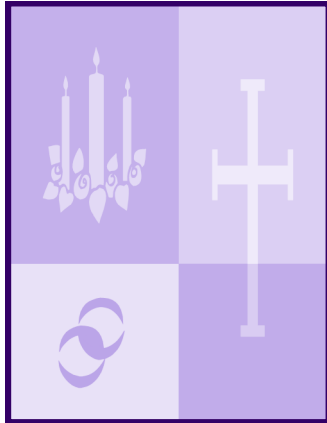


# THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

## And the two shall become one...



God is love — the very source of love, and it is this loving God who created us. Because we are created in the image of God, not only are we capable of loving one another, but love is the source and foundation of who we are and who we are called to be.

The love which is expressed in the marriage of two individuals is a witness to the Love of God for our world and in our world.

God's love for us is an unmerited gift, or Grace, that is abundant and steadfast. It is the dynamic and creative reality which breathes life into us, sustains us and invites us into everlasting life.

As Christians, we believe and understand the fullest expression of this life-giving and saving gift to be in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit breathes life and guides the Church, the people of God, through history. "The sacraments are 'by the Church' for she is the sacrament of Christ's action at work through the mission of the Holy Spirit. They are 'for the Church' in the sense that the sacraments make the Church,' since they manifest and communicate to everyone, above all in the Eucharist, the mystery of communion

with God who is love, One in three persons." (Catechism: Article 1113)

In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ. In Marriage we celebrate and witness to God's love for us.

In the celebration of the sacrament, as the ones committing yourselves to one another, you, the couple are the ones who administer the sacrament to each other. The priest acts in the name of the Lord, of the Church, and of the State as witness to your promise.

Marriage is properly celebrated in public, before a community. Your guests represent the community as witness to your promise and to assent to their support of you during your life long commitment to one another.

Love is patient;  
love is kind;  
love is not envious or  
boastful or arrogant or  
rude.

It does not insist on its  
own way.

It is not irritable or  
resentful;

it does not rejoice in  
wrongdoing,

but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things,  
hopes all things,  
endures all things.

Love never ends.

And now faith, hope and  
love abide, these three:  
and the greatest of these  
is love.

-1 Corinthians: 13

## My beloved is mine and I am my beloved's ...

The love between a man and a woman is a sign of God's tender, passionate and steadfast love for us.

Vatican II uses covenant language to describe the relationship that two people consent to in marriage.

Covenant is the biblical language that describes

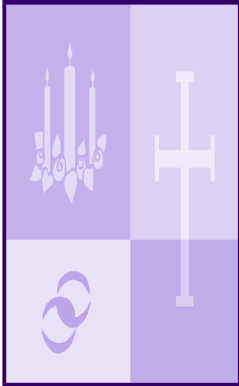
the relationship between God and God's people.

It is a relationship which is characterized by a mutual self-giving, a sense of reciprocity, of fidelity, faithfulness and care. It is a relationship which is freely entered into by both parties. It is a relationship founded in and

nurtured by the unmerited gift of love. It is open to and gives life in return.

This faithful and self-giving love is also Christ's gift to the Church and the Sacrament of Marriage is a sign of Christ's union with the Church.

In the Sacrament of Marriage, the gift given to both of you is the grace to love each other as Christ loves each of us, individually and communally. As Christ's love for us, this gift creates an indissoluble unity between the two of you and sanctifies you both on the day of your wedding and forever.



## ***The Sacrament of Marriage:***

***The Church understands marriage as a Sacrament: a celebration which symbolizes and signifies a Grace given by God to humanity. "Marriage is that sacrament in which a covenant is established between a man and woman, creating a partnership of the whole of life." (McKenna, p. 65) As such, the sacrament of marriage serves as a metaphor and a witness to God's faithful and enduring love for humanity.***

***Covenant is a key biblical theme found in the Hebrew Scriptures and is often presented as a marriage between God and Israel. Unlike a contract, in which commitment is spelled out in the specific duties and obligations of each party, commitment in a covenant of alliance or friendship is open-ended. "It is a pledge of personal loyalty to be sustained in changing and unpredictable circumstances. Marriage, therefore is a covenant, because it is a total commitment of persons to each other. It is not conditional on certain circumstances" (Helwig, p.72)***

***An integral part of the metaphor of covenant for God's love of humanity is the understanding that because of God's enduring fidelity the door is always open for us to return after we have turned away. We can see this motif repeated again and again in the Prophets. (Hosea) God's love is not only faithful and enduring, it is reconciling, liberating and salvific.***

***In the New Testament, marriage is used as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and his Church (Ephesians 5:25-33). Once again, as in the motif of Covenant, the redemptive and reconciling element of the relationship is stressed. Marriage as a sacrament is a sign and symbol of God's saving love.***

***All of this may seem foreign to our contemporary, secular society and may seem like a tremendous responsibility to place on people as individuals and as couples. But as a people of faith we know ourselves to be called to a deeper, fuller experience of life and one another. Religious symbols and rituals guide us to these deeper experiences. Sacraments challenge us to become what we celebrate. They challenge us to look at our selves and our world and to reconcile what is with God's promise of what ought to be.***

***A couple who chooses to commit to one another in this sacramental union enters into a life of witnessing not only to God's providential, abiding and creative love, but God's liberating, reconciling and saving love. The married couple does this through their mutual care for one another, their openness to raising children together and their growing together in faith. As witnesses to God's love, the couple engages in an integral ministry for the building up of God's kingdom in our world.***

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

### Marriage: A Sacrament of Mission

How we celebrate the Sacrament of marriage reflects the Church's understanding of the sacrament — that in the unity of the husband and wife is the image of the enduring and faithful love of God.

#### *Elements of a Marriage Bond:*

- ⇒ **A baptized man and woman**
  - ⇒ **The Freedom to enter into marriage (i.e. not being under any constraint and not impeded by any natural or Church law)**
  - ⇒ **Public Expression of Consent: The presiding priest or deacon, in the name of the Church, receives the consent and gives the blessing. The Church requires the couple to marry according to ecclesiastical form (sacramental ritual of the Church) because the Body of Christ as an integral dimension of marriage is visibly expressed by the presence of the Church's minister and witnesses. The Consent includes 3 essential intentions:**
    - ◆ **Unity (the intention of an exclusive love)**
    - ◆ **Indissolubility (the intention of a permanent love)**
    - ◆ **Openness to fertility (the intention of a love open to children)**
- This Mutual consent to live together as husband and wife constitutes the primary sign and words of the sacramental ritual**
- ⇒ **The 4th element of the marriage bond is sexual consummation**

#### *The Exchange of Rings*

- ⇒ **The exchange of rings is another symbol of the Sacrament of Marriage. It symbolizes the fidelity and permanence that is expressed in the expression of mutual consent. As such, the exchange of rings always follows the declaration of marriage and does not precede it.**

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

### Important Information regarding the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Roman Catholic Church

#### *Age:*

- ⇒ **A man must be at least 16 years of age**
- ⇒ **A woman must be at least 14 years of age**

#### *Prior Marriage:*

- ⇒ **A person may not enter into a new marriage until the invalidity of the prior marriage has been established.**
- ⇒ **Depending on the circumstances surrounding the previous marriage it will be necessary to obtain an annulment or other forms of dispensations.**
- ⇒ **Before beginning any of these processes, the previous marriage must be dissolved civilly (through divorce).**
- ⇒ **These processes will take time and will involve meeting with a priest and/or being in touch with the Marriage Tribunal Office of the local diocese. It is important that prior to making any plans or setting any dates for your wedding that the issue of a prior union has been resolved.**

#### *Inter-faith and Inter-denomination:*

**Interfaith and Interdenominational couples are very welcome here at Our Lady of Lourdes and you should feel free to discuss any special concerns you might have in the celebration of the Sacrament with one of our priests. There are several important things to note about the process:**

- ⇒ **Prior to the marriage, a special dispensation must be made called a “Disparity of Cult”. For this dispensation there are several conditions that are necessary:**
  - 1. The Catholic partner must declare that he or she will be so all they can to safeguard and nurture their faith and make a sincere promise to do all in their power to have their children baptized and raised in the Catholic Church.**
  - 2. The non-Catholic partner is informed about these promises and is fully aware of the obligations of the Catholic partner.**
  - 3. Both individuals are instructed in how the Church understands marriage.**

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

### Important Information regarding the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Roman Catholic Church

#### *Form of Marriage:*

- ⇒ Catholics are obliged to observe canonical form when they enter into marriage. By 'canonical form' is meant that Catholics must marry in the presence of a properly delegated priest or deacon, and in the presence of two witnesses (at least one of which is Roman Catholic).
- ⇒ The Priest must ask for the couple to exchange their consent in his presence.
- ⇒ In cases on interdenominational and interfaith marriages, where there is a desire to include a minister from another Faith tradition, it is possible to obtain a Dispensation from Canonical Form

#### *Place for a Marriage Celebration:*

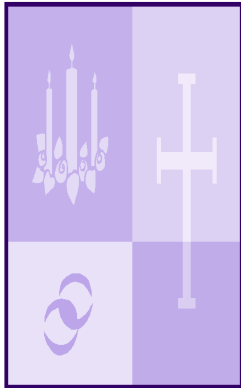
- ⇒ Marriage is properly celebrated in one of the partners local parish.
- ⇒ If Lourdes is not your parish, a letter from your parish priest must be sent giving permission for your marriage to take place here.
- ⇒ In the Archdiocese of Toronto, it is very rare to receive permission for a wedding to take place outside of the church (eg. In a garden or a hall), except in cases of interfaith weddings.

#### *Are you currently in a Civil Marriage*

- ⇒ If you are currently married civilly and would like to have your marriage recognized by the Church it is possible to have what is called a **Convalidation**. This happens by the couple renewing their consent according to the proper canonical form.
- ⇒ It is important to realize that the process is the same as for couples who have not already been married civilly and that all necessary dispensations, etc. will need to be obtained in the process.

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

## Wedding Check List



### ***Have You.....***

#### ***Approximately 1 year Before the Wedding:***

- Been in contact with the Parish regarding your wedding**
- Completed and Submitted the Prenuptial Questionnaire**
- For couples from outside Our Lady Of Lourdes parish, submitted a letter of permission from your parish**
- Spoken with a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Staff regarding a time line for preparation and a possible date for your wedding**
- Registered for a Marriage Preparation Course**
- Been in contact with one of our priests to confirm a date and the church for your wedding**
- Customary offering will be given in advance before the Marriage Preparation begins**

#### ***Approximately 6 months:***

- Completed a Marriage Preparation Course & submitted Marriage Preparation Course certificate**
- Obtained a copy of your Baptismal Certificate(s) and brought them into the Parish Office for your wedding file**
- Submitted the names and addresses of your primary witnesses (i.e. the best man and maid of honour)**

#### ***Approximately 1 to 3 months:***

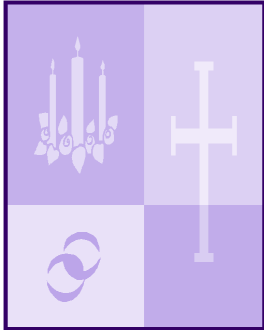
- Picked up a Marriage License from City Hall and dropped it off at the Parish office.**
- Scheduled your rehearsal time**
- Submitted Selection of Readings**

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Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1M4

Phone: 416-924-6257  
Fax: 416-960-6206  
E-mail: [helen@lourdes.to](mailto:helen@lourdes.to)

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH

Important Information regarding the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Roman Catholic Church



***We are happy you have chosen to be married at Our Lady Of Lourdes Church. You have chosen an active parish that is open to the public from 8am until dusk on most days. In order to facilitate your wedding preparation and make things flow smoothly on your special day, we ask you to take special consideration of the following:***

### ***Scheduling:***

- ⇒ ***Normally, weddings are scheduled on Saturdays at one of the following times: 10am and 2pm or 3pm***
- ⇒ ***These times allow for the most flexibility given the many liturgical and sacramental demands of the parish and to allow enough room for decorating and picture taking .***
- ⇒ ***By way of exception, weddings may be scheduled at other times during the week depending on the availability of the church and the priest.***
- ⇒ ***Due to the liturgical and parish demands at Lourdes, we do not schedule weddings during the Christmas-New Year's period, on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (February 11), During the season of Lent, Holy Week, or on the weekend of our Parish Bazaar in June.***

### ***Decorating:***

- ⇒ ***Flowers and other modest decorations are permitted in the church. NO petal throwing, arch flowers & sash in between pews.***
- ⇒ ***Decorating takes place just prior to the wedding ceremony. Normally your decorator will have approximately 30 minutes to set up flowers, etc.***
- ⇒ ***We have daily masses scheduled at 8am; 12:10 pm and 5:15pm. Decorating for your wedding should not interrupt the Mass in any way.***

### ***Wedding License & Witness Information:***

- ⇒ ***In order to ensure the proper and timely preparation of your marriage file we ask you to drop off your marriage license along with the mailing envelope provided to the Parish Office 2 to 3 weeks before your wedding.***
- ⇒ ***For the Marriage records, the Parish Office needs the names and addresses of your witnesses. Please drop these off when you drop off your wedding license.***