

Our Lady  
of the  
Valley Parish



The Sacrament of  
Holy Matrimony  
Planning Manual

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! Everyone involved with the marriage process at Our Lady of the Valley Parish want to do all that we can to assure that your wedding will be a happy and memorable occasion. It is our goal to help support you in this part of your journey of faith.

It is the belief of the Catholic Church that the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony constitutes a Christian couple in a new relationship to our Blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, and to his bride, the Church. The *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* states that:

*“By the Sacrament of Matrimony Christian Spouses signify and participate in the mystery of unity and fruitful love between Christ and His Church; therefore, both in embracing conjugal life and in accepting and educating their children, they help one another become holy and have their own place and particular gift among the People of God.” (8)*

This manual was originally published under the Pastorate of Reverend David G. Howard in August, 2008 and has been updated and revised under the Pastorate of Reverend Matthew J. Robben in May 2020. It is designed to assist you as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at Our Lady of the Valley Parish.

## II. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The Roman Catholic Church firmly teaches and believes that Marriage is a life-long, faithful, and exclusive covenant that is created by God and is entered into by a couple when they exchange their vows and irrevocable consent. Just as Almighty God created the covenant of Holy Matrimony in the beginning, so also, He creates the covenant bond that unites husband and wife. While husband and wife give their free and mutual consent, God does the unseen work of joining them together. As our Blessed Lord reminds us:

*Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human must separate. (Matthew 19:5-6)*

Since you are preparing to make this permanent and life-long commitment, there are various things to consider and reflect upon. As such, you will be required to enter into a marriage preparation discernment process, in order to ensure that the irrevocable consent of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony may be freely chosen, maturely considered, and clearly understood. Throughout this reflective period of preparation, there will be several people involved in the process with you, in order to assist you during this special time.

### **III. THE FOCCUS PROGRAM**

One required component of the marriage preparation process will be a program called FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding & Study). This program is a self-diagnostic inventory that is designed to help couples learn more about themselves and each other. This is neither a test nor a predictor of the success or failure in a marriage. Rather, it is a tool that helps couples to grow in both intimacy and understanding. And, if necessary, it provides an opportunity to discern and address issues before marriage. As a result, it is crucial that couples approach this diagnostic tool with a great sense of openness and honesty.

Upon completing the FOCCUS assessment tool, the information will be sent to the offices of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for compilation. The FOCCUS inventory must be completed at least four months prior to the wedding date. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the Parish Office, in order to make arrangements.

During this process, you may be assigned to a FOCCUS couple that will meet with you and discuss the results. The Priest, or Deacon, will also review the results, and may choose to meet with you as well.

### **V. GENESIS: A PRE-CANA RETREAT PROGRAM**

Another required component of the Marriage Preparation Process involves attending the archdiocesan Genesis Retreat Program. This is a regional, day-long marriage preparation seminar

that is offered by the Marriage and Family Life Office for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Classes are offered at various locations throughout the Archdiocese. During the seminar, you will meet other couples as well as hear presentations from different speakers on various issues pertinent to your married life together. You will also receive information regarding the teachings of the Catholic Church on numerous issues. At the conclusion of the seminar, you will receive a certificate of attendance, which you will return to Our Lady of the Valley Parish. For more information on dates and locations, go to [www.catholicaoc.org](http://www.catholicaoc.org) and click on “Offices” and then the Marriage and Family tab or please contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at (513) 421-3131.

It is the responsibility of the couple to register for the GENESIS Retreat through the Marriage and Family Life Office. While there are alternative programs that may also fulfill this particular component, please consult with the Pastor to discuss such a possibility.

## **V. COHABITATION**

There is really no easy way to address the issue of ‘cohabitation’—i.e. the practice of unmarried couples living together—especially since this is not an unusual practice or living arrangement in our society. Yet, it has serious moral complications and implications “in the eyes of the Church”, and, in many cases, it can be a challenging issue for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

While it is certainly easy to rationalize that something is 'right' because everybody else is doing it, the Catholic Church and the Marriage Preparation Team, in particular, have the responsibility to catechize you and provide you with the authentic teachings of the Catholic Faith so as to assist you in the proper formation of conscience, as well as to help ensure that your marriage is indeed life-long. The statistics on 'cohabitation' and the impact that it has on the failure of marriages is very compelling. Given the Church's teaching on 'cohabitation', as well as its potential negative effect on the spiritual well-being of the couple and the marriage itself, Our Lady of the Valley Parish, in union with the teachings of the Catholic Church, follows a policy of strongly encouraging 'cohabitating' couples to physically move apart. If, 'cohabitation' is necessary due to a serious reason discussed with the Pastor, then you are asked to live in abstinence in accord with the teachings of the Church into which you are asking to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. If at all possible, 'cohabitation' should not be a part of this process.

## **VI. THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Prior to the reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony, Catholics are asked to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is usually recommended the week before the wedding. Prior to receiving the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, as well as the Holy Eucharist, Catholics are asked to be properly disposed and in a state of grace, so that they may receive the fruitfulness of the Sacrament(s). You may contact any priest to help you with this process.

## VII. THE WEDDING LITURGY

As with all of the sacraments, we believe that the wedding liturgy makes the mystery of our Divine Savior's resurrection present in a very special way. Therefore, we take the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony according to the mind and the intention of the Roman Catholic Church very seriously, regardless of any fads, niceties or traditions that might have been observed at other Catholic parishes.

Your request for the 'Rite of Marriage' indicates that the Catholic Faith and Tradition is important to you during this very special time. Therefore, a member of the Parish Clergy and members of our Music Ministry will help you prepare the wedding liturgy ensuring that all proper guidelines are observed. This is to ensure that the Sacrament is celebrated with due reverence and according to the rites and rubrics of the Catholic Church.

When two Catholics marry, the 'Rite of Marriage' will take place within the Holy Mass. However, if one of the participants is a non-Catholic, the 'Rite of Marriage' will normally take place outside of Mass.

While there are certain options and choices that will be provided to you for your selection, such as Sacred Scripture readings, as well as various prayers, the structure and flow of the Liturgy, from the time of the entrance procession until the recession at the end of the Liturgy is fixed according to the Catholic 'Rite of Marriage'.

As has been previously mentioned, just because some nicety or tradition might have been observed at another Catholic

wedding does not necessarily mean that it is authorized by the Roman Catholic Church. All weddings that occur at Our Lady of the Valley Parish are handled the same way, regardless of the choice of Clergy. So, please guard against any assumptions of what will or will not be permitted. If you have any questions, please contact the Pastor.

### **VIII. DOCUMENTS NEEDED**

As part of the Marriage Preparation Process, you will be required to complete various documents and forms. The Priest or Deacon who is preparing you will help you with this part of the process. Please be sure to contact the Priest or Deacon in order to get the process started.

You will be required to provide the Parish with current and official copies of your Baptismal Certificates dated within six months of your wedding. Please contact the church at which you were baptized, and ask them to send an official copy of your Baptismal Certificate (with seal and notations) to Our Lady of the Valley Parish, 330 West Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215.

A Marriage License from Hamilton County must be presented at the time of the payment of the fees (see Section XIII). Please understand that without all of the proper documentation completed, the wedding cannot take place. So, it is very important to take this very seriously.

### **IX. MUSIC**

Since music is an integral element of the 'Rite of Marriage', it must be chosen to express the fundamental understanding of the

Sacrament of Matrimony. And, while some music may be personally meaningful to the Bride and/or Groom, the principles that govern the selection of any music and/or hymn are its sacredness and acceptability in the religious aspect of the wedding. As such, some favorite hymns might be more acceptable for the wedding reception, rather than the ceremony. The Pastor has delegated the responsibility for judging the appropriateness and acceptability of any suggested music to the discretion of the Music Director.

## **X. THE UNITY CANDLE**

The Unity Candle is not a Catholic liturgical symbol and it is not a part of the Roman Catholic 'Rite of Marriage'. And, while it has enjoyed widespread acceptance, its origins and meanings are confused and it really has no place in a Catholic Marriage Liturgy. As such, its use is not permitted during the Marriage Ceremony at Our Lady of the Valley Parish. The Archdiocesan publication, *Celebrating Marriage*, addresses the Unity Candle, and reminds us:

*The unity that exists between husband and wife in the Sacraments of Marriage is central to the celebration of Christian Marriage. In the Rite of Marriage this is symbolized by the exchange of vows. The blessing and exchange of rings (optional) is another part of the Rite that is symbolic unity. And, the bride and groom stand together in the midst of the faith community as a symbol of the unity that exists between Christ and his Church. When celebrated within the context of Mass, the reception of Holy Communion (which is always a symbol of the unity that exists between Christ and his body, the Church,) is an especially important symbol of the unity celebrated in Christian Marriage.*

*For this reason, the Church does not include the so called ‘unity candle’ as a part of its official rite. Primarily this is so because the above-mentioned elements of the rite are to be done in such a way that they carry the weight of the symbol of unity. Moreover, in our liturgical tradition, candles always stand as symbols of Christ, and not so much for individual persons.*

*Another concern about the so-called “unity candle” is that there are often understandings that individuals bring to the “unity candle” that are contrary to a Catholic understanding of Christian Marriage. For example, there is the custom of extinguishing candles when the central unity candle is lit, as if the individuals somehow loose [sic] their own identity in Christian marriage. (12)*

## **XI. BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

The custom of taking flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary is not a part of the Marriage Rite. As such, this custom is not permitted during the wedding liturgy at Our Lady of the Valley Parish. The Archdiocesan publication, *Celebrating Marriage*, addresses this custom, and reminds us: “While it may seem like a nice addition to the wedding liturgy, it does not reflect what the liturgy is: an act of public worship by the entire assembly.”

The departure of the bride and groom to go visit the statue of Mary for a moment of private prayer is often an awkward moment for the assembly who sits waiting for them. Since this tradition is not included in the actual Marriage Rite and because it seems contrary to good liturgical principles, its use should be carefully considered. Perhaps the couple could make a private visit

to the statue of the Blessed Mother prior to the day of their wedding. This may enrich their personal prayer together as husband and wife. (p. 13).

## **XII. FLOWERS & DECORATIONS**

Flowers have always been a traditional element for a wedding ceremony. Flowers that are already in place as part of the parish arts & environment display may not be removed. Throwing or dropping of flower petals or rice during the entrance procession and exiting recessional is also not permitted. Please consult with the Pastor prior to decorating, for there are certain liturgical directives, as well as parish practices, that must be followed and observed.

- Sanctuary furniture is not to be moved for any reason.
- Candles are not permitted to be attached to the pews in any manner.
- Our Lady of the Valley Parish churches are carpeted, and due to liability concerns and safety issues, aisle runners are not permitted.
- Unapproved decorations that appear the day of the wedding will not be permitted, even if there is a visiting Priest or Deacon.

## **XIII. PICTURES**

Pictures and flash photography are permitted during the procession and recession of the bridal party. Wedding guests are asked to refrain from taking flash pictures during the ceremony. Video cameras may be used at any time during the ceremony.

**No one is permitted to take pictures from the sanctuary.**

Some photographers wish to take pictures before the ceremony, and this may be permitted if arrangements are made with the Parish Office ahead of time.

Photographers may not remove any sanctuary furnishings, and they may not stand on any pews or chairs.

*Please discuss these guidelines with your photographer, so that there are no misunderstandings with our policies, and so that there are no unnecessary interruptions during the ceremony itself.*

**XIV. ALCOHOL**

Absolutely no alcoholic beverages are permitted anywhere on the church property.

Any member of the wedding party showing signs of alcohol use before the rehearsal or the wedding will be asked to leave the church and its grounds.

Moreover, any member of the wedding party showing up to the wedding with signs of alcohol use may result in the refusal of the Priest or Deacon to perform the ceremony.

## XV. FEES & STIPENDS

The following fee schedule has been established at Our Lady of the Valley Parish:

Parishioner	\$ 500.00*
<i>*(please refer to pgs. 15-16)</i>	
Non-Parishioner	\$1000.00

### Musicians

Organist	\$150.00
Cantor	\$125.00

Servers - only needed for a catholic mass

Two Altar Servers at \$10.00 each	\$ 20.00
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The question of stipends for the Priest or Deacon often times comes up. Stipends are traditionally given to the secretary during the payment of fees, or to the Priest or Deacon at the rehearsal, so as to avoid confusion on the day of your wedding. For many that ask, a common stipend ranges somewhere between \$100.00 and \$150.00.

Although the Priest or Deacon spends a significant amount of time and preparation in assisting you with this process, the offering of a stipend is ultimately at your discretion to determine the final amount, as it is a gift. However, whatever amount you may wish to offer is always most appreciated.

**All fees must be submitted to the Parish Office at least two weeks prior to the wedding.** It is not the responsibility of the Parish Office to follow-up with this component. If there are special

circumstances that prevent you from meeting this deadline, please contact the Parish Office to make other arrangements. Otherwise, failure to meet this responsibility may result in the cancellation of the wedding. If you have any questions, please contact the Parish Secretary at (513) 554-1010.

## **XVI. PARISH MEMBERSHIP**

While we are always happy to welcome new parishioners into the Our Lady of the Valley family, sometimes the question is posed regarding the criterion of judgment for parish membership, especially as it relates to the aforementioned fee schedule.

As per an *Instruction* from Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, “All Catholics who live within the territory of a parish are members of the parish. This means that they have the right to orderly access to the sacraments, to personal ministrations from the pastor or his agents, to preaching, to religious education, and to all the other ministerial benefits (e.g. Christian funeral) that the parish offers ...” (*Instruction on Parish Membership and Access to Elementary Schools*, June 10, 2009).

In essence, the aforementioned Parishioner fee schedule is available for those that meet one of following criteria:

- Either the bride or groom lives within the boundaries of the Parish in which they are to be married and have not registered at another parish; or,
- Either the bride or groom has been accepted, by the Regional Pastor, as members of Our Lady of the Valley Parish and have informed the Pastor of their proper territorial parish of the change.

*Those who do not meet such criteria are subject to the non-Parishioner fee schedule. The parish membership of family members does not serve as a criterion of judgment.*

## **XVII. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The timely submission of paperwork and documentation, as well as the scheduling of appointments with the Priest or Deacon, and the Musicians, are the responsibility of the Bride and/or Groom and not the respective ministers of Our Lady of the Valley Parish. Failure to follow through with this responsibility could result in the unnecessary delay or cancellation of the wedding ceremony.

If you have any questions regarding the process, it is important to contact the Parish office at (513) 554-1010 for assistance.

## **XIII. FINAL REMARKS**

Once again, congratulations on your upcoming wedding at Our Lady of the Valley Parish. The Marriage Ministry Team is here to help you in any way that we can, as well as to help ensure a beautiful, meaningful, reverent and proper celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony according to the mind and the intention of the Roman Catholic Church.

Please remember that this process of preparation is a very special time. And, if approached with a friendly disposition, it will serve as an invaluable tool that will promote self-understanding and awareness, as well as help you and your fiancée grow in greater intimacy. Although the requirements might initially seem overwhelming, everything does not have to be completed at one

time. And, so, while we encourage couples to get an early start, we also ask you to relax and enjoy this preparation process.

## **XIX. APPENDICES**

### **(APPENDIX A)**

#### **Wedding Music Policy for Our Lady of the Valley Parish.**

Music for the wedding ceremony is a very important element of the plans for the day.

Our Parish Music Director and Gina Rieman are the parish musicians for all weddings. Music Directors from other Catholic Churches are welcome to play a wedding here, but they need to contact our Music Director (513-554-1010 ext. 24) as soon as possible. Other musicians and singers are welcome to play/sing, after consulting with the Music Director. At this planning meeting, we need the names, phone numbers and/or emails of the additional singers. No additional musicians will be added after this meeting. Experience dictates that often friends or relatives are not adequately prepared to provide the music for a wedding alone.

While it is a privilege to be a part of your wedding day, we are providing a service. Music Director fee is \$150.00, as the principal musician/organist. Gina, as primary singer/cantor/guitarist, has a fee of \$125.00. This is to be given to the parish secretary, who then in turn will distribute the stipends to the musicians the day of the wedding.

Contact should be made with Gina within two weeks of meeting with the priest/deacon. That way a planning session can

be scheduled. This planning can take place any time during the six months of preparation for the wedding.

Care must be taken in choosing music for your wedding to include music that can be sung by all those in attendance. Once the procession of bridesmaids and bride is finished, the guests are there no longer as spectators. Rather, they are there to celebrate with the couple and therefore need to be included in as much as possible. A Gathering Hymn is required. We tell the people, without words, that it is now their turn to participate and pray with you.

There are possibly a few places during the service for a solo piece, but generally music at this time needs to include the congregation. Therefore, these hymns need to be taken from the hymnals used at Our Lady of the Valley Parish, namely the *Gather Third Edition* hymnal. All music chosen must be suitable to the liturgical celebration, therefore only liturgical music is used. Some music is best played at the reception. This will be further discussed with you when meeting with Gina to plan your wedding music. If words or music are included in a program, copyright permission must be requested before they are copied. It is illegal to include words and/or music without the appropriate permission. If you request a specific piece of music, and its use is approved, it is your responsibility to provide legal copies for Gina and Terry. Run off copies are a violation of the copyright regulations, and can result in large fines.

If arrangements are not made with Gina and/or Terry more than a month before the wedding, they will choose all music. This is necessary due to a lack of adequate time to practice and prepare for the wedding. You may choose the hymns/songs to be used,

from suggestions from Gina. All other music, (Gospel Acclamation; the Holy, Holy, Holy; Mystery of Faith; Amen; and, Lamb of God) will be chosen by Terry.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Gina Rieman (513-733-8136) or the office (513-554-1010 ext 24). Thank you for your cooperation. We wish you many happy years together!

**(APPENDIX B)****Order of 'Rite of Marriage outside Mass'**

## PRELUDE MUSIC

## INTRODUCTORY RITE

Processional

Greeting &amp; Welcome

Opening Hymn

Opening Prayer

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading

Responsorial Psalm

New Testament Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Holy Gospel Reading

Homily

## RITE OF MARRIAGE

Introduction

Questioning

Freedom of Choice

Faithfulness to each other

Acceptance and Upbringing of Children

Consent

Declaration of Couple

Reception by Priest or Deacon

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

General Intercessions

The Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

## CONCLUSION OF THE CELEBRATION

The Lord's Prayer

The Sign of Peace

Final Blessing

Introduction of the Couple

Recessional

**(APPENDIX C)****Order of 'Rite of Marriage during Mass**

## PRELUDE MUSIC

## INTRODUCTORY RITE

Processional

Greeting &amp; Welcome

Opening Hymn

Penitential Rite

Gloria (required)

Opening Prayer

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading

Responsorial Psalm

New Testament Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Holy Gospel Reading

Homily

## RITE OF MARRIAGE

Introduction

Questioning

Freedom of Choice

Faithfulness to each other

Acceptance and Upbringing of Children

Consent

Declaration of Couple/

Reception by Priest or Deacon

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

General Intercessions/ Creed

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts

Prayer over the Gifts

Preface

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer/Nuptial Blessing

The Sign of Peace

Holy Communion (properly disposed Catholics)

Prayer after Holy Communion

**CONCLUDING RITE**

Solemn Blessing

Introduction of the Couple

Recessional

**(APPENDIX D)**

**Order of Procession**

**SERVERS**

One Cross-bearer and/or

Two Acolytes

**LECTORS (optional)**

**PRESIDING PRIEST or DEACON w/GROOM**

**GROOMSMEN & BRIDESMAIDS**

**BRIDE w/FATHER and/or MOTHER ESCORT**

**Order of Recession**

**BRIDE & GROOM**

**WEDDING PARTY**

**SERVERS**

**PRESIDING PRIEST or DEACON**

## **(APPENDIX F) Commonly Asked Questions**

### *1. Can I ask any Priest or Deacon to officiate at the wedding?*

Weddings at Our Lady of the Valley Parish are typically officiated by resident clergy; however, exceptions can be made provided that the requested clergy has the proper faculties and is “in good standing”. Please consult with the Pastor to further discuss this possibility, and to receive necessary approval. Upon approval, the Pastor, in accordance with the *Code of Canon Law*, will grant special delegation to the clergyman to witness your wedding at Our Lady of the Valley Parish.

### *2. I have been at other weddings where certain “niceties” were permitted. Can I include them in the wedding at Our Lady of the Valley Parish?*

As has been previously stated, weddings are treated very seriously and reverently. All of the requirements of Church Law and Archdiocesan Law are observed. In addition, Parish guidelines and requirements remain in effect for all weddings that occur here, regardless of the clergyman asked to officiate. These requirements and guidelines are observed in order to ensure and protect the dignity of the sacrament that is being celebrated. Furthermore, they are based upon our experience of what “works” and “doesn’t work”, especially as it pertains to the logistics of our worship spaces.

### *3. Where will the Bride and Groom be placed during the Wedding? Where will the Wedding party be placed?*

Seeing as the Bride and Groom are the ministers of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, they will be seated in the Sanctuary in two chairs alongside the presiding Priest or Deacon. Chairs will be situated so as to face the altar and not the congregation. The remaining members of the bridal party will be seated in the first two pews. The men will be located on the right side as you approach the altar and the women on the left. During the Rite of Marriage, the Best Man and Maid or Matron of Honor, who will serve as the witnesses, will be invited forward to the altar. The remaining members of the wedding party may either join the Best Man and Maid of Honor at the front of the altar, or they may remain in the front pews. Either option will be acceptable.

*4. Will everyone be seated or standing during the bridal procession?*

Since the ceremony begins with only one procession, everyone will be standing for the entire procession. We do not divide up the procession, in order to create a more dramatic effect for the entrance of the Bride. As the procession begins, the musician will invite everyone in the congregation to please stand as the procession begins. No other arrangements or alterations will be permitted.

*5. I have a ring bearer and a flower girl. What are they permitted to do?*

A ring bearer and a flower girl are permitted to be a part of the procession. However, flower petals are not permitted to be thrown or tossed at any time. The wedding coordinators will make a concerted effort to help monitor this regulation.

*6. What if I have an uneven number of groomsmen and bridesmaids?*

During our final meeting to plan the Liturgy, we will discuss several options.

*7. What if I have more than one Best Man or more than one Bridesmaid? Will special seating be provided for them?*

The Church requires only two witnesses for the Sacrament of Marriage and a Church Clergy presider. Therefore, only two names will be officially entered into the record. However, they will be able to sign the ceremonial wedding certificate and will be afforded the appropriate placement in the bridal procession.

*8. I have a recently deceased parent or family member. Is there some way to memorialize them?*

We have had such requests made in the past and have been able to make some sort of accommodation especially in the Universal Prayers. For further information, please contact the Our Lady of the Valley Parish Pastor.

*9. If I bring my own clergy, can some of these guidelines be relaxed?*

The short answer is 'no'. As was mentioned, all weddings at Our Lady of the Valley Parish are conducted in the same manner. Only the Our Lady of the Valley Pastor has the authority to determine Parish Wedding Policies that are not mandated by Church Law or Archdiocesan Law.

*10. Who will prepare me for the wedding?*

Typically, the Priest or Deacon that will be officiating at your wedding will be responsible for preparing you for the wedding, in accordance with the guidelines that have been stated above. It is also necessary for the clergyman to contact the Our Lady of the Valley Parish Pastor for delegation.

*11. Who will be at the rehearsal? Who do I need to bring? Can I bring a wedding planner?*

From the standpoint of the parish, the Priest/Deacon and at least one member of the Wedding Coordinator Team will be present at the rehearsal, in order to ensure a comprehensive and efficient rehearsal. On the part of the Bride and Groom, it is necessary to have the entire Wedding Party present. Also, those that will serve as lectors for the First and Second Reading, and the Universal Prayers should be present. It is also recommended that anyone else that will be a part of the procession be at the rehearsal as well. While others are invited to attend the rehearsal, it is the consistent policy that only the Bride and Groom will have a “voice” at the rehearsal. Recommendations of a wedding planner, parents, or other persons will not be considered. This is, in effect, to prevent any unnecessary delays or conflicts at the rehearsal, as well as to both ensure the reverence and beauty of the celebration, and compliance with Catholic observance.

*12. Can I ask a non-Catholic person to participate in the wedding as a reader?*

Yes. Please remember, however, that there are certain things to consider when requesting a non-Catholic to read at your wedding. For instance, there are several biblical books that are contained in the Catholic Bible and not in the Protestant Bible.

Also, please remember, if you would like a non-Catholic to read at a Nuptial Mass, please inform the Pastor as soon as possible, for he must solicit permission from the Archbishop for such an arrangement at least 6-8 weeks in advance.

*13. Can I ask for a particular server to serve at the wedding?*

While a particular altar server may be requested, altar servers are ordinarily scheduled by the Parish Office. Since you are celebrating a sacrament, only those altar servers that have been properly trained and commissioned are permitted to serve at the wedding. However, if you would like to request a particular server, please contact the Parish Office to make such a request early on. Unauthorized servers that merely show up without having received approval will not be permitted to serve at the wedding.

*14. Do I need to provide Readers and/or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMOHC)?*

Yes. Please remember that your choices for readers and EMOHC (Mass only) should be Catholics in good standing. While it is possible to request that a non-Catholic serve as a reader, a non-Catholic may not serve as an EMOHC. All EMOHCs will be commissioned to serve in such a capacity by the Pastor during the wedding Mass. Again, if you would like to ask a non-Catholic to serve as a reader for the ceremony, please contact the Pastor so that appropriate permissions may be obtained from the Archbishop of Cincinnati, if applicable. At the ceremony, you will need two readers. The number of EMOHCs that will be needed will be determined during the liturgical planning meeting.

**XXII. SIGNATURE**

We, the undersigned, have read and understood the above-mentioned policies that are in effect for any wedding that takes place in the Collaborative Reading Region of OLSH and SSPP.

We also understand that these policies are in effect regardless of who the presiding minister may be and regardless of our status as parishioners or non-parishioners. We understand that if these policies are not accepted or respected, then the wedding will not be permitted to be celebrated in the Reading Region. We also understand that if the parish representatives that are involved in this process are not respected, the wedding will be cancelled.

We understand that it is our responsibility to contact the Priest or Deacon, Parish Musician, and Parish Secretary in a timely manner for any necessary appointments, planning and payments.

We understand that our signature signifies our acceptance of, and compliance with, the above-mentioned policies, and that failure to accept or comply with the guidelines and requirements of the Roman Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and the parishes of the Collaborative Pastoral Region of Reading, Ohio will result in the refusal of our wedding taking place.

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 BRIDE'S SIGNATURE

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 DATE

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 GROOM'S SIGNATURE

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 DATE

Please sign this page and return it to the Parish Office, or mail to: Our Lady of the Valley Parish, 330 West Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215. Please be informed that the finalization of the wedding date will not occur until we have received this signature sheet.