



# ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH



## Official Wedding Policy Handbook

Instituted January 2014  
Updated: June 2016

Dear Friends:

Congratulations on your engagement!

We welcome your inquiry about receiving the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at St. Michael the Archangel Church. It is a privilege for us to assist you as you prepare for this Sacrament, and our parish community wants to support you as you grow together in God, who is Love Itself.

The Catholic Church esteems marriage as a sacred action, one of the Seven Sacraments instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Sacred Scripture compares marriage to the covenant relationship God has made with His People. St. Paul says that the union of husband and wife is a sign of the union between Christ and his Bride, the Church. Please realize that your marriage is a gift from God given to help you and your spouse attain holiness and, in turn, to inspire the members of this parish to holiness as well.

Church law permits the priests and deacons of St. Michael the Archangel Parish to witness the marriages of those who are parishioners. "Sons and daughters" of the Parish who - as adults - have since registered in another Catholic parish may, if their proper pastor grants permission, marry here if they choose to.

We are unable to allow marriages for parties who have no affiliation with St. Michael the Archangel Parish. However, requests from those with a personal connection to the parish through direct family history and/or as a school alum may be considered. All such cases shall be at the sole discretion of the Pastor. Please contact the office staff for information on requirements in these cases.

Marriage in the Catholic Church is a participation in the action of God, in which His Grace is given and marital duties and responsibilities are assumed by each partner. A Catholic marriage is not only to indicate that you intend to marry your spouse, but also that you desire God, through his Church, to bless and to participate actively in your union.

This booklet is designed to provide you with the basic information needed to plan your wedding at St. Michael the Archangel Parish. Please read it carefully.

We look forward to serving you as we share our Faith together on our mutual journey to holiness!

Sincerely in Christ,



The Reverend Anthony A. Dinovo, Jr., Pastor  
St. Michael the Archangel Parish

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT WEDDINGS AT ST. MICHAEL PARISH

St. Michael the Archangel Parish wishes to join with you in making your wedding day beautiful, memorable and above all, an expression of Faith. The policies and requirements in this booklet arise as a result of the many such celebrations the Parish has been part of over many years. The accumulated wisdom and practical experience give these policies value and help place them in the necessary context to protect the sacredness of the Sacrament of Matrimony. If your particular circumstances require accommodation outside these policies, you may request an exception from the Pastor. However, exceptions are given only in the rarest instances and for the most serious of reasons.

Those people who are registered, established, and active members of a Catholic parish and who share in the faith and moral teachings of the Church have the right to marry in the Church. The Church has the obligation to see that no one is married until each of the partners has been properly prepared for this Sacrament.

To qualify as *registered, established and active* members of the Parish, at least one of the parties must have had a real relationship with and presence in, our parish for at least six (6) months before being considered eligible to marry at St. Michael the Archangel Church. In practical terms, this means that either the bride or groom (or both) must be:

- Formally registered at St. Michael, that is included in the parish database
- Participating in the life of the Parish by fulfilling their obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation;
- Fulfilling their obligation to support the Church and evidencing that attendance by traceable financial contributions.

Young adults over the age of majority are expected to register at their parish as individuals apart from their families. Any young adult, however, who remains legally dependent on his/her parents is an exception to this expectation. Commonly, a young adult is legitimately maintained on a family registration record until completion of his or her undergraduate degree or equivalent.

Children (or grandchildren) of registered, established and active members, who may not themselves be registered at St. Michael the Archangel Parish, as well as former St. Michael School students, are welcome to marry here provided that the pastor of the Catholic parish to which the children belong gives the necessary permission. Inquire with the parish office staff for complete affiliation requirements.

### Days and times for Weddings

Weddings are celebrated typically at this Parish on Saturdays. Ceremonies are celebrated either at 11 am or at 1pm. Only one wedding will be scheduled on a Saturday to allow time for the celebration of Matrimony and the regular schedule of weekend services. Rehearsals are typically

held the Friday before the wedding between 5 and 7 pm. Weddings can also be scheduled for Friday evenings, but not during the Lenten Season. Friday evening weddings occur between 4 and 7 pm, with a rehearsal scheduled at a mutually convenient time for the officiating cleric and the intended spouses.

## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **Setting the Date of the Wedding**

A wedding date cannot be reserved definitively until the engaged couple has been interviewed in person by a priest or deacon from St. Michael the Archangel Parish. This initial meeting is for obtaining important information about both parties, and seeks to establish their freedom to marry according to the laws of the Catholic Church. The couple may also complete a mandatory pre-marriage inventory at this initial meeting. This meeting usually lasts about two hours.

Once the priest or deacon has clearly determined the freedom of the parties to enter marriage and the \$250.00 church use fee has been paid (See page 6, *Financial Considerations*), the date and time for the wedding will be definitively established. Once this has been done, the respective Priest or Deacon will share and review the Couple's Checklist." This listing will help guide the couple in completing all the necessary requirements for preparation.

The priest or deacon will meet with the couple over an extended period of time and address the preparation needs of those wishing to marry. Designed to prepare the specific couple to enter into Matrimony, these meetings are scheduled at mutually satisfactory times. The content of each session as well as the number of sessions are at the sole discretion of the cleric who prepares the couple. For this reason, Diocesan marriage policies require preparation to occur over a six (6) month period.

### **The Officiating Cleric**

The priest or deacon who presides at a wedding asks for and receives the consent of the parties, which establishes the marriage bond between them. Thus, the cleric assists those who are marrying in preparing for their role as ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Priests or deacons from St. Michael the Archangel Parish preside at marriages in the parish.

Usually the cleric who assists the parties in preparing them for the wedding will be the presider. Typically, deacons will prepare those who wish a Marriage Ceremony Outside Mass and will preside at that ceremony. Priests will usually prepare those who wish to be married at a Nuptial Mass, and the priest will celebrate that Eucharist.

The Pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish must approve any request for visiting clergy to preside at or assist in a marriage in the parish and provide proper delegation. It is the responsibility of the visiting cleric to follow parish guidelines and policies and to adhere to them. Visiting clergy must provide the Pastor with documentation of his good standing and his

faculties in his home diocese. The visiting cleric must be licensed in the State of Ohio to officiate at weddings. Information regarding licenses for clergy can be obtained from the Secretary of the State of Ohio.

### **Pre-Cana Programs**

All who marry in the Diocese of Columbus are required to attend and complete a Pre-Cana Program at a date that is no later than three (3) months prior to the scheduled date of the wedding. Couples may choose either an Engaged Encounter Weekend or the Pre-Cana Program scheduled and presented by the Marriage and Family Life Office of the Diocese. These programs are offered on a variety of different dates and locations. Upon completion of either program, participants receive a certificate of completion. This certificate must be given to the priest or deacon preparing the couple for marriage. The certificate is a necessary part of the marriage file for the parties.

### **The Wedding Liturgy**

The liturgy for marriage belongs to the Church, and neither the presider nor the couple has the authority to alter the prescribed Rite of Marriage. Containing matter and form specific to the Sacrament of Matrimony, the integrity of the Rite must be preserved.

The Rite of Marriage ordinarily occurs within the Mass when both parties are Catholic. When one of the parties is not Catholic, one of the Rites of Marriage Outside Mass is used. All Rites require the presence of either a priest or deacon and two (2) witnesses for proper canonical form. These official witnesses, better known as the Maid/Matron of Honor and the Best Man, need to be over the age of 14, and competent to understand the event they are witnessing. There is no requirement that these witnesses be Catholic.

To make your wedding liturgy more personal and special, you are encouraged to select family members or friends to participate in the liturgy. They may read Scripture, serve at the altar, be gift bearers, and/or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It is highly recommended that those doing Scripture readings be experienced in proclaiming the Word of God. Altar Servers are to be experienced in that role. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must have been instituted as such by their local bishop according to the procedures and policies of their home diocese. There are no prerequisites for being a gift bearer.

To ensure that the wedding liturgy you have planned proceeds in a dignified and appropriate manner, all those taking active roles in the wedding are expected to attend the wedding rehearsal.

For Masses, the use of Altar Servers is required. If you do not have particular Altar Servers in mind, St. Michael the Archangel Parish can –and typically does- provide Servers. One or two servers are customary for ceremonies outside of Mass, while three or four servers are customary for ceremonies with Mass. Servers are usually offered some cash compensation for their services.

For safety purposes, aisle runners are prohibited at St. Michael the Archangel Church. Because this symbol is not part of the Rite of Marriage, the Diocese of Columbus does not permit the use of Unity Candles in the Marriage Liturgy.

Long experience has proven that Flower Girls and Ring Bearers under the age of four (4) find fulfilling their roles difficult and distract from the solemnity of the occasion.  
No pets are permitted in Church.

### **Liturgical Music for the Wedding**

Wedding music is typically provided by the Music Director of St. Michael the Archangel Parish. Permission to import other musicians and/or soloists is at the sole discretion of the Music Director. As the expert for liturgical music in the Parish, the Director's decisions will be final. You will need to schedule a meeting with the Music Director at least two (2) months prior to your wedding date in order to choose and finalize the music.

Only sacred music is appropriate for liturgies. The Music Director is highly skilled and knowledgeable about the wide range of liturgical music that would enhance your wedding. While the range of sacred music is vast, it does not include pop, rock, or Broadway or cinema selections, for example. None of these are appropriate even before or after the liturgy.

### **Use of the Parish Facilities**

While your wedding liturgy is an important event for the Parish, it is often not the only liturgy of the day. We are unable to disturb the regularly scheduled Masses or Confessions for weddings. The following time frames are strictly observed.

For a wedding at 11 am, the Church and grounds will be ready for your use from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. For a wedding starting at 1:00 pm, you may use the Church from 11:30 to 2:30 pm.

Florists, photographers and /or videographers may not set up earlier or stay later. All floral arrangements, technical equipment and other paraphernalia must be removed and all areas cleared of personal belongings and trash by the end of your allotted time period.

Because they impinge on the time allotted for photographs after the ceremony, Guest Books and Receiving Lines are appropriate for the wedding reception and not at the Church.

Rice, birdseed, flower petals, or balloons are not permitted inside or outside the Church.

Use of Alcohol is not permitted on St. Michael property at any time before, during, or after the wedding ceremony.

### **Florists and Decorating**

Our Church is decorated according to and for liturgical seasons and notable days (e.g. Thanksgiving, Christmas). If you choose to add flowers, no more than three (3) flower arrangements are to be placed in the sanctuary. No flowers or decorations are to be placed on the Altar. Safety regulations prohibit the use of candelabra, lamps, and floral displays with candles. An agreement of understanding of these regulations from you and your florist is required to be delivered to the Parish Office one (1) month prior to the wedding day.

## **Photography**

We welcome photographers and/or videographers to take pictures and/or film during the ceremony. However, because a wedding is a time of worship, they are not permitted in the sanctuary during the wedding. Posing for pictures both before and after the ceremony is permitted, but only within the timeframes allotted. Because music is part of the liturgy, the choir loft is off limits for photography of any kind.

You and your photographer/videographer must provide an agreement of understanding of these regulations to the Parish Office one (1) month prior to the wedding day.

## **Ladies in Waiting**

Two volunteers from the parish will be assigned to help ensure that the wedding day goes smoothly. These “Ladies in Waiting” will assist at the rehearsal, especially in last minute details for the use of the Church facility, dressing rooms, and in coordinating with the priest or deacon officiating at the wedding. On the wedding day, they will assist with florists, photographers, turning lights on, and generally helping where needed or wanted. One of these “Ladies in Waiting” will contact you prior to the wedding to introduce herself and answer any questions.

## **Financial Considerations**

Because even churches have costs associated with them for utilities, maintenance and upkeep, a fee of \$250 is required to reserve the facility. This fee is due at the time the wedding date is definitively reserved. Please make this payable to St. Michael Parish.

The Catholic Church forbids any charge for the administration of sacraments. You are not required to give a fee to the priest or deacon who officiates at the ceremony. However, it is customary to offer a gift of appreciation for his time and efforts in preparing you for your wedding. Given the time involved, we respectfully suggest a stipend of \$250; however, the amount is really up to you. Please make these payable to the individual clergy member and not to the parish.

Fees for music and soloists are contracted with the Music Director and those who sing. Fees for musicians other than the organist are also independently contracted. Please make these payable to the individual musician(s) or soloist and not to the parish.

Stipends for the Altar Server(s) provided by the Parish is \$10 each and are usually paid in cash.

# St. Michael the Archangel Parish

## Policy Agreement of Couple to be Wed

We understand that to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Michael the Archangel Parish we must meet certain conditions and requirements. Accordingly, therefore, we claim, assert, and agree to the following:

1. At least one of us is a registered, established, and active member of the Parish, or has an acceptable affiliation to the parish as defined in this Marriage Policy.
2. We have read the Marriage Policy completely and thoroughly. We understand the policy and we understand that we must adhere to the policies and regulations contained therein in order to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Michael the Archangel Parish. We guarantee and will ensure that all those participating in and/or attending our wedding will also comply with these policies and regulations. We further understand that any failure to comply with, or any opposition to, these policies and regulations may result in the postponement or cancellation of the wedding at any time prior to the wedding's start. We accept that such a postponement or cancellation is entirely at the officiating cleric's discretion and properly within his ecclesiastical authority.
3. We will be active participants in our marriage preparation and formation process. We will complete all required programs, provide all required documents, apply for all ecclesiastical and civil permissions, and meet with the cleric preparing us as scheduled. We appreciate the fact that we are not only planning a wedding, but are, in actuality, preparing for a life-long and indissoluble marriage. Accordingly, we will not approach our preparation and formation as a "series of hoops to jump," but will, rather, enter into this process with honesty, sincerity, generosity of spirit, and openness of heart.
4. We know that both the officiating cleric (if not the Pastor) and the Pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish have the authority to enforce these policies and regulations. There are certain people who serve as agents or functionaries of the Pastor and the officiating clerics at weddings (e.g. the Music Director, Ladies in Waiting). WE will cooperate with all involved and will see that our families and friends cooperate as well. Both the officiating cleric and the Pastor each have the authority and right to cancel or postpone any wedding that attempts to deviate from these policies and regulations.
5. Inebriation, the odor of alcohol on one's breath, apparent abuse of other substances, and/or a hangover by either the prospective bride or groom on the day of the wedding will result in automatic postponement of the wedding. St. Michael church does not allow alcohol on the property at any time.
6. We agree to return the facilities used during the wedding to the same condition they were when the wedding party arrived. All boxes, excess flowers, bows, pew decorations, programs, dress/tuxedo storage bags, etc. will be disposed of properly prior to the wedding party leaving the premises on the day of the wedding.

Signature of Bride \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Groom \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## St. Michael the Archangel Parish

### Policy Agreement for Photographer and/or Videographer

1. For an 11am wedding on a Saturday, we may set up our equipment starting at 9:30 am. For a 1 pm wedding, we may set up starting at 11:30pm. Times for Friday evening weddings must be arranged with the officiant. We will not and may not set up any earlier than these stated times without the expressed permission of the officiating priest or deacon, or their agents. We understand that these constraints are dictated solely by the church's schedule on the day of the wedding.
2. All equipment must be removed, and all areas cleaned up and cleared up by the end of the allotted time period (by 12:30pm for the 11am ceremony, or by 2:30pm for the 1pm ceremony, one half hour after the Friday evening wedding). Again, we understand that these constraints are dictated solely by the church's schedule on the day of the wedding. We know that the officiating priest or deacon can give additional time if it is available.
3. Photographers and/or videographers – professional and amateur - are welcome to take pictures and/or film during the ceremony, however not in the sanctuary. Certain directives and sensibilities must be honored, however.
4. The church is not itself a studio, but a sacred place in which a community of believers celebrates common worship. Photographers/videographers will respect the formal character of the church, and do nothing which will interfere with the integrity of the Mass or the Rite of Marriage.
5. Photographers/videographers will not move church furniture or alter the existing church set-up. We will place nothing on the Altar.
6. Posing for pictures before and after the wedding is permitted, but only within the narrow windows of time noted above. The wedding will begin promptly as scheduled, and will not be delayed to accommodate photographers/videographers.
7. Photographers/videographers will not enter the sanctuary or the ante-chamber leading to it. Photographers/videographers will not photograph or film from the church's center aisle. Photography of any kind is prohibited from the choir loft.
8. Pictures or portraits augmented or staged with studio equipment, props, etc. will not be done at the church, but instead be taken at another venue.
9. Flash photography will be used only during the Processional and Recessional. Flash photography is not to be used during the ceremony itself.
10. Photographers/videographers are in no way to delay, stop, or otherwise impede the progress or movement of the Mass or of the Rite of Marriage.
11. No photographs or videotapes are permitted in the Adoration Chapel.
12. St. Michael the Archangel Parish or any of its agents cannot be responsible for items left on premises.

Business Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Representative (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Representative (Sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bride/ Groom \_\_\_\_\_

## St. Michael the Archangel Parish

### Policy Agreement for Florist

For an 11 am Saturday wedding, florists may decorate and arrange flowers starting at 9:30 am. For a 1 pm Saturday wedding, florists may begin at 11:30 pm. Florists may not set up any earlier than these stated times unless the officiating cleric or agent of the parish has given expressed permission. Set up times for Friday evening weddings are arranged with the cleric or agent of the parish. We understand that these constraints are dictated solely by the church's schedule on the day of the wedding.

All floral arrangements and decorations must be removed, and all areas cleaned up and cleared up by the end of the allotted time periods (by 12:30 for the 11 am wedding; by 2:30 for the 1pm wedding, or by one half hour after a Friday evening wedding). Again, we understand that these constraints are dictated by the church's schedule on the day of the wedding. We know that the officiating clergy or his agent will give more time if it is available.

Our church is decorated according to and for liturgical seasons and notable holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas). If you choose to add flowers, no more than three (3) flower arrangements are to be placed in the sanctuary. No decorations or flowers are to be placed on the Altar. For safety reasons, the use of candelabra, lamps, and floral displays with candles are prohibited.

We will not move church furniture or alter the existing church set-up. We will place nothing on the Altar.

Adornments for pews will not be attached by tape, tacks, glue, etc. that may damage the wood.

No floral arches, trees, sculptures, or aisle runners are permitted. This list of prohibitions is not exhaustive; St. Michael Parish reserves the right to prohibit any decorations that diminish or conflict with the aesthetics of and reverence due the sacred space of the church.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish or any of its agents cannot be held responsible for items left on its premises.

Business Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Representative (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Representative  
(Sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bride/ Groom \_\_\_\_\_