

# **Marriage Preparation and Wedding Guidelines**



**St. Thomas More Newman Center**

The Roman Catholic Campus Ministry  
for The Ohio State University

# The Sacrament of Matrimony

Congratulations!

We are thankful that God has brought you together and that you are planning to be married in the Catholic Church. This brochure is offered to couples who are part of the St. Thomas More Newman Center and The Ohio State University community who are planning to have their wedding at St. Thomas More Newman Center.

Married couples live their sacrament of married love by the way they care for one another, love one another, and are enthusiastic for one another as husband and wife. In their daily love of each other, their children, and the larger community, a married couple becomes a living sign (a sacrament) of how much Jesus loves us and wishes to embrace us as His brothers and sisters. As they work their way through marital and family times of happiness as well as crises and struggles, they witness the power of the Holy Spirit at work in all our lives.

To assist you in your long range planning for this great event in your life, we offer these guidelines.

We look forward to walking with you on this new aspect of your journey of life and faith!

- The Staff of St. Thomas More Newman Center



# Marriage Guidelines

## Preliminary Planning

About **nine to twelve months** before the tentative wedding date, the engaged couple should arrange to meet with one of the priests on the Newman Center staff to begin formal preparation. This will allow sufficient time for preparation, not only for your wedding celebration, which will last a short time, but also for your marriage, which will last a lifetime. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, contact is to be made by the couple themselves.

The engaged couple is asked to make only tentative wedding arrangements. No firm date will be set until the application process (p. 4), which will be explained at your first meeting with one of the Newman Center priests, has been completed.

The marriage preparation process will be outlined in detail at the initial meeting with the priest, as well as any initial questions concerning the wedding itself (e.g., church, music, flowers). Guidelines on these aspects are provided in this booklet.

**You are welcome to invite another priest** to celebrate your wedding at the Newman Center. However, be advised that ordinarily, he is responsible for your instruction and must be in contact with a Newman Center priest at the beginning and at the conclusion of the preparation process.

**Non-Catholic ministers are welcome to participate** in the wedding ceremony at the Newman Center. The non-Catholic party may consult his or her minister about taking part in the ceremony. The name, address, and phone number of your minister should be given to the priest in order for them to preview the liturgy together.

**If you are planning to be married at the Newman Center, but live outside of the Columbus area,** you will need to do all of the necessary preparation and paperwork at the local Catholic parish in which you reside. The parish priest who is preparing you will need to send a letter to the priest on the Newman Center staff who will be officiating at your wedding stating:

1. that you have begun a marriage preparation process;
2. that permission is given for your wedding to take place at the Newman Center;
3. that all of the necessary paperwork and permissions will be sent at the appropriate time.

These items are critical parts of the application process. Upon completion of the application process (p. 4), you will receive a letter from the Newman Center that will confirm the date and time of your wedding and rehearsal.

**If your wedding is going to be at another Catholic church, with a priest from the Newman Center,** please check the guidelines for the parish church in which you want to be married. Under normal circumstances, the priest who will witness the wedding ceremony should assist you with the marriage preparation. You will need to make sure that:

1. the Newman Center priest is available and willing to travel to your home parish;
2. there is a clear understanding with the pastor of the church in which your wedding will take place that you have invited another priest to preside at your wedding;
3. you participate in all of the marriage preparation required at the Newman Center.

# Wedding Preparations

## The Application Process

At your first or second meeting with one of the Newman Center priests, you will be given a Wedding Application. This contains your contact information, the preferred date and time of the wedding, as well as the fees and deposits involved with having your wedding at the Newman Center. Until your wedding date and time has been confirmed, via a letter from the Newman Center office, please do not make any commitments regarding your wedding day. As you will see on the Wedding Application form, in the confirmation section it states "You will receive a confirmation letter once your application is approved and deposit received, verifying the time and date of your wedding on our schedule."

## Dates and Times

Weddings are celebrated on Saturdays at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Requests for other days and times must be discussed with the priest. Certain areas in the church building will be available to you for preparation (including pictures) **90 minutes** before the beginning of your ceremony.

**Weddings are not scheduled** on the following days:

- All Sundays including Easter
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
- Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday

A wedding at the Newman Center may not be scheduled on certain Saturdays when the Newman Center or The Ohio State University have already scheduled events that will impact the use of the building or the surrounding neighborhood (e.g., Penance Services, First Communions, OSU home football games). Please remember that your wedding date will not be confirmed until the wedding application process is complete.

**Lent:** While marriages are permitted to occur in Lent, the Catholic Church does not encourage the celebration of the sacrament of marriage during Lent because of the penitential nature of the season. If a wedding is scheduled during Lent, the couple must take this into account. Flowers are not permitted in the church and no other additions or changes to the worship space may be made during this time.

## **Requirements to be Married in the Catholic Church**

**Freedom to Marry** Both parties need to be free to marry under the law of the Catholic Church. If either of you has been married before, please tell the priest during your first meeting.

**A Formal Time of Marriage Preparation** While the diocese may recommend a minimum of six months, given the vagaries of schedules and dates of available programs, we strongly suggest that you plan on **nine to twelve months** for the time of preparation prior to your wedding. During this time you will meet with a priest on a regular basis, as well as participate in a Pre-Cana workshop.

**Proof of Baptism** Baptized Christians (Catholic and non-Catholic) must present proof of baptism to the priest. For Catholics, this is a certificate issued by the parish church in which the individual was baptized. This baptismal certificate, with notation of other sacraments received, must be issued within **six months** of the wedding date. For non-Catholic Christians, a copy of the certificate received when they were baptized or a letter from the church of baptism, verifying their baptism, will suffice.

**Pre-Cana Workshop** Participation in a Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Workshop is one of the requirements of the marriage preparation process. The Diocese of Columbus sponsors Pre-Cana workshops and the alternative Engaged Encounter Weekend at various times and locations. For more information, please contact the Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Office at (614) 241-2560 or visit their website: [familylife.colsdioc.org](http://familylife.colsdioc.org).

**Civil Requirements** In the United States, a civil marriage and church marriage can take place during the same ceremony. A civil license issued by the State of Ohio, or proof of civil marriage, is required for a member of the clergy to witness a marriage. The Ohio civil marriage license must be in the hands of the priest no later than the time of the rehearsal. Marriage licenses may be obtained as much as 60 days prior to the wedding date, but may take as long as five days to be issued. For more information, please contact the Franklin County Marriage License office at (614) 462-3898 or visit [www.franklincountyohio.gov/probate/departments/marriage](http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/probate/departments/marriage).

## **The Wedding Liturgy**

During the course of preparation for your marriage, you will have an opportunity to plan your wedding liturgy. The priest will work closely with you and advise you of the many options you have in selecting Scripture readings, prayers, blessings and vows.

## **The Rehearsal**

The rehearsal is usually scheduled on the Friday before the wedding at 6 p.m., unless otherwise scheduled by the priest. We urge you and your party to arrive on time. The rehearsal takes no longer than **60 minutes**. It is important that all who will play a significant part in the ceremony (e.g., members of the wedding party, parents, lectors, gift-bearers, ushers) be in attendance at the rehearsal.

## **Music**

The engaged couple must contact the Newman Center music minister, at least **eight weeks** prior to the ceremony to discuss music for their wedding celebration. Details concerning fees and choice of music can be taken care of at that time.

Music during the wedding should generally be sacred music or traditional wedding music. (p. 10)

## **Flowers and Photography**

Included in this booklet are guidelines on the taking of photographs (p. 12) and the placement of flowers and greens (p. 13). You are encouraged to donate your altar flowers to the Newman Center so the entire community may join in your celebration.

## Deposits and Fees

### **Wedding taking place at the Newman Center: \$650**

This fee includes the use of the worship space and preparation rooms for the ceremony, the priest's time during the required marriage preparation process, and custodial services.

### **Wedding at another church, with a priest from the Newman Center in attendance: \$250**

This fee includes the priest's time during the required marriage preparation process. This fee does not include any costs due to travel or overnight accommodations.

**Deposit: \$100 (non-refundable)**

**Balance: Due 60 days prior to wedding date**

*You have the right to a full refund of the fee set forth above (less deposit) if you cancel the reservation **two months** or more prior to the date of the event.*

*If cancellation takes place less than two months prior to the date of the event, the fee shall be forfeited. Please make checks payable to the Newman Center.*

The wedding fee does not include a gift to the priest. A personal gift to the priest presiding at the ceremony will be gratefully accepted. Although a \$50 gift is suggested, the amount is left to your discretion.

**Musicians: See page 10 for information**

## **Special Circumstances**

### **Pregnancy**

If the couple had not planned to marry, pregnancy, of itself, will not be considered sufficient reason to enter marriage or shorten the marriage preparation process.

### **Validation**

If the couple has entered a marriage contrary to the laws of the Catholic Church, a validation of the marriage is permitted after the couple has completed the appropriate preparation and paperwork. Please speak with one of the priests on the Newman Center staff for more information.

### **Previous Marriage**

Any previous marriage (Catholic or non-Catholic) is a potential obstacle to marriage in the Catholic Church. No date of marriage in the Catholic Church can be set until both parties are free to marry in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Please speak with a priest for more information.



# Ceremony Details

## Wedding Liturgy

During the course of preparation for your marriage, you will have an opportunity to plan your wedding liturgy. The priest will work closely with you and advise you of the many options you have in selecting Scripture readings, prayers, blessings and vows.

## Music

The Music Minister at the Newman Center is available to assist any couple in the planning of music for their wedding, regardless of whether Newman Center musicians are providing music for the wedding or not. The Music Minister should be contacted at least **eight weeks** prior to the ceremony.

The couple may choose any musicians they wish to provide for their wedding. It is not necessary to hire Newman Center musicians. If desired, however, Newman Center musicians may be available to provide music for a wedding.

Contact the Music Minister for more information on hiring Newman Center musicians for your wedding.

## Slides and Music Programs

Singing by all who are present at your wedding is encouraged. The digital projector may be used to assist the congregation in singing during your wedding. In the event that slides are needed, the Music Minister must be contacted concerning the need for slides, as well as the musical selections for which slides are needed, no later than **two weeks** prior to the wedding. This advance notice is especially important if new slides need to be produced for any of the couple's musical selections.

If the digital projector is not used, it is possible to reproduce music in a wedding program. Contact the Music Minister for licensing information.

## Sound System

A small number of microphones are available free of cost for each wedding. These include the presider's clip-on wireless microphone, and the podium microphone. In addition, the musicians are provided with two wireless microphones (one clip-on and one hand-held microphone which can also be used with a microphone stand).

If any additional microphones are needed, it becomes necessary for the couple to hire a sound system operator for the service. Newman Center sound system operators are available at a cost of \$100 per service. A sound system operator will work with the couple and any musicians to assure the best possible use of microphones and sound reinforcement equipment. Contact the Music Minister for more information.

## Photography

Photographs provide lasting memories of the wedding ceremony. The taking of these photographs, however, must never distract the bride and groom and their guests at the wedding ceremony from the prayerful dignity of the liturgy.

Please see that your photographer receives a copy of these guidelines.

1. Photographers are expected to check-in with the priest at least **30 minutes** before the wedding ceremony.
2. Setup of photographic equipment and any photographs being taken prior to the ceremony must be completed **30 minutes** before the wedding begins. The wedding ceremony must start **on time**.
3. Flash pictures **may not** be taken during the service, except during the entrance and closing processions. The taking of such a photograph may not inhibit the procession itself. Once the wedding celebration begins, the photographer is to remain behind the last seated guest on the main floor. We recommend that the photographer take photos during the service from the center aisle on the elevated portion of the East Sanctuary.
4. Time exposures are permitted during the service as long as the photographer remains out of the view of the congregation.
5. When pictures are taken after the service, photography is limited to **30 minutes** immediately following the service. There may be another wedding or other church activity following your wedding, so please be considerate.
6. The church is available **90 minutes** before the start of your wedding ceremony.

## Flowers and Candles

The sanctuary area of the Newman Center is a sacred place where we gather to pray and celebrate. Our church is designed to express a sense of unity and sacredness and your wedding decorations need to reflect this as well.

The following guidelines are provided to assist you in your wedding planning.

1. Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary, around the altar, or to decorate the aisle. However, no decoration is to be used which would obstruct the clear view of the worship symbols used in the sanctuary, namely the ambo (pulpit), priest's chair, and altar. Flowers are **never** to be placed upon the altar table. In selecting decorations, please keep in mind the sacredness of the event and the simple elegance for which it calls.
2. Potted plants must have waterproof pot covers or be provided with saucers.
3. Flower petals are not permitted to be thrown in the aisle. Rice, bird seed, grain, confetti, rose petals or any other form of shredded material are **not permitted** to be thrown in or around the Newman Center building.
4. You are encouraged to donate the flowers and plants from your wedding to the Newman Center so the entire community may celebrate with you.
5. Flowers are not permitted in the sanctuary during the season of Lent, due to the penitential nature of this season in the Church year.

6. Because the sanctuary is fully carpeted and the air conditioning creates a draft that causes even dripless candles to drip, no candles other than the ones already placed in the altar area are permitted.
7. The use of runners is not permitted due to the potential hazard of tripping.
8. Chairs must not be marred by any type of adhesive, tape, or damaged with screws, staples, or clamps. Bows and flowers may be placed along the aisle, but particular care must be taken to conform with these guidelines.
9. No furnishings, pedestals or plants belonging to Newman Center may be removed from the building.

Please be sure that the building is left in the same order in which you found it. This includes the sanctuary, bride's room, and any other area used by the wedding party.

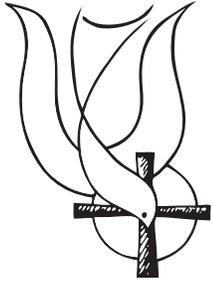
### **Other Details**

There is a designated room that the bride and bridesmaids may use to touch-up their hair, makeup and to put on their dresses. The room will be available for use **90 minutes** before the start of your ceremony. Please leave the room in the same condition as you found it.

Smoking is not permitted inside the building. The use of alcohol or illegal substances is not permitted on the property of the Newman Center.

No valuable personal items should be stored unsupervised during the ceremony because the building is open to public access.

The Newman Center has accommodations and availability for receptions. Specific guidelines and fees apply. Please contact the office for more information.



## **St. Thomas More Newman Center**

### **Contact Information**

64 West Lane Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201

Office: (614) 291-4674

Fax: (614) 291-2065

[BuckeyeCatholic.com/sacraments](http://BuckeyeCatholic.com/sacraments)

### **Clergy at the Newman Center**

Fr. Joe Ciccone, C.S.P., Director

(614) 291-4674 x102      [jciccone@buckeyecatholic.com](mailto:jciccone@buckeyecatholic.com)

Fr. Ed Nowak, C.S.P., Pastoral Associate

(614) 291-4674 x114      [enowak@buckeyecatholic.com](mailto:enowak@buckeyecatholic.com)

Fr. Stu Wilson-Smith, C.S.P., Pastoral Associate

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Fr. Vinny McKiernan, C.S.P., Pastoral Associate

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### **Music Minister**

Eric Utsler

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