

MARRIAGE PREPARATION Guidelines

FOR COUPLES PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE THROUGH ST. MAX, BUT THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT AT ANOTHER PARISH

We know that all of us need God's blessing at all times, but at the time of their engagement to be married, Christians are in particular need of grace as they prepare themselves to form a new family.

Let us pray, then, for God's blessing to come upon this couple: that as they await the day of their wedding, they will grow in mutual respect and in their love for one another; that through their companionship and prayer together they will prepare themselves rightly and chastely for marriage. Strengthen their hearts, so that they will keep faith with each other, please you in all things, and so come to the happiness of celebrating the sacrament of their marriage.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

St. Maximilian Kolbe . . . pray for us.

**St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish
Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

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St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish
5720 Hamilton-Mason Road
Liberty Township, Ohio 45011
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<http://www.saint-max.org>

Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! We at St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish want to do all we can to prepare you for this most holy sacrament.

This booklet provides necessary information about:

- Sacramental Requirements
- Necessary fees
- Contact Persons

If you have any questions, please contact the parish office.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jim Riehle, Pastor

You have chosen to marry each other in the presence of God, family, and the community of faith. The role of the priest or deacon is that of the official representative of the Roman Catholic community, as well as the state of Ohio. When celebrated sacramentally, marriage is an action of the Church in and with Christ, and a sign of the love Christ has for you and the Church. You choose to celebrate with a community that has helped to form your values built on the Gospel that Jesus gave us. It is a union in which we believe Christ to be totally present. The exchange of your vows is the external sign of the commitment you have to one another and to the Church.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Before the sacrament of Holy Matrimony can be celebrated, the Church requires us to make an assessment of your readiness for marriage. For this reason, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati requires **at least six months of preparation** prior to the wedding date. Couples are encouraged to contact their parish well in advance of their desired wedding date. St. Max recommends contacting the parish nine months to a year ahead of time.

The first step in the marriage preparation process is to request an initial meeting with the pastor.

- If St. Max is providing the clergy for your wedding in another church OR you are getting married here, you must meet with St. Max Coordinator of Marriage Preparation.

SACRAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Ideally, Catholics should be fully initiated in the Church, having received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, before they receive the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Any individual who may have been baptized Catholic but has not received the other sacraments of initiation (Eucharist and Confirmation) is encouraged to do so. Please consult with the pastor if this is the case.

For baptized Catholics, a current baptismal certificate (with notations) must be issued from the church where the sacrament was celebrated. **This certificate must be dated no earlier than six months prior to the actual wedding date. Older records are not acceptable.**

Baptized Christians of other denominations need to provide a record of their baptism as well.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS

There are several required elements in the marriage preparation program here at St. Max. These programs emphasize the importance of preparing not only for an authentic and prayerful wedding liturgy, but also preparing for a life together upholding the teachings of the Church and reflecting the love of Christ for His Church in and through your married life.

They are as follows:

- a. A “Before We Say I Do” marriage preparation session is held at the parish several times a year. At this meeting, the couple will begin the process of formation and of preparing the wedding liturgy. **All couples must attend ONE of these sessions, during which they will begin the process of planning the wedding liturgy. Plan to attend AT LEAST SIX MONTHS, and PREFERABLY NINE MONTHS before your wedding date.**
- b. FOCCUS, a pre-marriage compatibility inventory which demonstrates readiness for marriage
- c. Mentor Couple Program: a series of meetings with one of the mentor couples from the parish marriage preparation team that takes place after the FOCCUS inventory to assist in preparation according to your mutual schedules.
- d. Engaged Encounter Weekend, Pre-Cana Day, or God’s Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage. (Please refer to additional flyers/parish website for information.)
- e. Natural Family Planning Classes (NFP)
- f. If Catholic, the bride and/or groom are encouraged to go to confession prior to receiving the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

*These requirements may vary based upon the needs of the couple or at the discretion of the presider (the priest or deacon).

PARISH MEMBERSHIP REQUIRMENTS

Either the bride, groom, or one of their families must be members of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish. Catholics are highly encouraged to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Matrimony in their parish. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the pastor. Couples seeking to marry in a Catholic church other than their parish must obtain permission from their “home” pastor.

FEES

The fee for couples preparing for Marriage through St. Max but not celebrating their wedding at St. Max, is \$150.00. Make checks payable to St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish. This fee is for:

- Marriage Preparation Coordinator (paperwork filing and upkeep, mailing, coordination between bride and groom and mentor couple time.)

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

St. Max can provide some initial guidance, but ultimately, your liturgy plans and worship aid are to be handled through the church where your wedding will take place.

The celebration of the sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a celebration for the whole Church, and in particular the whole parish community. We all rejoice with you in your new life together and we pledge our prayers and support for you in your new ministry to one another.

If you will be living within the St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish community, please register as a new family even though you are already registered as an individual. Registering in the parish is important for our records and your continued involvement in the parish. We invite you to participate in parish life and regularly worship with us. If you will be living elsewhere, please register at a parish and become actively involved in the life of your new community.

Through the intercession of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary, may our Lord continue to bless you abundantly.

Contacts:

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