



# Holy Cross Immaculata Parish

## Wedding Policies

Congratulations on your recent engagement! We celebrate with you the joyful fact that God has brought you to this moment in your lives. We pray that this time of preparation will be one of grace, peace, and joy for you. The staff members of Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish are happy to help you prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Our wedding policies are in place to ensure that the liturgy will be prayerful, and as a result, a more meaningful encounter with Christ for you. The policies of our parish reflect the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for the Rite of Matrimony. A copy of these guidelines will be given to you and reviewed when you meet with our pastor or a member of the pastoral staff.

The celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony is an action of the entire Church in whose presence you commit yourself to one another. It is an act of worship, and therefore communal. That is why many things that might take place outside an act of worship are not appropriate to include in a Catholic wedding ceremony. It is our goal to assist you in planning a celebration that will facilitate prayerful participation among your guests.

Since our church will have a significant place in your married life, we invite you to consider becoming members of Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish. We invite you to join us at Sunday Mass and at other parish prayer services, spiritual enrichment programs, and the social events that are scheduled throughout the year. For couples who do not live in Cincinnati, we invite you to visit any time you are in town!

If you have questions that are not answered within these pages, please contact the parish office at 513-721-6544 or email the pastoral staff who met with you.

### Confirming the Date of Your Wedding

Under most circumstances, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati requires a six-month preparation period for all marriages.

The first step in the marriage preparation process is to speak with the pastor or a member of the pastoral staff at Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish to discern your readiness to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Catholic Church. Once this preliminary step has been accomplished, a date can be set.

It is necessary to confirm the date within thirty (30) days by submitting the Pre-Marital Information Form and by making an initial non-refundable deposit of \$50 for the use of the church. If the date and time is not confirmed and the deposit is not received within this time period, it is presumed that the date and/or time are not needed and your names will be removed from our calendar. We will make an effort to contact you before cancelling a date.

## Who can be married at Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish?

Registered members and non-members of Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish may be married here provided that both are free to marry and at least one party is a practicing Catholic. Since sacraments are normally celebrated in a catholic person's home parish, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati requires that non-member Catholics obtain a letter of permission from the pastor of the parish where you are registered (independently of your parents) in order to marry at Holy Cross-Immaculata.

Couples who wish to be married at Holy Cross-Immaculata should contact the parish office no less than six months and ordinarily not more than 16 months before the proposed date.

In the event that either party in any way participated in a prior marriage, a decree of nullity (Annulment) must be provided, demonstrating that the person is free to marry. Church Law is clear in this matter. No wedding date can be set until the annulment has been secured. Please keep in mind, an annulment is sometimes required, even if neither of the parties involved in the first marriage were not catholic. The priest or deacon can explain this further.

Sometimes a dispensation is required. (For example, if one of the parties has not been baptized, a dispensation is required.) The priest or deacon who will be the Presider at your wedding will inform you if a dispensation is necessary.

Mount Adams is one of the most unique and historical neighborhoods in Cincinnati. Sometimes, however, the charm of this neighborhood presents challenges, especially in terms of parking and competition with parades, art shows, and other events. We will inform you of any events we know of that will be taking place on the day you plan to schedule your wedding.

The Monastery Event Center in Mount Adams is a very popular venue for wedding receptions, and many events are scheduled far in advance. If you are considering that location or other reception centers that book well in advance, please contact our pastor. He will work with you to begin the necessary preparation if you want to secure our church for your wedding.

## Wedding Fees

**We will gladly set up a no interest payment plan for wedding fees.**

**The fees you pay to Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish include the following:**

- The use of the church
- Marriage Liturgy Coordinator
- Wedding Coordinator
- Parking Attendant
- Use of the Parish Center prior to the ceremony
- FOCCUS Inventory
- Professional Keyboard Accompanist
- Professional Cantor



**The description of the role and duties of these professionals or services is explained in detail throughout this handbook.**

**Fees are ordinarily nonrefundable; however, a wedding date can be rescheduled.**

**Not included in the fees paid to Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish include the following:**

- Registration fee for the Pre-Cana Workshop & the Natural Family Workshop
- Stipend or Honorarium for the Priest or Deacon Presider
- Stipend for the Acolyte or Server

## Scheduling a Wedding Date & Time

The Rite of Matrimony permits weddings on any day of the year except Holy Thursday, Good Friday & Holy Saturday. Due to the parish schedule for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and because of the high demand for weddings at Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish, we have specific times set on Saturdays. Information for Friday and Saturday weddings follows.

**Friday:** Normally we do not have events scheduled in the church on Friday evenings, so there is more flexibility in scheduling the wedding time. We will not schedule any other events in our facilities once you schedule your wedding. Please be aware that the parking lot gates are locked Friday evening and do not open until Saturday morning. Please inform your guess of this parking restriction. Cars need to be removed from the lot 45 minutes after the wedding ceremony.

**Saturday 10:30:** The staging time for your wedding can be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator. If another wedding is scheduled at 1:30, your wedding party and all guests will need to depart the church and the parking lot by noon. This minimizes the possibility of your guests being inconvenienced by the arrival of the next wedding party.

**Saturday 1:30:** If there is a morning wedding, the church will be available at noon for any required venue staging. If there is no morning wedding, we will inform you when the church and parish center will be open. Your wedding party, all guests and all cars must depart the premises by 3:15. No vehicles may be left in the parking lot after this time because we need the parking spaces for the 4:30 Mass. Please, ***please*** cooperate with us in this matter!

**Saturday 6:30:** Please keep in mind that we have a 4:30 Mass on Saturdays. Therefore, your wedding party and guests will not be able to park in our lot until 5:45. It may be more convenient to hire a shuttle service for the bride and bridesmaids if you plan to use the parish center before the ceremony. Please be aware that the parking lot gates are locked on Saturday evenings and do not open until Sunday morning. Vehicles may not be left in the lot overnight. Please inform your guests of this parking restriction.

## Pre-Cana Preparation Requirements

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati requires that all engaged couples participate in an approved marriage preparation program. Our pastor or pastoral minister will give you the information and options available within the archdiocese. If you live outside the archdiocese, check with the staff at your home parish or home diocese about programs provided in your geographical area.

The priest or deacon who is officiating at your wedding is responsible to ensure that you complete all steps of preparation for your marriage. But please remember, it is the couple's final responsibility to complete the required preparation programs and submit all necessary documents.

Standard requirements include for all dioceses within the United States include:

- A recently issued Baptismal certificate from the church where you were baptized.
- A completed M-1 Questionnaire.
- Completed and reviewed FOCCUS communication inventory.
- Pre-Cana Workshop - with certificate.
- Natural Family Planning Workshop - with certificate...

## The Presider, Officiant or Celebrant

Registered members of our parish may ask our pastor or one of the deacons affiliated with our parish to preside at their wedding, or they may ask another priest or deacon to officiate as long as they are in good standing in their diocese. Couples who are not members of Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish will need to arrange to have a priest or deacon officiate at your wedding. You may contact our pastor or one of the deacons that are members of our staff, but please be aware that their schedules are demanding and therefore we cannot guarantee that they will be available. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to obtain the celebrant for their wedding. The priest or deacon should be confirmed prior to booking the wedding. If that is not possible, securing a priest or deacon should be the first priority in the wedding planning.

The fees you pay to Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish do not include an honorarium for the priest or deacon who will officiate at your wedding ceremony. It may be the case that the priest or deacon is offering his services as a gift because he is a friend. If this is not the case, it is proper etiquette to compensate these professionals for the time they spent helping you plan your wedding and officiating at the ceremony. It is recommended that the Best Man give the honorarium to the Presider at the rehearsal if the bride and groom have not done so previously.

The form, **Sacrament of Matrimony Celebrant Agreement** must be completed by the Presider and returned to Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish as soon as possible. If they are not part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, they will have to provide a copy of a Letter of Faculties from their diocese as well as proof of a license to solemnize marriages in Ohio. The chosen priest or deacon is expected to conduct and provide all required instructions for marriage preparation and obtain any permissions, dispensations, etc. as well as to complete the marriage preparation documents for permanent archiving at Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish. Please keep in mind that a priest or deacon are the only persons permitted to officiate at Catholic weddings. Therefore, making arrangements with your celebrant should be arranged as soon as possible.

If you are completing your marriage preparation outside the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the priest, deacon or pastoral minister who has accepted this responsibility must complete the file and submit it to the local diocese. That diocese will review and endorse the completeness of your marriage file and will then send it to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, who will, in turn, forward it to our parish where the records will be stored.

If you are completing your marriage preparation out of state, please try to arrange for everything to be completed as soon as possible to avoid any delays. **Your wedding ceremony cannot take place unless the file is complete.**

It is your ultimate responsibility to track your marriage file. A checklist of all the things that are required is printed on the back cover of this booklet. Monitor the status of your file throughout the process. Specifically, know when the file is sent to your local diocese and verify that it was received. Follow up to confirm that your file was sent to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and verify that they have received your file. In doing so you will avoid a situation where the file may be lost in the mail.

**Please be advised that Canon Law is clear on this issue:  
No marriage file, no wedding ceremony - No exceptions!**

# Planning Your Wedding Liturgy

## The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator

Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish follows the guidelines of the Roman Catholic Church and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for the Rite of Matrimony. The revisions to the Rite of Matrimony were effective December 28, 2016. All priests and deacons who will be officiating at weddings at our parish are expected to follow the new rite. Our Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will review the changes to the new rite with you when you meet to plan the music and the liturgy.

Included in the fees you paid to Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish include the assistance of our Marriage Liturgy Coordinator. This professional staff person is well qualified to assist you in the planning of your wedding liturgy, including the selection of options for prayers and rituals permitted in the Rite of Matrimony, and for the selection of appropriate music. The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator is a trained professional musician and liturgist and will be the accompanist for your ceremony. If the Marriage Liturgy Coordinator is not available on the day of your wedding, another qualified accompanist will be provided.

One of the things the Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will help you decide is whether your wedding ceremony will include the celebration of the Eucharist or whether it will be a ceremony with the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Matrimony but not a full Mass. The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will take all pastoral concerns you may have into consideration and offer suggestions that will help you plan a liturgy that reflects your spirituality and will engage all your guests into full participation in this special celebration. The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator can also help you design the program or worship aid you choose to use.

It is possible to choose another person to be the accompanist at your ceremony, but this person must be approved by our Marriage Liturgy Coordinator so that we are certain that not only is the person a qualified musician, but also that he or she has a good understanding of the Catholic Rite of Matrimony.



# Music

We follow the wedding music guidelines of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Our Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will help you choose appropriate music for your liturgy. All song selections must be chosen from the repertoire of sacred or church music. They must be religious in their text, clearly referring to God by name in a significant way, quoting scriptures, or referring to the Sacrament of Matrimony. Popular songs that happen to mention God in an incidental manner do not qualify as sacred music. Secular or popular songs are not appropriate for a Catholic wedding and therefore should not be requested. Some music may be objectionable on the basis of the musical style.

The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator has final approval about questionable music - *even if you are bringing your own musicians*. No recorded music or accompaniment tape may be used at the wedding liturgy.

Included in the fees you paid to our parish is the service of a professional singer who will serve in the role of Cantor or leader of song. The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will work with you to decide whether you might prefer a male or female voice, depending on the song choices you have made. We work only with people we know will be on time and who will have practiced all the vocal selections they will be singing.

It is also possible for you to include a friend or family member as a vocalist, but once again, our Marriage Liturgy Coordinator must have contact with any vocalist to ensure that she or he is qualified to sing in public on a day that is supposed to be free of glitches and embarrassing moments.

## **The best place to include non-professional singers is at the reception!**

The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will also assist you if you choose to have other instrumentalists, such as trumpet, oboe, harp, flute or violin. We have connections with the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. The fees for professional musicians usually begin at \$125 per hour. You may also invite friends who are musicians, but it is the responsibility of our Marriage Liturgy Coordinator to decide if they are qualified according to our professional standards.

All the professional musicians and singers we work with understand that they are expected to practice on their own in advance of the day of the wedding so that only a short rehearsal is needed. If you choose to include friends or family members who need a longer rehearsal time with the Marriage Liturgy Coordinator, an additional fee of \$125 per hour is required.

## The Liturgical Environment

Holy Cross-Immaculata church is a place of dignity and prayer. Most wedding couples tell us that the reason they have chosen to get married here is because of the beauty of the church and the rich history of the parish. Because of the beauty of the church itself, very little needs to be added to make it special for your wedding.

Since the Roman Catholic Church follows a liturgical calendar, there will be certain liturgical symbols and decorations present during the course of the year (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.) The seasonal environment is intended for all liturgical celebrations during that time of the year, including your wedding. The existing environment - including all furniture - may not be changed or removed for your wedding unless you have received permission from our pastor. Anything that you do have permission to move for your ceremony must be placed back in the proper place after the wedding.

You may bring flower arrangements to the church for your wedding celebration. You will be given an instruction sheet to give to your florist. Flowers used for the wedding celebration are not merely decorative, but are offered for the further honor and glory of God. You may choose to dedicate your flowers to the church in memory, in thanksgiving, or in honor of a relative or friend. When flower arrangements are donated to the church, we will gladly publish this information in our parish bulletin.

Because of the danger of slipping, the use of an aisle runner is prohibited. Candelabra in the aisle are not permitted. Any flowers attached to the pews must be attached only with ribbon – no wire or pins may be used.

No flowers may be dropped in the main aisle or elsewhere in the church. Throwing rice, confetti, bird seed, etc. is prohibited anywhere on church property.

## Photography & Videography

Photography and videography are, of course, permitted, but they should not distract the wedding party, the presider, musicians, singers or your guests. For this reason, flash or extra lighting is not permitted during the ceremony. (Photographers may use flash for pictures of the entrance procession.) Videographers should also make certain that any microphones used do not interfere with our sound system.

Photographers and videographers must position themselves in a place where they will not be blocking wedding guests or the wedding party. Photographers and videographers may never come up the steps into the sanctuary at any time. We encourage all video cameras to be set on a tripod in a stationary position.

Photographs may be taken before or after the ceremony provided they do not interfere with the schedule of our weekend liturgies. No wedding parties are permitted to enter the church while other services are in session. We ask that photographs taken after the ceremony be limited.

We encourage you to make a list with your photographer of all the photographs you want prior to the wedding, during the ceremony and after the ceremony. We will do our best to help you in this process, especially after the ceremony, because we know that you do not want to keep your guests waiting at the reception. An instruction sheet will also be provided for you to give to the photographer.

***Whether your photographer/videographer is a professional, friend or family member, that person should always check with our wedding coordinator and the Presider before the wedding so that instructions are clear.***

## Liturgical Ministers

Anyone you ask to be an Acolyte (Server), Lector, or Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist in a Catholic wedding must be a practicing Catholic. This is not necessary for those who assist in other ways. Only those who have been commissioned in their local parish can be an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist.

The Marriage Liturgy Coordinator will help you decide how many Lectors (readers) and Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist you will need. It is helpful if all these ministers are present at the rehearsal so they can receive instructions and practice if necessary.

## The Acolyte or Altar Server

An acolyte or altar server is required for all wedding ceremonies - even if you are not having a Mass, because the server is a great help to the Presider. If you do not have a friend or family member who can serve in this capacity, we will arrange for a member of our parish to assist in this capacity. Unfortunately, parishes are not permitted to provide the servers with any kind of financial remuneration. It is customary, however, that this person is given an honorarium or stipend by the bride and groom. Our suggested amount is \$40. (Any groom who was a server when he was in school can attest to the fact that the stipend is always appreciated!) We ask that you give the stipend (in cash) to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal. She will give the stipend to the server on the day of the wedding.

## The Wedding Party

We do not limit or restrict the size of the wedding party, but please keep in mind that with a large wedding party, better organization is needed, and the possibility exists for more complications, creating more stress for the bride and groom! If you are trying to involve friends and family, ask the priest, the deacon, or the Marriage Liturgy Coordinator for ideas. We will gladly suggest other ways they can be involved.

Common sense is the best guide when it comes to wedding attire. You want your outward appearance to be a reflection of your style and inner dignity. With this in mind, you also want to avoid dressing in a way that will distract from the sacredness of the liturgy.

## Flower Girls/Ring Bearers

We strongly suggest that children participating be at least five years of age and have sufficient maturity to process down the aisle without fear. The best policy is to assume that things will not go as planned. Be prepared - because younger children may get stage fright. Always prepare for "Plan B." To help minimize stage fright, we recommend that prior to the wedding ceremony you bring your young wedding participants to Mass a few times. Familiarizing them with the church can alleviate some of the wedding day angst.

**The best advice we can give is to do your best to plan ahead and give everyone involved the practice and reassurance they need so that things go as planned!**



## The Wedding Coordinator

Included in the fees paid to Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish is a Wedding Coordinator from our parish who has thorough knowledge and understanding of the lighting system, the sound system, who knows where to find the first aid kit if necessary, and who also knows where to obtain the "emergency kit" of thread, pins and other necessary supplies. The coordinator will also have keys and access to all parish facilities. The Wedding Coordinator will assist all visiting clergy who may be presiding at wedding ceremonies at our parish. In some cases the Wedding Coordinator may facilitate the wedding rehearsal if the presider is not available.

The Coordinator will work with all musicians, florists and photographers to make certain they are following the policies and guidelines of the parish. The Wedding Coordinator will assist the bride and bridesmaids before the ceremony and will monitor any unforeseen circumstances that may occur and communicate this to the Presider, the wedding party, and others that may need to be informed. And finally, the Coordinator will communicate to the photographer and the wedding party when the time for photographs is reaching the limit, especially when other services are scheduled to begin in the church.

The Wedding Coordinator will do her best to help the wedding party and others be at the right place at the right time and will help at the end of the service, but please keep in mind that the Wedding Coordinator is not a maidservant. We ask that the bridesmaids and groomsmen assist the Wedding Coordinator after the service by removing extra programs from the pews, removing any flowers, and generally helping out to make certain that the church is cleared of any items brought for the wedding ceremony.

If you have a friend or paid wedding planner, please inform them that the parish Wedding Coordinator is the person designated by our parish to assist with the coordination of the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. We recommend that your personal wedding planner help the bride and bridesmaids in the parish center.

## The Rehearsal

The rehearsal time is to be arranged first with the presider. We do expect that all visiting priests and deacons attend the rehearsal so that they can become familiar with our church and have a chance to meet with the wedding coordinator to make certain that everything is organized for the day of the wedding.

All members of the wedding party are expected to attend the rehearsal as well as anyone who will be part of the entrance procession. Anyone who will be reading during the ceremony is also asked to attend so that they can practice reading using the microphone at the Ambo. Please have everyone arrive on time. We allocate 45 minutes for each rehearsal. If there is a Friday evening wedding, rehearsals for any Saturday wedding the same weekend must be scheduled for another day. Our office staff will let you know as soon as possible if a Friday evening wedding has been scheduled.

## Marriage License

A civil marriage license is required in the state of Ohio. The license may be obtained 90 days prior to the date of the wedding. If you live in Ohio, you are required to obtain the marriage license in the county where you live. Couples who do not reside in the State of Ohio are required to obtain their marriage license at the Hamilton County Courthouse. For more information about the civil license, visit [www.probatect.org](http://www.probatect.org) or call 513-946-3589.

Without exception, the marriage license must be brought to the rehearsal and given to the celebrant or the wedding coordinator. For your convenience, you may bring your license to the parish office prior to the rehearsal, but please do not send your marriage license in the mail!

Every priest or deacon who officiates at a wedding in the State of Ohio must have license to do so. A priest or deacon who is not a resident may obtain a temporary license through the office of the Secretary of State.

## Other Planning Info & Tips

### **Use of the Parish Center**

The parish center is not designed to serve as a dressing area for the bride and bridesmaids; however it is place where they can relax before the ceremony. The wedding party is responsible for making certain that the space is returned to the condition in which it was found and all trash is put in the appropriate receptacles. Valuables are not to be left unattended in the parish center or anywhere on church property. ***Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish is not responsible for any items missing or stolen from the parish center, in the church or any other area.***

### **Safety**

Rice, birdseed, confetti, sparklers, flower petals and balloons are not permitted in the church or on the Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish campus. Aisle runners are not permitted because they are a tripping hazard and we cannot have an aisle runner cover the air vent in the main aisle of our church. For the same reasons of safety, candles are not permitted in the center aisle at any time. Additionally, luminaries or other lighting implements are not permitted outside.

### **Food & Beverages**

No food or beverages of any kind are permitted in the church at any time. There is a water cooler in the sacristy for the benefit of the groom and groomsmen before the ceremony. The reason why we are strict on this policy is because we have had situations in the past where carpeting has been damaged and garbage and uneaten food has been left in the church or chapel.

Bottled or canned beverages and simple finger foods are permitted in the parish center. Keep in mind that it is the responsibility of the bridesmaids to make certain that all cans, bottles and trash are put in the appropriate containers.

### **Cell Phones**

Please ask all guests to keep cell phones locked in the trunk of their vehicles if possible. If cell phones must be brought into the church, please ask guests to silence them during the ceremony.

### **Smoking & Alcohol**

**All Parish buildings are smoke free. No alcohol is permitted anywhere on the parish grounds at any time.** Please note that the intoxication of any member of the wedding party is cause for their removal from the ceremony. **The intoxication of the bride or groom is cause for cancellation of the wedding by the Presider since it is expected that they are able to give full consent to the promises they will make to one other.** If this occurs, no fees paid to the parish will be refunded.

### **Parking**

Parking is extremely limited in our parish lot. There are 26 marked spaces with the possibility of approximately 10 additional spaces if cars are double parked. Other lots are available in Mount Adams. The majority of wedding guests use the Towne Properties parking lot. The wedding couple must contact Towne Properties directly to ensure the adequate number of parking spaces is reserved. Be advised, however, that since they now operate an event center in the former Holy Cross Church, weddings are scheduled in that facility most weekends and many of those couples also use their parking facilities. It might be advisable to use a private shuttle service in order to transport guests from the reception facility to our church.

Please be advised that the gates to our parking lot are locked on Friday and Saturday evenings and remain locked until 7 a.m. All vehicles must be cleared from the parking lot within one hour after the ceremony. Holy Cross-Immaculata Parish does not permit any overnight parking.

***If all of this seems overwhelming, it may be helpful to remember that these guidelines and policies are the result of many years of experience celebrating weddings at our parish.***

***Be assured that these guidelines arise out of our desire to help you prepare a wedding ceremony which will be prayerful, dignified and memorable.***

***For any questions or clarifications, please contact the parish office. We will work with you in any way possible to make the planning process as stress-free as possible!***



## **HOLY CROSS-IMMACULATA PARISH**

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