

Our Lady of Consolation Church

Parkesburg, Pa.

Guidelines for the Sacrament of Matrimony



“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.”

~ John 15:12

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As You Prepare to Marry

With prayerful best wishes, the Parish community of Our Lady of Consolation congratulates you both on your engagement. Your decision to pledge yourselves to one another is one of the most important you will make. In so doing, you are promising yourselves freely, faithfully, totally, and fruitfully (with an openness to life) in a life of love and service in the Sacrament of Matrimony. This commitment is one you pledge to each other for the rest of your lives. You will become for each other, for your children, and for the community a sign of God's love for His Church. In accepting this tremendous responsibility, you witness the great trust, confidence, and love you have in and for each other.

Since you are asking the Church to witness your marriage vows, you are also giving a strong sign of your faith and your willingness to accept what the Church teaches about marriage.

TO SECURE A DATE FOR YOUR WEDDING DATE AND TIME

Please contact the Pastor at the Parish Rectory to set an appointment to meet with him to plan your wedding and confirm the availability of the date, time, and church location you desire. Weddings are held either at Our Lady of Consolation Church in Parkesburg, PA or St. Malachi's Chapel in Cochranville (Doe Run), PA. To best ensure the availability of your desired date, time, and church location, please contact the parish *at least one year prior to your proposed wedding date or no less than six months prior to your proposed date*. Also, **please be sure to check that the date/time/location you want is available at the church BEFORE making arrangements for your reception**. Weddings are usually scheduled for Fridays, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Saturdays between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Due to Confessions and the 5:00 PM Vigil Mass, we cannot schedule weddings later than 1:30 PM. Other days and times may be scheduled for *exceptional reasons*. **WE DO NOT SCHEDULE WEDDINGS ON SATURDAY EVENINGS OR SUNDAYS**. The demand for open dates is such that we must have appropriate records for each wedding scheduled. **We do not reserve wedding dates over the phone. You must meet with the Pastor before the date and time can be written in the Parish Mass Book**. It is imperative that all couples desiring to be married at Our Lady of Consolation/St. Malachi make the following arrangements for marriage preparation in order to secure a date.

REHEARSAL TIME

The time of the rehearsal is usually 6:00 PM on the Thursday or Friday evening before your wedding. The Pastor or Deacon will conduct your rehearsal. If you have a visiting Priest or Deacon presiding at your wedding, it is customary that he conduct the rehearsal. Please check with him to confirm his availability to participate in the rehearsal. All weddings at Our Lady of Consolation/St. Malachi will be celebrated according to the approved rites and liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church, *without exception*.

A complete marriage preparation includes the following, as required for all weddings held at Our Lady of Consolation Church/St. Malachi Chapel:

MEETING WITH PRIEST

During the months leading up to your wedding, you will be required to meet with the Pastor several times in order that he may assist you in your marriage preparation. You will be able to make appointments with him for these meetings as you continue through your preparation.

PRE-CANA PROGRAM

The Pre-Cana Program is a Catholic marriage preparation program for engaged couples throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Trained married couples offer presentations during the course of this program. It is highly recommended you attend this course as soon as possible, since these programs fill quickly. Our Lady of Consolation Parish does offer a Pre-Cana Program and you can sign up through the Parish Rectory office or when you meet with the Pastor. A couple

from our Parish will be in touch with you and work with you one-on-one as a mentoring couple throughout the time of your marriage prep. If you are unable to attend our Parish Pre-Cana class, the Archdiocese offers a variety of dates and locations for Pre-Cana programs throughout the year. For more information on other Pre-Cana opportunities, please contact the Family Life Office at 215-587-5639 or visit their webpage at:

http://archphila.org/evangelization/famlife/marriage_prep/marriage.htm. If you are registered with another parish or you live outside of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, please check with your local parish/diocese for Pre-Cana opportunities.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS In order to be married in the Catholic Church, it is necessary that at least one of the persons be a baptized Catholic. Therefore, the following documents are required:

1) PROOF OF BAPTISM

If you were baptized at Our Lady of Consolation Church or St. Malachi Chapel, you should notify the Pastor of this. If you were baptized in another Parish, you must obtain *a current copy of your baptismal certificate*, dated no more than 6 months from the date of your wedding. To obtain a baptism certificate from the parish in which you were baptized, you will need to contact that parish and request from them a current baptismal certificate. You will need to provide your name, your birth date, your father's full name, and your mother's name with her maiden name, as well as the names of your godparents. They will ask you for your current address so they can mail it to you, or if you are able, you can request to pick it up in person. If you were baptized in another Christian religion, you will need to provide a copy of your Baptismal certificate. This is needed so the priest can apply to the Archdiocese for a Permission for Mixed Marriage. If you were never baptized or have no way of proving your baptism, please tell the priest. He will need to obtain a special dispensation from the Archdiocese for this.

2) LETTER OF FREEDOM AND PERMISSION TO MARRY

It is necessary that a person be free to marry, that is, never married before. Although you may have never been married before, your freedom to marry must be documented. **If either of you has been married before, in any type of ceremony, whether religious or civil, please make this known to the priest immediately.** Whether or not it was a sacramental and valid marriage will be determined. If you are not a member of Our Lady of Consolation Parish, you will need a letter from your Pastor stating that you are free to marry and that you have permission to be married at Our Lady of Consolation Church/St. Malachi Chapel. If neither of you are parishioners, you will need to have testimony from 2 witnesses for each of you about your freedom to marry. An appointment will need to be made for them to be interviewed by the priest.

3) MARRIAGE LICENSE

The State of Pennsylvania requires all couples planning to marry in Pennsylvania to obtain a valid, Pennsylvania Marriage License at a maximum of 60 days before the date of your wedding. You can obtain a marriage license at any PA courthouse and contacting the courthouse beforehand may be helpful in answering any questions you may have. It is recommended you obtain your license about 4 weeks prior to your wedding date to ensure you have it in a timely manner.

4) OTHER DOCUMENTS

If either of you have been married previously, you will need to bring original copies of your divorce decree(s). The priest handling your paperwork will make copies of the original(s) to keep on file. He will also determine if a Declaration of Nullity, Lack of form or a full Annulment process through the Archdiocesan Tribunal is required. If either of you are under the age of 18 years, you will need to have written consent from your parents or legal guardian(s) to marry.

Liturgy

NUPTIAL MASS or NUPTIAL CEREMONY: The type of liturgy best for you and your guests should be discussed with the priest. The Nuptial Mass is appropriate for two Catholics who are marrying. The Nuptial Ceremony is appropriate for couples of mixed religions or non-practicing Catholics, since it does not involve the reception of Holy Communion. **PLEASE NOTE:** If one of the parties marrying is either a non-baptized person or a former Catholic, ***you may only opt for the Nuptial Ceremony.*** In addition, only those who are practicing Catholics and properly prepared to do so, may receive Holy Communion. Celebrating the Sacrament of Confession before your wedding day is highly recommended.

VISITING PRIEST/DEACON: If you have a family member or friend who is a Roman Catholic Priest or Deacon in good standing with his diocese or religious community, and you would like him to witness your marriage, he is more than welcome to do so. Ordinarily, you will still make all the arrangements and complete the necessary paperwork with the Pastor of Our Lady of Consolation Parish. Please provide the name and phone number of the visiting priest or deacon. He must contact the Pastor to receive delegation from him. He is also to provide a letter in good standing from his diocese or religious community if he is not from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Please inform the priest/deacon that he should also be responsible for the rehearsal if possible. *Please note:* A deacon may only preside if your celebration is a Nuptial Ceremony. Only a priest may preside at a Nuptial Mass.

SELECTION OF READINGS AND PRAYERS: When you make an appointment to meet with the Pastor, he will give you a book entitled, *Together for Life*. This book will assist you in planning your wedding ceremony or Mass and contains all of the readings, prayer options, and other details for the celebration. You are encouraged to spend time as a couple deciding which readings, prayers, and options for your vows, etc., that speak most to you personally as a couple and are most meaningful for your wedding liturgy. Please complete the liturgy planning worksheet in the back of the *Together for Life Book* and bring this with you, filled out, when you have your last meeting with the priest or deacon. It is preferred that those proclaiming the readings at your wedding liturgy be a practicing Catholic. They will have the opportunity to practice the readings at your rehearsal.

MUSIC: Music is a very important part of your wedding ceremony or Mass. You are encouraged to contact the OLC Music Director, Janeen Walker, as soon as possible after planning your wedding date with the Pastor, to discuss music selections for the liturgy. Janeen may be reached at (717) 799-3877 or walkfam18@gmail.com.

At this time, **please inform her of the date and time of both your rehearsal and wedding.** As Parish Music Director, she will help you in choosing music selections that are appropriate for a Catholic wedding. All music must be approved by Janeen and she will discuss these options with the bride and groom **ONLY**. No other parties are to be involved when planning music and liturgical options other than the bride and groom.

Music for your wedding Mass or Ceremony **MUST BE CHURCH APPROVED LITURGICAL SACRED MUSIC ONLY. NO SECULAR MUSIC MAY BE USED IN LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS. THE MUSIC DIRECTOR WILL ASSIST YOU WITH AND APPROVE YOUR MUSICAL SELECTIONS.** Also, the Bridal March (“Here Comes the Bride”) is not permitted in the wedding liturgy as per church policy.

Finalizing music selections for your wedding must be completed **no later than 2 weeks prior to your wedding date.** **The fee for the OLC Music Director is \$350 and OLC Accompanist is \$300. It is to be paid within 2 to 4 weeks of your wedding date.** Our in-house keyboard accompanist gets first right of refusal for playing at the wedding. If desired, the fee for any other Parish musicians is \$300 in addition. All music fees should be dropped off at the Rectory no later than 2 weeks prior to your wedding date. ***OUTSIDE CANTORS/MUSICIANS NOT FROM THE OLC PARISH CAN BE ACCOMODATED, BUT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE MUSIC DIRECTOR. IF APPROVED, THE REGULAR \$350 FEE MUST STILL BE PAID TO THE MUSIC DIRECTOR.***

CONFESSION: It is highly recommended you both (or the Catholic party) celebrate the Sacrament of Penance before your wedding day. Please speak to the Pastor or priest handling your wedding paperwork about this. You may make an appointment to go to Confession to him or another priest of your choice during the week before your wedding or when Confessions are regularly scheduled at OLC on Saturday afternoons from 3:30 - 4:30 PM.

PICTURES/VIDEO: Photos and videos are welcome during and after the service. Flash photography is permitted as appropriate. However, it is assumed the photographers will not interfere with the celebration of the Liturgy. Photographers/videographers are NOT permitted in the Sanctuary area (the area where the altar is), nor are they permitted to set up any equipment there. Also, absolutely **NO FLYING DRONE** cameras are permitted in church. Should you require pictures after the celebration, kindly keep within the timeframe allotted to your wedding due to the church's regular schedule.

CHURCH FEE: The donation for the use of the church is **\$400 for members of Our Lady of Consolation Parish**. If you are not a member of Our Lady of Consolation Parish, the donation is **\$550 for Our Lady of Consolation Church and \$1,800 for St. Malachi Chapel**. This offering **does not** include payments to musicians, florists, photographers, printers, any personal gift you would like to give to the priest or deacon officiating at your wedding, or other fees. These are to be arranged separately. The church fee should be given to the Pastor during your last meeting with him, **no more than 2 to 4 weeks before your wedding**.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

BEST MAN/MAID OR MATRON OF HONOR: The Best Man and Maid or Matron of Honor do not need to be Catholic, but must be at least 16 years of age. They serve as the witnesses of your marriage along with the priest or deacon officiating your wedding and their names are entered into the Parish Marriage Register.

FLOWERS: These are welcome and are greatly appreciated should you decide they remain in the sanctuary for Sunday celebration of Masses. Should your florist have any questions, please have him/her contact our office. If you are planning your wedding during Advent (4 weeks before Christmas) or during Lent (6 weeks prior to Easter), floral arrangements should be kept to a minimum in keeping with the seasonal themes of preparation and penance. It is up to you to contact the florist of your choice to select flowers. Please inform your florist it is preferred that the arrangements be delivered to the church location of your wedding the day of your wedding. It is your responsibility to work this out with your florist. The clergy and parish staff are not responsible for arranging, paying for, or delivering your floral arrangements.

PEW BOWS/DECORATIONS: These may be used on the pews, but only if they are tied on, clipped on, or attached in some other manner than using tape or other adhesives, or tacks or nails, which damage the surface of the wood pews.

FLOOR RUNNERS, RICE, FLOWER PETALS, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI ARE NOT PERMITTED: They are a safety hazard for the bridal party and guests, as well as creating clutter that needs to be cleaned up for other church celebrations, such as Sunday Masses. Please note, the "custom of throwing rice has its origin in pagan fertility rites that are contrary to our Catholic beliefs."

RECEIVING LINE: The proper setting for a receiving line is the site of your reception, not at the church. Keeping in mind the Parish's schedule of Confessions and Masses, and your time for pictures after the wedding, a receiving line would significantly cut into this allotted time.

UNITY CANDLES: These are not permitted in church. The Archdiocese has clearly stated in its marriage policies that a unity candle is forbidden at Nuptial Liturgies. They are not part of the Ceremony or Mass and do not have roots in our liturgical practices. The Christian symbol of Matrimony is the wedding ring. If you so desire, a unity candle may be used at your reception.

BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES, BUBBLES, BALOONS: If you want to release birds, butterflies, bubbles, or balloons, you may do so but **ONLY** outside of the church after the wedding has concluded.

Other Important Points

ALCOHOL & DRUGS: Drinking of alcoholic beverages or partaking in illegal substances before your wedding, whether on the way to, in front of, in the church, or on the church property/parking lot before or during the wedding celebration is **NOT** permitted. If either the bride or groom is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol before the ceremony begins, the wedding will **NOT** take place that day. Wedding party members are also prohibited from these activities as well.

PUNCTUALITY: Please be respectful of the commitment of time we have agreed upon. Keeping your family, guests, paid musicians, and the priest or deacon waiting is not fashionable and is inconsiderate. You should be ready to walk down the aisle at the time listed on your invitation. Please remember that there are parish liturgies scheduled after your wedding and your lateness will inconvenience them as well. Extreme lateness will result in your liturgy being shortened considerably to allow other parish liturgies to begin on time.

A Final Word

As you prepare for your marriage, remember this is not only a part of your personal journey, but a part of your journey of faith. As baptized disciples of Jesus, Christian Matrimony is a vocation, a calling to support one another in a unique way in your relationship with one another and with Christ. Christ Himself raised the Marriage Covenant to the dignity of a Sacrament. The vocation of Christian Matrimony calls spouses to witness the love of Christ for His Church to the world and to participate in God's creation through the rearing and forming of children in the faith. As members of the Body of Christ, the Church, our Parish clergy, staff, and Pre-Cana Couples are here to support you spiritually during this time of preparation for your marriage. If you have any questions or feel the Lord calling you to deepen your faith during this time, we are praying for you and we are here to walk with you on your journey of faith.

Catholics preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony are encouraged to pray for and with one another, to attend Mass regularly, and to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance by going to Confession prior to your wedding day. Please talk to our Pastor or the priest assisting you in your marriage prep about setting a time to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession before your wedding day.

