

St. John Fisher Parish Marriage Policy

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The pastoral staff of St. John Fisher congratulates you on your decision to be married in our church. We encourage engaged couples to prayerfully prepare themselves for a happy and lasting union, blessed by Christ. It is our desire to make your wedding as beautiful and meaningful as possible. We have prepared the following guidelines to help you and to answer the many questions you may have. We ask you to please read them carefully as you will be held responsible for their content.

The marriage of people is both a human and a sacred event. For Christians marriage is an image of the union between Christ and His Church. The ceremony of marriage according to the Rite of Roman Catholic Church is a religious celebration of this belief.

Who may be married at St. John Fisher Church?

Any parishioner, or child of a parishioner, may be married at St. John Fisher with permission of the pastor. The Church prefers that marriage take place in the parish church in which the couple are attending and plan to continue to attend. Because St. John Fisher is now a part of a Pastoral Region, and presiders have additional responsibilities with multiple parishes, it has become increasingly difficult, although not impossible, for priests and deacons to witness marriages in other parish locations.

Ceremony

The religious character of the Order of Christian Matrimony should be kept in mind. The particular liturgical season (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time) must be respected.

Generally, the Eucharist is celebrated in the marriage of two practicing Catholics. If the bride or groom is non-Catholic the Eucharist is not celebrated.

When can you be married at St. John Fisher Church?

Weddings are celebrated on Fridays between 6:00- 7:00 p.m; on Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. (please note that ceremonies with Masses in the last timeframe must use the readings and prayers of the Sunday). Weddings may be celebrated at other times and are to be arranged with the officiating minister. Weddings may be celebrated at a regular weekend Mass.

Setting the Date and Time

Since Matrimony is a sacrament, it is necessary to meet with the Pastor/Parochial Vicar/Deacon, at least 6 months prior, and ideally 9-12 months before the ceremony. At the first meeting the requirements will be discussed before a date can be set. Make no plans or permanent arrangements until after meeting with one of the above ministers.

Before the Marriage

The Deacon or Priest will inform you of all the civil and church requirements for your marriage. It is the responsibility of the couple to have all the necessary paper work (Engaged Encounter certificate, Baptismal certificates, M-1 answers, liturgy information) into the priest/deacon at least one month prior to the wedding date or the wedding will not take place.

Marriage Encounter Weekend

St. John Fisher Parish wishes to help and foster success in all marriages and therefore it is the policy of St. John Fisher that couples preparing for marriage should attend a Marriage Encounter Weekend sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. These weekends are scheduled throughout the year and registration should be completed early.

If due to extreme circumstances a couple cannot schedule a Marriage Encounter Weekend, with the approval of the Pastor/Deacon, a couple may schedule a Pre-Cana Day in substitution.

Who may perform the Ceremony?

Ordinarily the Pastor/Parochial Vicar/Deacon will perform your wedding ceremony. Any priest or deacon in good standing is welcome to officiate at St. John Fisher with the approval of the Pastor, and a Letter of Good Standing, for those outside the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Marriage Policy must still be followed for visiting presiders. The minister of the non-Catholic person is most welcome to participate if the marriage is outside the Eucharist.

The Church Building

It is Catholic belief that the church building is a sacred place because the Blessed Sacrament, that is, the real presence of Jesus Christ, is reserved there. It is also sacred because it is a place of worship. At all times we must conduct ourselves with dignity and decorum in this sacred place. Such practices as eating snacks and drinking, etc., are *strictly prohibited*. People engaged in this sort of behavior either at rehearsal, the wedding or at picture taking will be asked to dispose of these items and/or leave the premises. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to inform their attendants beforehand of our community belief in the sacredness of the occasion and the house of God.

Parking

There are plenty of parking spaces available on St. John Fisher's property.

Flowers/Decorations

Simplicity, rather than extravagance, is encouraged as suitable to enhance the wedding ceremony. Given the style of our worship space, one or two floral arrangements are recommended as sufficient. They may be placed either in front of the altar and/or the ambo. **Nothing is ever placed on the altar.** If the Church already has extensive floral arrangements such as at Christmas and Easter times, additional flowers would not be necessary. **Dropping of flower petals in church is not permitted.**

In the interest of fire safety, no candelabras are permitted. Pew decorations with candles are permitted; globes must be used with lit candles. Pew decorations are permitted but should not be placed with masking tape or other items that deface the pews. Damage to the pews or other Church property by florists is the responsibility of the wedding couple and their florist and they will be held liable.

Unity candles are not a part of the Rite of Matrimony of the Church.

The use of an aisle cloth is not permitted due to the risk of injury with the concrete floor. The seating capacity of St. John Fisher Church is 400-450. Aisle candles, pew bows, potted plants, flower stands, etc., must be picked up directly after the ceremony. All flowers brought to the Church are considered to be a decoration for the house of God and therefore it is highly recommended that they remain in the church after the ceremony.

Music

All music for weddings at St. John Fisher will follow the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The music must be suitable for a sacred and solemn celebration held in a Church and is intended to be a form of prayer. Music of a purely secular nature is best used at the reception. Cassettes and CDs are not to be used.

All music must be approved by the Parish Music Director. Any other musician or singer must contact Mr. Mark Friedmann (markfriedman90@gmail.com), St. John Fisher Parish Music Director, to have music approved. Please contact the Music Director early as his calendar fills up quickly. Musician fees for a parish Music Director and cantor are not included in the parish fees, they are agreed upon directly with them.

Rice, Bird Seed, Confetti

In interest to protecting our environment, the cleanliness of our church facility, and for various other reasons, there will be no use of rice, bird seed, confetti or other similar substances before or after the ceremony at St. John Fisher Parish.

Wagons, Carts, etc.

The Rite of Marriage takes place in a sacred space and the focus is on the sacramentality of marriage. No wagons, carts or other children's vehicles are permitted as part of the Eucharist or ceremony.

Alcohol

The possession of and/or use of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited. This includes during the rehearsal, before and after the wedding ceremony, and at picture taking time. **The Priest/Deacon reserves the right to leave the premises and cancel the wedding if alcohol is present at the rehearsal or wedding. Wedding coordinators reserve the right to notify the Priest/Deacon officiating the wedding if any alcohol is detected to have been be present at rehearsal or wedding.**

Reception Line

A reception line is discouraged following the wedding. Once the church has cleared pictures will be taken, unless pictures have been arranged prior to the celebration of marriage.

Sound System

At St. John Fisher we have a professionally engineered sound system. Ample microphones, stands, etc., are available so that the assembly is able to hear the ceremony. Output jacks are not available for use. Please note that the presider will *only* wear the microphone for the church sound system.

Dressing Room

St. John Fisher Church is not equipped with dressing rooms. The bride and bridal party will need to make other arrangements for dressing. There is a male and female restroom.

Pictures

To preserve the prayerful and religious character of the ceremony only a professional photographer is permitted to take pictures. We ask that this be made clear to family and friends in attendance. **NO one else is to take pictures during the ceremony.** The photographer is to contact the Priest/Deacon prior to the ceremony for instructions.

A professional videographer may use only one video camera. It is to be placed on a tripod and remain stationary during the ceremony. No extra lighting is necessary. Presiders will not wear additional microphones to accommodate videographers.

Families and group photographs are permitted prior to and after the ceremony. We ask that photographing following the ceremony be limited to 30 minutes. The steps leading to the sanctuary may be used for photographs. However, none are permitted in the sanctuary proper. No one is permitted in the sanctuary and no sanctuary furniture is to be moved.

When any photography takes place in the church, we ask that all remember that this is a house of God and conduct themselves in a proper manner.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal should be scheduled with the Priest or Deacon officiating at the wedding. You should allow approximately one full hour for the rehearsal. Since the Blessed Sacrament is present in the church, we ask that reverence be maintained during the rehearsal.

Fees

There is a non-refundable deposit of \$50 to reserve the date and time of your wedding in the St. John Fisher Parish Church. The non-refundable deposit applies to the total fee for use of the Church. The total offering for using the church is \$450.00, which includes the marriage preparation and is not for Priest/Deacon to officiate at your wedding.

There is a \$50 fee if you choose not to hold your ceremony at St. John Fisher but would like for us to help with the preparation paperwork.

Clean Up

You are responsible to leave the church in the order in which you found it. Please appoint someone to make sure that all areas are clean after the wedding. Please do not leave inordinate amounts of trash in the waste baskets on the premises. Thank you.

This information has been offered to you as you prepare for marriage. Some of it reflects some unfortunate past experiences. Some reflects the religious importance we place in the wedding ceremony. We hope that all of it will help to make your wedding a celebration of your love blessed and united by God.

- **Please note that we are unable to offer space for rehearsal dinners and receptions. We do not have staff support for these events.**
- **Please copy this information for your photographer, videographer and florist.**
- **You may wish to pass this information on to your family and friends before the ceremony.**

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 properly disposed 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. Persons conscious of grave sin must first be reconciled with God and the Church through the Sacrament of Penance. A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance 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 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 a oneness that does not yet exist, and for which we must all pray.

For Those Not Receiving Communion

Those not receiving sacramental communion 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 this 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.

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation and union of man and woman and ends with "the wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7, 9). Scripture often refers to marriage, its origin and purpose, the meaning God gave to it, and its renewal in the covenant made by Jesus with his Church.

Man and woman were created for each other.

By their marriage, the couple witnesses Christ's spousal love for the Church. One of the Nuptial Blessings in the liturgical celebration of marriage refers to this in saying, "Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church."

The Sacrament of Marriage is a covenant, which is more than a contract. Covenant always expresses a relationship between persons. The marriage covenant refers to the relationship between the husband and wife, a permanent union of persons capable of knowing and loving each other and God. The celebration of marriage is also a liturgical act, appropriately held in a public liturgy at church. Catholics are urged to celebrate their marriage within the Eucharistic Liturgy.

~from the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*



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