

*“Holy Father, you created humankind in your own image and made man and woman to be joined as husband and wife in union of body and heart and so fulfill their mission in this world...Father, grant that as they come together to your table of earth, so they may one day have the joy of sharing your feast in heaven.”*

- From the Nuptial Blessing in the Rite of Marriage

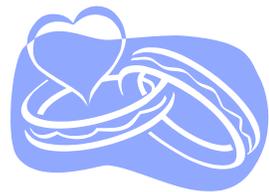
## **Congratulations on your Engagement!**

On behalf of the Staff and Parishioners of St. John Vianney, we extend our prayerful support for both of you as you begin your life together. Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church and is a special encounter between Christ and the bride and groom. The covenant between the bride and groom mirrors the sacred covenant between God and us. Therefore, a couple deserves thorough preparation before entering into this holy union that is both sacramental and a lifelong commitment to one another.

The staff of St. John Vianney commits itself to quality marriage preparation for each and every couple that approaches the church to receive the sacrament of marriage.

Enclosed in this packet are various handouts that will help you plan for your upcoming marriage:

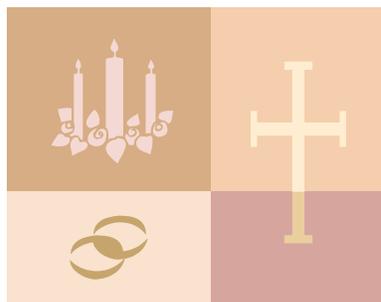
- ‡ Components of Catholic Marriage Preparation
- ‡ Definition of the Sacrament of Marriage
- ‡ Required Documentation for Marriage
- ‡ Guidelines for Marriage Ceremony
- ‡ Readings
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- ‡ Photographer/Videographer Information
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- ‡ An article on Marriage & Married Life
- ‡ Information of Pre-Cana Program
- ‡ Party Center Information



## Components of Catholic Marriage Preparation

There are several important components of marriage preparation that you both need to commit yourselves to that will assure that you both are ready for marriage. In general, preparation should begin at least 6 months prior to intended wedding date:

- ‡ **Active Faith Life:** Regular Mass attendance, registration in a parish, and reception of the sacraments on a regular basis constitute an active faith life for the baptized Catholic.
- ‡ **Prayer:** You should continue to pray together throughout the entire process. Many important decisions will be made during the process that would call for prayer.
- ‡ **FOCCUS:** FOCCUS is a 156 question agree/disagree statement survey that measures various areas of married life (i.e., Religion, Communication, Sexuality, etc.). There are no right or wrong answers; the survey compares and contrasts the answers of each person and thus allows for observations for future growth.
- ‡ **Meeting with the Priest:** The majority of the marriage preparation will be done with the priest who is witnessing the marriage. Each priest sets his own appointments and determines the number of meetings to best meet the needs of both of you.
- ‡ **Pre-Cana Day:** The Pre-Cana Day is a retreat/workshop experience for engaged couples. It is planned and facilitated by married couples of the parish. St. John Vianney has a Pre-Cana day in March and September. However, you are free to attend one at any Catholic Church to meet your own personal scheduling needs. There are also Engaged Encounter weekends available. A brochure on these weekends is enclosed in this marriage packet.



## **The Sacrament of Marriage**

A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Sacraments are also personal encounters with Jesus Christ. Every Sacrament brings us into contact with the saving activity of the Lord. The Sacrament of Marriage is a Sacrament of Vocation, a way of life that people choose to live.

The ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage are the bride and groom. When they exchange wedding vows, they share in the life of Christ that they received in baptism. They become one on their journey to eternal life with God.

In the consent and wedding vows, the couple agrees to unconditional love of one another, an exclusive life-long union to one another, and openness to children and raising children in the ways of Christ and His Church.

Christ is the center of Christian marriage. Therefore, you should review your relationship with Christ and your willingness to abide by the faith that His Church professes.

Couples of different faith backgrounds need to honestly communicate where they are in each of their faiths and come to a mutual understanding and common way to express their faith as one.



## Required Documents

It is the responsibility of the couple to provide the following documentation before the wedding date:

**Sacramental Records:** Catholic parties are to obtain a baptismal certificate. These certificates may be obtained from the church in which baptism was celebrated. The documents are to be dated within the last six months of giving them to the priest. Others who are baptized should try to obtain a baptismal certificate from their Christian denomination and/or church.

**Previous Marriages:** If a person has been married before it is necessary to provide the following:

- Death Certificate of Former Spouse (if a widow or widower)
- Declaration of Nullity (record of annulment)

**Civil Marriage License:** It is necessary to obtain a civil license within sixty (60) days of the wedding date. It is obtained at the probate court of the county in which the couple resides.

For Lake County: LAKE COUNTY PROBATE COURT  
47 North Park Place  
Painesville  
(Annex behind the Courthouse)  
440.350.2784  
Monday – Friday, 7:30am – 5:00pm

Please submit the license to the priest, no later than the Rehearsal. The Rehearsal cannot take place without the License.



## **Guidelines for Marriage Ceremonies**

### **1. Setting the Date and Time of Marriage**

Marriages may be on any day except Sunday, Civil Holidays and certain major feasts. Marriages are strongly discouraged during the season of Lent. In general, weddings are held on Fridays or Saturdays. On Fridays, the time is flexible. On Saturday, the Wedding times are 11am or 1pm.

### **2. The Wedding Mass**

The Sacrament of Marriage between two Catholics should take place at Wedding Mass. In certain cases, the priest, bride and groom may decide to have the marriage outside of Mass. The marriage involving a Catholic and a member of another faith tradition will take place at Mass, only if requested by both parties. Otherwise, it will be a Liturgy of the Word Service with the Rite of Marriage.

### **3. Place of Marriage**

Marriage should take place in the parish church of the bride or groom. In some cases the marriage may take place in the Church of the non-Catholic person. However, the marriage must take place in a sacred setting (i.e., one set aside explicitly for divine worship).

### **4. Witnesses for Marriage**

There needs to be two official witnesses for the Sacrament of Marriage. Generally, these are the best man and maid/matron of honor.

## **5. Bridal Party**

The Bridal party gives witness and support to the bride and groom on the day of the wedding. The couple should consider the bridal party in terms of a reasonable size. A large bridal party can be a bit overwhelming when it comes to the procession and liturgical movement during the ceremony. A ring bearer and flower girl are fine. However, be careful to choose children who will be comfortable coming down the aisle and sitting with the bridal party during the ceremony.

## **6. Music**

Barb Visocky Adams (255.0600), our Parish Music Director will coordinate the music for your wedding. She can arrange for a variety of musical instruments and vocalists. You are welcome to bring in your own musicians, but please coordinate this through Barb. She will be glad to help you in the overall planning of your liturgy. Music must always be church music. Secular music is not allowed during the liturgy, nor is pre-recorded music.

## **7. Planning the Wedding Mass**

For your wedding liturgy, the enclosed sheets contain the various Scripture readings for the Wedding Mass. You should spend time prayerfully choosing the readings which you wish to have on the day of your wedding. You will need to choose people to proclaim the scripture readings and general intercessions. Please choose someone who is comfortable with public speaking. Both the priest and music director will be more than willing to assist you in planning for your Wedding Mass.

## **8. Wedding Banns**

Wedding Banns are normally posted in the Parish *Bulletin* for those couples who are getting married at St John Vianney Church. If a couple would like the banns to be posted in another church, it will be their responsibility to call that church.

## **9. Flowers**

Floral arrangements for the church are provided by the bride and groom. You may want to inquire if there are any other weddings on the day of your wedding so the cost of the floral arrangements could be shared with the other bridal party. Floral arrangements should be tasteful and not distracting from the altar, ambo, and presider's chair.

## **10. Unity Candle**

The Unity Candle is not actually part of the Wedding Mass Rite. It is preferred that there is no Unity Candle at the Wedding Mass. It would be appropriate to have at the reception and incorporated into the prayer before the meal at the reception.

## **11. Balloons, Birdseed, Confetti, or Rice**

For environmental, maintenance, and insurance reasons, birdseed, confetti, or rice are NOT to be thrown at the bride and groom as they depart from the church, nor are balloons to be released. Bubbles or bells MAY be used.

## **12. Aisle Runner, Flower Petals, And Ring Pillow**

It is preferable that an aisle runner not be used. Our tile floor is not conducive to the runner and can become quite hazardous. When it is used, it is furnished and installed by the bride and groom. The approximate length of the aisle is 75 feet. Scattering flower petals in the aisle is allowed if they are SILK PETALS and you arrange for someone to clean them up. The rings are to be carried by the best man in his pocket. They should not be attached to the Ring Bearer's pillow.

## **13. Programs**

If you have prepared programs for your guests, please designate someone to distribute them and also gather those left in the pews after the service. Please show the program to the priest before it is printed. Copyright laws must be respected.

#### **14. Bridal Room & Groom Room**

A Bridal Room (with private restroom) is off the gathering area and is available for the bride to get ready before the Mass. Please designate someone to clean up the room after the wedding. The Groom's Room (with private restroom) is off the hallway between the old church and new church. It is the "Usher's Room."

#### **15. Prayer at Mary's Shrine**

St John Vianney has a statue of the Holy Family. You may choose to ceremonially visit the statue after the Mass has concluded, prior to the recessional. Flowers may be left at the statue.

#### **16. Rehearsal**

The rehearsal for your wedding ceremony is usually scheduled for the evening before the wedding. The rehearsal will take about 45 minutes. The wedding and rehearsal are in church and we expect appropriate behavior by all present.

#### **17. Altar Servers**

Altar Servers can be provided by St John Vianney Church or you can provide your own. There is a fee for the server that goes directly to them.

#### **18. Dignity of Wedding Ceremony**

The Catholic Wedding Ceremony or Mass must be done in a dignified manner that is respectful to the space (the Church) that it is being celebrated in. Things such as animals, wagons, tricycles and other such things cannot be used. Please always consult with the priest you are working with about each detail of your ceremony as to allow for the most beautiful and prayerful Wedding possible.

## FEES

There are several financial responsibilities required as you make your arrangements for your wedding:

**Altar Servers** (normally 2).....\$10.00each

**Music for Liturgy**.....Music Director will discuss fee

**Donation to Parish:** If you or your family regularly supports the parish with your time, talent, and donations in the weekly collection envelopes, there is no fee for the use of the church. However, if you or your family has not supported the parish in the past with your financial contributions, it is expected that you make a donation of **\$150** to offset the expenses associated with the building and maintaining of the new church.

**Priest:** There is no fee for the priest, however you may wish to make a donation to him.

## **ST. JOHN VIANNEY PRE-CANA DAY**

The St. John Vianney Pre-Cana Day is held twice a year, once a year in early March and then again in late September. The day is held on a Saturday from 9:00 am until approximately 7:00 pm. The couple is required to attend the entire day. There is a charge to cover materials and food. Coffee, doughnuts, lunch, dinner and snacks are provided.

The day is very informal (couples are told to dress in jeans, or whatever they are comfortable in). Team couples, who volunteer their time, present a series of talks based on their own life experiences. The couples are then given time alone to discuss the various topics presented. Also during the day the couples participate in various activities designed to get them in touch with their priorities, beliefs, and shared values.

Registration Forms are sent to all couples being married at St. John Vianney about two months in advance.

**St. John Vianney Church  
Photography & Videography  
Guidelines for Weddings:**

Photographers and Videographers are welcome at St. John Vianney Church; we simply ask you to respect the following guidelines:

1. The preliminary pictures should be taken in a place other than the church. The time before the wedding, at the church, is a time for the bride and groom to spiritually and emotionally prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.
2. Please be as inconspicuous as possible. Please do not enter the Sanctuary area at any time. (This includes the procession, vows, and the exchange of rings.)
3. The use of flashes and lights is permitted as long as they do not distract those who have gathered for liturgy.
4. Pictures are permitted following the liturgy. Please consult with the priest as to the length of time that the church may be used for pictures. The length of time will depend on what else is going on in the church that day and is **generally no longer than 15 minutes.**
5. Please control the noise level of the bridal party for post-liturgu pictures. Please remind them they are still in a sacred place reserved for the worship of God.
6. Please do not move any of the church furnishings for pictures!
7. Please arrive early enough to the ceremony to clarify any questions you may have of the priest about these guidelines.
8. Outdoor pictures may be possible in the Gazebo and Shrine areas, weather and scheduling permitting.

These guidelines have been established by the parish staff so that wedding liturgy may be as prayerful as possible. We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines.