

Saint Cecilia Catholic Church
Columbus, Ohio
Wedding Guidelines

Are you planning to marry? We want to help you find holiness through God's plan for you!

This guide is only for couples who wish to marry. We do not respond to requests for information from relatives, friends, or wedding planners.

What is Marriage?

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament. Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1601.

Marriage is part of God's plan, built into the nature of the human race by its Creator. Christian marriage is part of God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. "Getting married in the Church" means agreeing with God's plan for marriage and desiring to seek holiness as Christ has taught us, within the Church that Christ established.

1. Who may marry at St. Cecilia?

At least one of the spouses must be a practicing Catholic who has been an *active* member of this parish for at least six months before contacting us about marriage. We do not accept enquiries about weddings from couples who have already fixed a date and booked a reception venue.

2. What is "Freedom to Marry?"

Before a date may be set and definite plans made, both spouses need to show that they are free to marry in the Catholic Church and that there are no impediments. Catholics must submit a baptism certificate, issued no more than six months ago, from the parish where they were baptized. Non-Catholic Christians must show proof of baptism.

3. What are "impediments?"

Anything that would prevent you from marrying in the Catholic Church. These include: Insufficient age, impotence, a previous marriage to someone who is still living, crime, kidnapping, and being closely related by blood or adoption.

If one party is Catholic and the other is not, the marriage may take place only after a dispensation is obtained from the local Bishop.

4. Have either of you ever been married before?

4.1. Yes, marriage ended by death. In this case, you will need to provide a copy of the death certificate of your deceased spouse.

4.2. Yes, marriage ended by divorce or dissolution. In this case, no marriage is possible unless and until the previous marriage/marriages is/are declared null and void by the Catholic Church, *even if the marriage did not take place in the Catholic Church*. You will need to discuss this with the parish priest to determine if you have grounds for asking for a decree of nullity (sometimes called an “annulment”).

5. When can we set a date?

Setting a date takes time. To avoid disappointment and expense, *never* reserve a reception venue before first contacting the parish and completing the required steps below. *We cannot answer questions about the availability of dates until the following steps have been completed.*

- In-person meeting with the priest or deacon
- All necessary documents received at the parish office: including baptism certificates and, if necessary, statements of witnesses who can testify that you are free to marry.
- In the case of a previous marriage, a declaration of nullity or death certificate.

6. Days and times for weddings

Weddings usually take place on Saturdays at 1pm. Friday afternoons/evenings are also possible. No weddings are scheduled on the first Friday and Saturday of the month, Holy Days of Obligation, Good Friday or Holy Saturday, the Friday and Saturday following Easter Sunday, or the Friday and Saturday between Christmas and New Year’s Day.

7. The Preparation

Preparation includes completion of a pre-marital inventory and in-person review with clergy, attending a Pre-Cana workshop, obtaining a marriage license (if you are not already legally married). Catholics should make a confession before marrying

7.1. Witnesses

The Catholic Church requires two witnesses for a wedding. They may be anyone over the age 16. The priest or deacon who prepares you for your

wedding will obtain these names from you in advance. Usually they are the best man and maid/matron of honor but may be others. They do not need to sign anything. The officiant will sign the marriage license and return it to the probate court.

8. The Ceremony and Rehearsal

8.1. Planning

In the Catholic Church, a wedding is a liturgical act. It is part of the prayer of the whole Church. Most of it has already been planned for us. What makes it “personal” is the unique people involved: the bride and groom. You do not need to “personalize” every detail of the wedding.

8.2. Music

After a date has been set by the parish, the couple will contact our Music Director to make an appointment. Our Director will provide a list of suggested musical pieces for the wedding, in accord with Church directives. Our Music Director serves as organist for all weddings and approves and supervises the participation of outside musicians. All music must be sacred music suitable for a liturgical celebration, and no recorded music is permitted.

8.3. Wedding Coordinator

After a date has been set, the couple will contact one of our parish wedding coordinators to discuss details of the ceremony and rehearsal.

8.4. Scripture readings

We invite the couple to select the Bible readings for their wedding, choosing from the options provided by the Church. We will give you a booklet with these options. You may also find them online [here](#). Please fill out the planning sheet included in the booklet and return to the wedding coordinator at least 1 month before the wedding date.

8.4.1. Lectors

A practicing Catholic who is a relative or friend may read one of the Scripture readings at the wedding. This should be someone who is old enough and experienced enough to read clearly and confidently. The parish can provide lectors as needed.

8.5. Decoration

Simple decorations may be used but are not required. A flower arrangement no more than 32” high may be placed in front of the altar. Normally, two flower arrangements placed on either side of the tabernacle are sufficient. Seasonal decorations and sanctuary furnishings may not be

moved or removed for a wedding ceremony. No decorations may be placed on the altar itself. You may choose to leave your flowers in the church or take them with you after the ceremony.

For safety reasons, the use of candelabra, lamps and floral displays with candles, aisle runners, rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons and/or bubbles is prohibited.

If decorations are placed on pews, doors or walls, they must be attached in a way that will not leave residue or marks. Ribbon, fabric, or plastic clips are most commonly used. No decorating may be done when Masses and confessions are scheduled.

All decorations and belongings must be taken out of the church immediately after the ceremony. Any items left in the church or the bride's dressing room after the ceremony will be discarded.

8.6. Bridesmaids, Groomsmen, Flower girls, Padrinos, etc.

Wedding customs vary from culture to culture and place to place. You should not feel obligated to live up to anyone else's expectations about the wedding ceremony. Preparing well for marriage by knowing and following God's plan is what matters.

Any children with a role in the ceremony must be at least 5 years old.

8.7. Servers

Three servers are needed for a wedding Mass, one for a ceremony that is not a Mass. The parish will schedule servers unless you have family members who are experienced servers.

8.8. Rehearsal

The parish wedding coordinator will be present at the rehearsal as well as the day of the wedding to help you rehearse the entrance procession and other details. Bring the marriage license to the rehearsal. A priest is usually available after the rehearsal to hear confessions.

8.9. The day of the wedding

The Saint Cecilia Room may be reserved for the bride and her attendants by contacting the Parish Office (614-878-5353). It is opened ninety (90) minutes prior to the time of the wedding ceremony. For security reasons, the wedding party is responsible for removing all belongings from the bride's dressing room prior to the ceremony. Due to limited space, the

groom and the groomsmen should come to the Church dressed in their wedding attire, and may gather in the Priest's Sacristy prior to the ceremony. Other than water, food and drinks are not permitted in the Saint Cecilia Room or Sacristy.

9. Photos and videos

Photographers are welcome to take photographs before and during the ceremony at Saint Cecilia. If you wish to take photos after the ceremony, they must be completed by 3:45pm on Saturdays. The photographer is to check with clergy at least thirty (30) minutes before the celebration to arrange for locations and final instructions.

The church does not have facilities for livestreaming.

10. Renting the Parish Center

The parish center may be rented for wedding receptions. For more information, contact the parish office.

11. Costs

Parish organist \$200

Parish cantor \$120

Parish wedding coordinator \$150

Servers: \$10 each

If other vocalists or instrumentalists are desired, additional fees will apply.

It is customary to offer a donation to the Priest or Deacon who officiates the wedding. There is no fixed fee. Most couples give \$100 – \$150.

All fees are due in the Parish Office two (2) weeks prior to the ceremony. The Parish Office is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.