

*Copley, Ohio*

**Guardian Angels Church**

**1676 S. Cleveland-Massillon Rd**

**Copley, Ohio 44321**

**(330) 666-1373   
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**Guardianangels-copley.org**

*"We, in the presence of one another, individually declare our freedom to many and our   
freedom from any known impediments between us. We hold marriage to be a life-long   
and faithful union and process of choosing each other for the mutual sharing of our life   
and our love; it is a union which is open to the transmission of life and rearing of children; it is a union which is modeled after and symbolizes God's ever-faithful love for His people. It is this partnership of life and love that we seek in marriage and to which we will publicly give our consent."* (Declaration of Matrimonial Consent, Diocese of Cleveland)

The Declaration of Matrimonial Consent signed by all couples celebrating marriage in the   
Diocese of Cleveland is an important moment in your lives. To assist you in preparation   
for marriage in the Catholic Church, and to facilitate your wedding plans here at Guardian Angels Church, the following information is presented.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

***IMPEDIMENT TO A VALID MARRIAGE***

**Canon 1095-1 in the *Code*** *of Canon* ***Law* states clearly that:**

***"They are incapable of contracting marriage* (1) *who lack the sufficient use of   
reason ... "***

**An example of an impediment to marriage is the use of alcohol or any controlled   
substance by the bride and/or groom on the wedding day prior to the marriage   
ceremony. Alcohol and controlled substance abuse impede the senses and indicates   
that the couple is not fully capable of professing their vows.**

**If it is discovered prior to the ceremony on the day of marriage that a couple has   
been drinking alcohol or using a controlled substance, the presider will halt the   
ceremony and the couple will be responsible for rescheduling a VALID marriage   
ceremony on another day.**

* The Diocese of Cleveland marriage policy states: "Couples are to present   
  themselves to a parish priest at least six (6) months prior to the intended   
  date of their wedding to allow time for proper assessment of readiness   
  and for preparation."

Usually when the engaged couple calls the church, they have a date in mind for the wedding ceremony. The setting of the date **cannot be considered final** until the proper assessments, evaluations and necessary dispensations are completed.

ASSESSMENT OF MARRIAGE READINESS

Meetings with parish deacon or priest:

The deacon or priest will use the INFORMATION FOR MARRIAGE form used by all the dioceses of Ohio. This form helps the priest make a Spiritual, Personal and Canonical assessment of your readiness for marriage.

A marriage evaluation called "PREPARE-ENRICH" is given to all couples entering into   
marriage at Guardian Angels Church. This evaluation covers areas of marriage and family life concerns: religion and life, marriage readiness, interpersonal communication, personal   
development and maturity, role adjustment in marriage, children and parenthood, sexuality and conjugal morality, extended family and in-laws, interests and activities, and financial questions.

You will take "Prepare-Enrich" on-line (which is preferred and most convenient) or you can take the hard copy if you do not have email. One or more meetings are used to review the profile that is prepared by the Marriage and Family Office of the Diocese of Cleveland.

MARRIAGE INSTRUCTIONS AND PROGRAMS OF PREPARATION

* ONE-DAY PRE-CANA - Couples preparing for marriage at Guardian Angels Church are ***required***to attend a Pre-Cana Day. Pre-Cana days are scheduled at Loyola of the Lakes Retreat House once a month. Couples should call the retreat house (330-896-2315) and register for their Pre-Cana Day. Various parishes in the Diocese also offer Pre Cana; check the Diocese website for lists.

MIXED RELIGION MARRIAGES

A dispensation form is to be submitted to the Bishop of the Diocese before a member of the   
Catholic Church may marry someone who is of another faith community. In submitting this petition, the Catholic party is asked to reaffirm faith in Jesus Christ and to state the intention to continue living the Catholic Faith. The Catholic is also asked to declare the intention of promising to do all he/she can do to share the faith with children born of the marriage by having them baptized and raising them as Catholics. The non-Catholic party is to be aware of this promise.

MINISTERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS AND CHURCHES - If you wish to have a member of the clergy present or to participate in the marriage ceremony, please discuss this with the priest who is working with you for your marriage preparation.

WEDDINGS TO BE CELEBRATED ELSEWHERE - In mixed religion marriages, permission must be given by the Bishop for wedding to take place somewhere other than the Catholic parish church. All other steps of marriage preparation still take place at the Catholic Church. If the presence or participation of the priest at the ceremony is desired, discussions with the other ministers or civil officials will help determine the feasibility of the request.

THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

Your wedding ceremony combines both the public and personal dimensions of a very   
important step in your lives. Liturgical norms, parish guidelines, civil law, and other   
requirements that pertain to the celebration of all weddings are also party of the   
considerations you must make when planning a wedding that is personal and unique.

* *TIME* - Marriages may take place on Fridays or Saturdays no later than 2:00 p.m.
* *PLACE* - In keeping with the sacred character of marriage and canon law, weddings are to take place **only** in the church.
* *LITURGICAL PLANNING* - You will be given a book, ***Together for Life****,* which   
  outlines the wedding ceremony, gives the selection of prayers, scriptural readings,   
  and vows that are approved for the Sacrament of Marriage. The planning sheet   
  included with the book should be returned to the celebrant one week before the   
  wedding.
* ***REHEARSAL******AND WEDDING INFORMATION FORM*** *–* This form must be filled out and returned to the volunteer wedding committee members. The form is attached to this Policy or can be accessed, filled out, and returned via email from the parish’s website. This form is due 2 months before the wedding.
* ***DOCUMENTS THAT ARE REQUIRED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF   
  MARRIAGE:***

Baptismal Certificate - This is required for all Catholics and must be issued from   
the church of baptism within six months before the wedding ceremony. Persons   
who are baptized in other faith traditions should supply the name of the church   
and date of baptism.

Marriage License - No marriage may take place without a license. Deliver the   
license to the church at the time of the rehearsal. Your marriage license may be   
issued in the county of the bride or the groom.

In Summit County:

Summit County Probate Court

209 South High Street

Akron, OH 44308

(330) 643-2345

Banns of Matrimony - These will be printed here at Guardian Angels Church in the   
Sunday bulletin beginning three Sundays before your wedding date. Members of   
other Catholic churches should contact their own parish to arrange for publication   
of banns.

* ***CEREMONY*** - There are two Rites (forms) for marriage: One celebrated within   
  Mass, and the other celebrated in conjunction with a Liturgy of the Word service.   
  The deacon or priest who is working with you **will help you determine which is the more appropriate celebration for you.** Often, either the bride or the groom is not of the Catholic Faith. If this is the case, it is preferred that you do not plan to have your wedding celebrated within a Mass. A beautiful and rich wedding ceremony speaks well to both the Catholics and non-Catholics who will be participating in your wedding liturgy. For a wedding celebrated in a Mass, the liturgy closely resembles the Sunday Eucharist in our parish, in terms of what is sung and what is done. You may want to seek out a good reader to be present for your wedding and proclaim the readings. It is never a good idea just to ask a friend to read who may not have any experience reading in our Church. The readings are an important part of your wedding, and should be done by someone who is qualified.

The Unity Candle Ceremony may be done at Guardian Angels Church during the wedding ceremony. However, please keep in mind that it is not actually part of the Catholic marriage rite and is an adaptation considered questionable. You may wish to consider including it as a part of your reception instead. If you choose to have the ceremony during your wedding in church, please supply the candles and the candle holder.

Some brides include in their wedding a prayer at Mary’s altar and presentation of flower(s) or bouquet to express their devotion. This is certainly not required. Again, the deacon or priest working with you will help you decide how you want to express your devotion.

Please talk over with the deacon or priest the number of couples to be included in the wedding party. We find four couples to be a practical limitation. More couples than that detracts from the attention of the congregation of this as a worship experience. We suggest that children under the age of seven ought not to be involved in the wedding ceremony as ring-bearers, and flowers girls.

Again, our main consideration in helping you plan your wedding is to help you understand the difference between staging a wonderful show and preparing a prayerful liturgy. It is our hope that the assembly gathered for your wedding would be active participants in the prayer.

* *MUSIC AT YOUR WEDDING LITURGY* - Music is an important part of the   
  wedding liturgy. Your wedding music should be selected with great care, so that   
  it not only celebrates the joy of the occasion, but also helps everyone to pray. The   
  text and words of songs must express the Christian concept of love and should be   
  liturgical in nature. Pop music is NOT liturgical. The liturgy office of the   
  Diocese suggests a good criterion for all music you may consider for your   
  wedding, *"Do the lyrics help me to think about God's love for all people?"*

Employees of the parish who assist on a regular basis in providing music for worship   
are prepared to help you in planning your wedding music. Normally, couples are   
expected to use the services of our musicians. If you plan to use the services of other   
musicians it must be arranged and approved by the parish Music Contact, Jeff Foulkes.

Please contact Jeff Foulkes at 234-380-0521, well in advance of your wedding. Please   
allow 2 to 3 months’ notice so that he can schedule your wedding into his calendar as well as prepare your musical selections.

Whether you employ the services of the Guardian Angels’ musicians or others, all couples must speak to Jeff Foulkes so that your music selections can be approved.

* ***OTHER PRIESTS and DEACONS*** – Priests and deacons beside the one who takes you through your marriage preparation may be invited to celebrate or concelebrate your wedding. If you wish to have a priest or deacon from another parish witness your wedding vows, please note the following policy:

1. **Priest or Deacon relative** - If you have a brother, uncle, or cousin who is a priest or deacon, the parish priest and deacon are willing to do all the work of preparation, assessment, PREPARE-ENRICH, and instruction.
2. **Priest or Deacon friend** - If you wish to have a priest or deacon friend witness your vows, he is asked to do all the work of preparation. The marriage file must be given to the parish one week prior to the wedding.
3. **Concelebrants** - You are welcome to invite priests and deacons to concelebrate the wedding liturgy. Please let us know that you wish to invite other priests.

**MARRIAGE IS ONLY ONE OF SEVEN SACRAMENTS**

Your marriage is a Sacrament. Catholics are reminded that they should be participating in the Mass each Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation. The Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament of Christ's love, can be a comfort and a challenge. Please make the effort to participate in the Mass and to receive the Eucharist often. For the difficult periods in your married life, the Eucharist can be a comfort. Whenever we remember Christ's undying love for us, each Christian is challenged to imitate Christ's love more fully.

**WEDDING OFFERINGS AND COSTS**

There is no set church fee for a wedding at Guardian Angels Church. Consult with the deacon or priest about appropriate gifts to cover the minister, organist, soloist, and altar servers. It is also appropriate to make an offering to the church.

**REHEARSAL**

Rehearsals are conducted by the Wedding Committee. Please see the **Rehearsal and Wedding Information** sheet attached or on the parish website for information regarding arrangements for your rehearsal.

**DRESSING FOR WEDDING**

A space for the bride and groom to get dressed is available on the church property. The cry room upstairs or the Fellowship Hall downstairs are available.

**GUEST BOOK**

We suggest that you save the guest book for the reception. It creates a major back up   
at the church when guests are standing in line waiting to sign in, many times   
causing the start of the ceremony to be delayed.

**PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEOGRAPHER**

Photographer and videographer services need to see the priest or deacon in the sacristy before the wedding to find out where they may set up and when pictures may be taken.   
Videographer services need to be in a stationary place, rather than moving around and   
causing distractions to the assembly. The priest will direct him/her where to go and when   
pictures would be appropriate. Photographs may be taken in church after the ceremony   
**for no longer than 30 minutes.** **When photographers are giving directions for pictures, they should do so respectfully and quietly.**

Three rules for all involved with the taking of pictures:

1. The photographer will **never** enter the sanctuary.
2. The photographer should **never** cut across the front of the Church.
3. Guests with cameras **should not** leave the pews to take pictures.

**RICE AND CONFETTI**

Absolutely NO confetti, rice, birdseed, or flower petals (real or artificial) can be thrown inside or outside the church. PLEASE advise guests about this matter and have members of   
the family control this at the wedding. We need your understanding and cooperation.   
Injuries occurring because of your failure to comply will be your liability. The above   
mentioned items can cause serious falls both in the church and outside.

**AISLE RUNNER**

No aisle runner is to be used due to safety and liability.

**FLOWERS**

Flowers placed upon the altar are done so for the glory of God and we recommend they not be removed following the ceremony. Advise your florist that flowers/bows on the pews MAY NOT be secured with tape. The florist or a member of the family are responsible for clean-up of all pew bows, non-altar flowers, aisle runners and associated trash. It is your responsibility to inform the florist and photographer of the directions that pertain to them.

**WITNESSES**

Diocesan Marriage Regulations states: "Christians of other traditions and also non-   
Christians may act as official witnesses (Best Man or Maid of Honor) at a Catholic   
marriage, and Catholics may be witnesses at a marriage which is validly contracted   
between Christians of other traditions. A non-practicing Catholic MAY NOT act as an   
official witness (Best Man or Maid of Honor) at a Catholic marriage." They may  
however, participate in the wedding as Ushers or Bridesmaids.

**PARISH REGISTRATION**

If you will be living in Copley following your marriage and wish to be members   
of Guardian Angels Church, please remember to register as a married couple in the   
parish. *(This applies even if you have been a member of Guardian Angels Church as a single person.)* You will not be automatically registered as members of the parish   
just because your wedding takes place in this church.

**GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION**

For Catholics: Catholics fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when they receive Holy Communion in fulfillment of Christ's command to eat His Body and drink His Blood. In order to be disposed properly to receive communion, communicants should not be conscious of grave sin, have fasted for an hour, and seek to live in charity and love with their neighbors. A person conscious of grave sin must first be reconciled with God and the Church through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged for all.

For other Christians: We welcome to this celebration of the Eucharist those   
Christians who are not fully united with us. It is a consequence of the sad divisions in   
Christianity that we cannot extend to them a general invitation to receive Holy Communion.   
Catholics believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a   
oneness in faith, life, and worship of the community. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply oneness which does not yet exist, and for which we must all pray.

For Those Not Receiving Communion - Those not receiving Sacramental Communion (Holy Eucharist) are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For Non-Christians - We also welcome to the celebration those who do not   
share our faith in Jesus. While we cannot extend to them an invitation to   
receive Communion, we do invite them to be united with us in prayer. Text from   
the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**NO ALCOHOL or CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES** on the Guardian Angles Church premises.

*Notice*

***If you plan to be members of Guardian Angels Church following your marrige,***

*You must register as a new couple even if one of you has been a member of the parish for years.*

***We have read the Guardian Angels Church Marriage Policy and we understand the policy regarding marriage preparation, and all the regulations regarding weddings as set by the parish.***

*Signature of Bride \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Signature of Groom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Return this form at your next scheduled meeting with the priest/deacon who is preparing your marriage.*

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Signature of Bride:* |  |
| *Signature of Groom:* |  |
| *Date:* |  |

*Return this form at your next scheduled meeting with the priest/deacon who is preparing your marriage.*