



The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Congratulations on your engagement! We welcome your inquiry about marrying in the Scioto Catholic Consortium. We are happy to assist you as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony and we promise to do all we can to make your wedding day reflect the importance and beauty of your commitment.

The Holy Catholic Church esteems marriage as sacred – one of the seven sacraments of the continual presence of Christ among us. Saint Paul says the union of husband and wife is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32).

In witnessing your marriage, our Church community desires to uphold and support you faithfully for the rest of your lives as you grow together in God who is Love. We undertake this work with you as you begin preparing to live the Sacrament of Marriage.

This booklet is intended to inform you of the preparation process at the Scioto Catholic Consortium. It will also help you plan a wedding at Holy Redeemer, Holy Trinity, St. Mary, and Saint Peter in Chains parishes in conformity with the Church's understanding of Christian Marriage. We desire to work with you so that your wedding may be a faith-filled, dignified, beautiful and memorable celebration. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions.

Who May Be Married in the Scioto Catholic Consortium?

All baptized Catholics have a right to receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Either the bride or groom must be a baptized Catholic, and it strongly preferred that they have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Marriage Preparation Journey

The preparation process **must** be started no later than 6 months before the preferred Nuptial Mass date. 9 months is ideal, but 6 is acceptable.

The marriage preparation sequence that is outlined here (and the “checklist” on our website) is required for a wedding at any of the Parishes in the Scioto Catholic Consortium.

1. Read this booklet, review the “checklist,” then contact the Consortium Marriage Preparation Coordinator Marissa McCormick at marissa@sciotocatholic to schedule an in-person meeting with a Consortium clergyman.
2. All Catholics will need to get a current (within the last 6 months) copy of your baptismal certificate from the parish where you were baptized. The baptismal certificate should include the full notations of all the sacraments you have received.
3. If you are not a parishioner, you will need to provide a letter from your pastor granting his permission for your wedding. Return the information and signature page at the back of this booklet to him. It is advisable for you to contact the pastor as soon as you are engaged or six months before your desired date.

The preparation process includes meetings with a mentor couple, meetings with the priest or deacon who is preparing you, and taking and reviewing the PREPARE ENRICH inventory. The Inventory is a series of questions designed to facilitate discussion between the couple and mentor couple about topics related to married life. The couple’s responses to the survey will be an aid to other parts of the preparation process.

You will also need to attend a Marriage Prep retreat and training in Natural Family Planning (<https://columbuscatholic.org/marriage-family/nfp/nfp-classes>). Information on the retreat weekend can be found on the Diocesan website (<https://columbuscatholic.org/marriage-family/marriage-formation/preparation-journey>). An online option is available as a part of the Witness to Love prep program. This can be discussed with the Marriage Prep Coordinator. The last step in preparation is to meet with the priest or deacon preparing you 1 month before the date to plan the nuptial mass. All parts of the preparation process (listed on the “checklist”) are to be completed before the wedding, or it will NOT proceed as planned.

Setting the Date and Time

A wedding date may be set only by approval of the pastor. Please first contact the Marriage Preparation Coordinator and have an initial meeting with a designated clergyman. Once the initial meeting has taken place, and "Form 1" is completed, the clergyman and pastor will decide on the acceptance of the proposed nuptial mass date.

Weddings may be scheduled for each church as follows:

Holy Redeemer and Holy Trinity: Saturdays between 11:00 AM and 1:30 PM. or after 6:00 PM. All photography must be finished by 3:00pm for an early wedding.

St. Mary and St. Peter in Chains: Saturdays after 11:00 AM

For weddings on other days of the week, special arrangements can be made with the officiating priest. All decorating must be done after the last event at the church on Saturday mornings or evenings (for 6:30pm weddings at Holy Redeemer or Holy Trinity).

The time of the rehearsal is set with the officiating priest. The agreed upon time, must be approved by the Consortium Secretary, to assure that there is no other conflict of events. Rehearsals start promptly at the established time and last one hour or less.

Documents Needed

- **Baptismal Record:** A copy of your baptismal certificate, issued in the last six months, is required for your wedding file. Information about your confirmation must be included. Contact the parish of your baptism and ask them to send a copy of your baptismal certificate with "notations" of all sacraments received and with the parish seal stamped upon it. Non-Catholics are encouraged, but not required, to produce a baptismal certificate. These must be sent to our office (514 Market St. Portsmouth, Ohio 45662) prior to the initial meeting with a clergyman, and evaluation of the clergyman and pastor, to set a wedding date.
- If either of you has been married before, an annulment declaration from the Church must also be presented. Please note that an annulment is a process that may be as brief as a few weeks or may take more than a year to complete.
- **Retreat Completion Certificate**
- **Natural Family Planning Training Certificate**
- **Marriage License:** the civil license is given to the Marriage Preparation Coordinator or Priest at the time of the rehearsal. You must apply for a marriage license in the county of your residence. While marriage licenses are valid throughout the State of Ohio, some restrictions vary by county. Please confer with your county courthouse for applicable restrictions.

Officiating Priest

Normally, the parish priest or deacon who has assisted in your preparation for marriage will officiate at your marriage ceremony. A priest or deacon who is your relative is welcome to officiate at the wedding in one of two ways: he may concelebrate the nuptial mass, or he may be the principal celebrant if it is arranged with the pastor. If a priest from outside of the Scioto Catholic Consortium is officiating, he will need to sign the Visiting Priest Agreement and will need to provide a letter from his bishop guaranteeing he is in good standing. The agreement and letter should be given to the pastor of the Consortium by the time of your last meeting.

Please contact the Secretary of State for information pertaining to the civil license necessary for an out-of-state priest or deacon to preside over the ceremony:

Secretary of the State of Ohio

180 East Broad Street Columbus, OH 43215

614-466-4980

www.state.oh.us/sos

The Liturgy of Marriage

A Church wedding is a sacred ritual of the Church celebrated by the participants. As such, the religious nature of the ceremony is carefully preserved.

Your wedding is a part of the faith life of our parishes. You, as the ministers of the Sacrament, have chosen to express freely your love and commitment to each other. The Rite of Marriage is centered on the exchange of vows and the blessing and exchange of rings. The ritual conveys the Church's desire to witness your vows, to strengthen your fidelity to them, and to prayerfully support you in your life together. As with all liturgical celebrations, the full and active participation of those present is desirable. **Customs not contained in the Rite of Marriage are prohibited in Church but may be appropriate at the wedding reception.**

All wedding plans are finalized with the priest celebrant before the rehearsal.

Readings

The Rite of Marriage includes selected scriptural readings and prayers. You will find these selections in the Together for Life booklet.

Music

Only liturgically appropriate music may be used at weddings. As soon as the wedding date is set, ask the Marriage Prep Coordinator for the contact information of the parish representative coordinating sacred music, to begin the process of choosing music and musicians. Popular, secular music or music from the theater is reserved for the wedding reception.

Parish musicians may be used, as well as outside musicians with the approval of the Pastor and Marriage Prep Coordinator.

Ministers

Friends and relatives of the couple may participate in the liturgy in various roles. You may wish to select individuals to serve as readers and gift bearers at the liturgy. So that these ministers feel comfortable, they should be properly trained. Decisions about these ministers may be made when the liturgy is planned with the priest. Please ask that selected ministers attend the rehearsal the evening before the nuptial mass.

Children may be included as part of the ceremony, as long as they are of the appropriate age and level of maturity.

No animals are permitted inside of the church. They are not to be included in the wedding ceremony.

Environment

Decorations

Very simple decorations are appropriate to enhance the liturgical space of all the churches. No decorations are to be placed on the altar. Normally, two live flower arrangements placed near the altar are sufficient for a wedding. The flowers are given to the church for the weekend Masses. Seasonal decorations (e.g. Easter) provide the environment for all weddings during those seasons.

Small decorations for the pew ends are acceptable as long as they do not hinder walking down the aisle. Synthetic flower petals may be scattered down the aisle as long as they are immediately picked up by the family after the ceremony. **No live flowers/flower petals** may be used for this purpose.

For safety reasons, the use of candelabras, lamps, and floral displays with candles is prohibited. **An aisle cloth/rolling carpet is not used in our Churches.**

The unity candle is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage; therefore, it is not included in the wedding ceremony.

For aesthetic and safety reasons, rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons, soap bubbles, alcohol, gum, and food are not permitted on Church property. If any of the wedding party have alcohol or drugs or are found to be under its influence at the wedding, the wedding will be immediately canceled.

Dressing Facilities

A room can be made available for the bride and bridesmaid for dressing. Security is limited; please do not leave valuables in the room or church. After the ceremony, the rooms are to be clean and furnished as found. **No alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs/paraphernalia, or firearms are permitted on the church property prior to, during, or after the wedding. The bride and groom are responsible for communicating this to members of the wedding party and family members.** Disregard of this policy will result in immediate cancellation of the wedding ceremony and forfeiture of deposit.

Chewing Gum

Because of the sacredness of the worship space, chewing gum during the ceremony, the rehearsal, or at any time inside the church is not permitted.

Receiving Line and Guest Book

Out of courtesy for your guests and out of respect for the sacred space and service schedule of the Church, receiving lines and guest books are held at the reception and not at the Church.

Photography

Photographers are welcome to take pictures before, during, and after the ceremony. The Church itself is not a studio but a sacred place in which a community of believers worship. The photographer and videographer should keep this in mind before, during, and after the celebration of marriage. We ask that the following rules be observed:

- Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary (raised platform around the altar).
- Formal portraits with studio equipment such as screens, props, etc. are not to be used in the Church.
- Church furnishings are not to be moved for pictures.
- Flash photography may be taken during the processional and recessional only and not during the ceremony itself.
- The photographer is not allowed to stop or slow the procession (only from front of church and not in the aisle) or any other part of the liturgy.
- Photographers should be prepared to begin taking the formal pictures immediately after the wedding party leaves in the recessional. Pictures may be taken while the congregation departs.
- All photography is to be finished by 3:00pm, or 9pm (for late weddings).

- Family and friends typically want to take pictures during the wedding. To prevent situations that distract from the sacredness and dignity of the ceremony, please consider placing a sign at the door, a note in the program, or have the cantor request that guests avoid excessive picture taking.
- A photography agreement will be signed and returned by the photography/videography company prior to the ceremony.

Situations Requiring Special Attention

- Cohabiting couples present a serious concern for the Church. Cohabitation and sex before marriage are grave sins and contrary to the sacramental good of Marriage. Living together before marriage seriously compromises the teaching of the Church on the Sacrament of Marriage. It also can compromise the freedom of couples to enter Marriage; statistically, the divorce rate is higher among couples who lived together prior to their wedding. The decision to live together deliberately or inadvertently shows disregard for the sacred nature of the marriage vocation and covenant. Couples are encouraged to move out. If this is not possible they should at least sleep in separate bedrooms and abstain from sexual relations, receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and inform their family and friends of this change in lifestyle.
- Conceiving a child prior to marriage is another concern. If the pregnancy affects the timing of the marriage, the couple may undertake preparations in the usual manner. If the pregnancy affects the decision to marry, the couple may be asked to delay setting a date until it is established that both bride and groom are able to give full and free consent to the responsibilities and obligations of marriage.
- At least one party to a Catholic marriage must be a baptized Catholic. If there is a serious and compelling reason, a delay in marrying the couple may take place.
- An annulment is required for anyone who has been previously married. This applies to both Catholics and non-Catholics wanting to marry Catholics. If either one of you has been married before, please inform the priest or deacon at the first meeting. He will be able to explain the annulment process and will be ready to help you begin the application.

Honorariums

The Scioto Catholic Consortium Marriage Preparation Team warmly welcomes couples to receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. We do not want any couple to be inhibited by cost. There is a fee to rent the Consortium Hall. All other offerings are much appreciated, and are given by the couple, on a free-will basis.

Parish Priest

The stipend for the clergy is a free will gift made in view of the time and service the priest or deacon has provided in the preparation process. It is a gift to offer the member of the clergy \$200.00 for his assistance.

Church

While there is no requirement to make a payment to the church for use of the facility, it is always appreciated to make a gift to the parish. While any amount is welcome, the suggested donation is \$100. If you choose to write a check, please make it payable to "St. Mary Church".

Music

An offering of \$150 is encouraged for parish musicians.

****This price could change with the use of outside musicians or accompanists. Please work out the final pricing with your accompanist beforehand****

Altar Server(s)

It is encouraged to give \$20 per altar server.

Please present an Honorarium donation at the rehearsal

We have reviewed this document and agree to follow the policies contained in it.

Name of Bride _____

Address _____

City/State _____ **Zip Code** _____

Cell Phone/Home Phone _____

Parish of Registration _____

Signature _____

Name of Groom _____

Address _____

City/State _____ **Zip Code** _____

Cell Phone/Home Phone _____

Parish of Registration _____

Signature _____

Complete this page and return to:
Scioto Catholic Consortium
Attn: Marissa McCormick
514 Market Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662

or Scan and email this page to marissa@sciotocatholic.org

Please call (740)-354-4551 x 1004 or email the marriage prep coordinator to schedule an appointment.