

Dear Bride-to-be & Groom to be,

Congratulations on your engagement! We welcome your inquiry about celebrating your marriage at our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. It is a privilege for us to assist you as you prepare for your new life together as husband and wife. The celebration of Christian Marriage is a unique moment in the life of the Church.

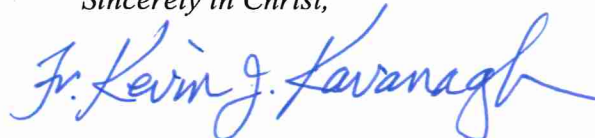
The Christian community rejoices in a special way whenever a bride and groom wish to commit themselves in faith and love to each other for life. This commitment reflects the love of God for all people and is a symbol of Christ's love for His Church. Therefore, a Christian wedding is above all a religious event.

In witnessing your marriage, our Church community wants to uphold and support you faithfully for the rest of your lives. The following policies and regulations have been prepared so that all couples planning a wedding at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church may do so in conformity with the Church's teaching and understanding of Christian marriage.

Once you have read the policies and regulations information and have agreed to them, please sign and return the signatures sheet (last page of the packet) along with a deposit of \$100.00 towards your wedding fees. The balance of your wedding fees are due two weeks prior to your wedding date.

May God bless you as you begin this new chapter in your lives.

Sincerely in Christ,



Reverend Kevin J. Kavanagh
Pastor

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Part One: Initial Planning

A. Place

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church is available for weddings for the members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish either directly registered or registered indirectly by parents. An active registered member of our parish is someone who has been registered in our parish one year before the scheduling of the wedding. Individuals who are not registered in the parish may also be married at Our Lady of Lourdes provided the bride or groom is a practicing Catholic at another Catholic church.

** If either party has been previously married, an official church annulment of that marriage is necessary **before** a re-marriage can be scheduled.*

B. Time

Weddings may be scheduled on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. There is also the possibility of a Friday evening Wedding at 6:30 p.m., as arranged with the pastor. The evening wedding times are best if a couple is planning to rent the Catholic Community Center for their reception.

*Weddings must begin **on time**. Couples will have the opportunity for setting up in the church, bridal room, or taking pictures **one hour before** the ceremony and **one hour after** the ceremony. Therefore the 10:30 a.m. Wedding must be out by 12:30 p.m. And the 1:30 p.m. Wedding must be out by 3:30 p.m. There can be some flexibility with these times if your wedding is the only wedding scheduled for that day.*

C. *Who may Officiate*

A priest or deacon from Our Lady of Lourdes staff will be assigned to officiate or oversee all weddings held at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. A priest or deacon that may be a personal friend or relative of the couple is welcome to prepare the couple and officiate the ceremony with permission from the pastor.

*The wedding file from the visiting clergy must be turned into the parish office **before** the ceremony. The stipend for the visiting clergy is the responsibility of the couple.*

D. *Preparation*

The process of preparation is arranged with the priest or deacon assigned for the wedding. Couples should begin this process at least one year before the wedding day. The preparation will include four to five meetings with the clergy, a pre cana class offered by the Diocese of Columbus, and proper baptismal, diocesan, state, and annulment (if applicable) certification.

** In a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic (a mixed marriage) a form for the couple promising to raise their children in the Catholic faith is always required.*

Part Two: Planning the Wedding Liturgy

A. Expression

Wedding celebrations should be designed so that the active participation of family and friends is possible. The Wedding celebration itself should be expressive of the faith of the couple and should be carried out with grace, beauty, and solemnity befitting a celebration of the Catholic Church.

B. Rehearsal

Rehearsals for Saturday weddings can be on Thursday or Friday evenings. The scheduling of rehearsals will take place on a first-come first serve basis. The allotted time needed for a rehearsal is one hour.

C. Flowers and Decorations

Flowers and decorations for the wedding are to be selected and purchased by the couple. Proper care for the worship space and decorum within the Church must be maintained. Remember, the church is not “rented.” Please consult the Rules for Florists for specific questions and details.

D. Participants in the Liturgy

Friends and relatives of the couple are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the liturgy in the roles of reader (three possible), altar server, usher, or communion distributor (if qualified). A professional wedding consultant is not needed for the liturgical part of the day. The wedding consultant should restrict his or her planning to the non-church activities of the wedding day. Bridesmaids and groomsmen should be reminded that they are there to give their very best witness to the bride and groom. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Drunkenness will mean removal from the ceremony.

E. Photographers and Videographers

All photographers and videographers must see the priest or deacon before the ceremony. Photographic equipment of any kind is not permitted in the sanctuary or in the space before it (just before the steps). Posing for pictures is permitted in the church one hour before and one hour after the ceremony. It is okay to use "flash" during the ceremony only with the couples permission as it might be a distraction during the vows, rings, etc. All photo personnel are encouraged to come to the rehearsal to know and work with what will be taking place. Please see the Rules for Photographers for specific questions and details.

F. Music

Music is an essential aspect of any liturgy in the Catholic Church. Only live music is used at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, and no kind of recorded music is allowed. Sacred music and appropriate classical music must be utilized for your wedding celebration. All music decisions for your wedding should be discussed with and approved by the Director of Music, and you are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Director of Music to make your music selections. Please note that the organist and cantor will not be present at your wedding rehearsal; therefore, we encourage you to plan the music as early as possible in consultation with the Director of Music.

Your wedding fee includes an organist and cantor, and these fees cannot be waived. These musicians are provided by Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. Though you are encouraged to use these musicians for your wedding, any outside musicians must be approved by the Director of Music. These include singers or instrumentalists who are family or friends. If you would like to have additional musicians as part of your wedding celebration, the Director of Music can assist in contracting these musicians for an additional fee, which will be the responsibility of the couple to pay.

G. *Additional Concerns*

1. *Marian Devotion*

If the bride or couple truly have a devotion to our Blessed Mother, they may honor her with prayer and flowers during the wedding ceremony just before the final blessing. This will be discussed during the couples preparation with the clergy.

2. *The Unity Candle*

The unity candle is not part of the Catholic nuptial celebration. Lit candles in the church represent the light of Christ, not of an individual or family. The union of the couple in the liturgy is ritualized by consent, vows, rings, and the blessing, not by lighting candles. For this reason the unity candle is not used at Our Lady of Lourdes.

3. *Receiving Line & Guest Book*

Receiving lines should be held at the reception where the couple “receives” their guests. If the couple wishes to dismiss or receive their guests in the church, they will forfeit their one hour of picture time after the wedding.

Guest books are welcome in the entrance area of the church as long as it is closed and people take their seats ten minutes before the wedding begins. A stand from the church will be provided.

4. *Secular Customs*

*Secular practices such as rice, birdseed, confetti, bubbles, bells, or any of the other current trends are not appropriate with the sacred nature and space of the church environment. These secular customs are more appropriate for the reception. Any use of such items must first be cleared with the pastor, **but will never at any time be used inside the church.***

Part Three: Fees

- A. *The fee for active, registered members of Our Lady of Lourdes is **\$950.00***
- B. *For those who are not registered and contributing members of the parish one year previous to the scheduling of their wedding, the fee is **\$1,150.00***

This fee is a flat fee that includes the use of the church and bride's dressing room, the organist or pianist, cantor, stipend for the priest or deacon, servers and wedding rehearsal coordinator and any set-up or cleaning services.

If for any reason a couple cannot provide the fee, other means of compensation can be discussed with the pastor. Lack of funds will never prevent a couples celebration of marriage.

Part Four: Regulations for Photographers

*We at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church welcome photographers at weddings, both for still photographs and video/digital taping. However, because the church is a sacred place and not a photo studio, the following rules must be **STRICTLY** observed.*

- 1. A level of professionalism is expected for all who work inside the church environment. Anyone who does not display this will be escorted to leave.*
- 2. Photos may be taken one hour before and one hour after the wedding ceremony. This is a most generous amount of time for taking pictures if everyone is on time and ready. Photography must cease 20 minutes prior to the start of the wedding. The bride and bridesmaids are to be in the bridal room, the groom and groomsmen should be in the sacristy or seating guests.*
- 3. The Catholic wedding is a celebration of a Sacrament and thus a sacred ceremony. It is important that the photographer be as unobtrusive as possible during the ceremony by not standing in the way of the wedding party as they come down the aisle, or distracting guests while the ceremony is in progress. The photographer should never stop the procession or any other part of the ceremony for a "still shot". Once the procession has stopped and the wedding party is in place, there are no "roving" video cameras. All cameras should be in place.*
- 4. Pictures may be taken and are welcome outside on the parish grounds before or after the wedding.*
- 5. During the ceremony, photographers may take pictures from any area in the church except: the sanctuary, the area between the first row of pews and the steps to the sanctuary, and the musicians area.*
- 6. Before and after pictures in the church can be taken on the steps of the sanctuary and in front of the altar.*
- 7. Flash pictures may be used during the ceremony with the couples permission.*

Part Five: Regulations for Florists

We at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church welcome fresh flowers to add to the beauty of the wedding celebration for the bride, groom, and the whole church. It would be in poor taste to decorate God's church and then de-decorate it after the ceremony is over. Please plan to leave your flower arrangements for the weekend Masses.

- 1. Two flower stands are provided near the altar for flower bouquets. Nothing may be placed on the altar.*
- 2. Aisle cloths on carpeting can be dangerous (especially for high heels) and are discouraged, but allowed.*
- 3. Standing candelabras may be used. However, the florist must provide plastic drop cloths under the candelabras to catch dripping wax.*
- 4. Nothing may be taped to the wood pews, as it would ruin the finish.*
- 5. A level of professionalism is expected for all who work inside the church environment. Anyone who does not display this will be escorted to leave.*

Part Six: Signatures Sheet (Sign & Return this Page to the Church)

Signature Sheet Agreement

We, _____ and _____ agree to
(Print – Brides Name) (Print – Grooms Name)

abide by the rules and regulations set forth for our wedding celebration at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church.

Signatures:

_____ and _____
(Bride) (Groom)

Wedding Date Chosen: _____

Wedding Time Chosen: _____

Wedding Fee: _____

Wedding Deposit Amount: _____ Received: _____ (mm/dd/yyyy)

Wedding Fee Balance: _____

(Give copy to Photographer)

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