

Preparing for Marriage and Planning Your Wedding at the Church of St. Peter

2600 Maine Street Quincy, Illinois 62301
(217) 222-3155 www.cospq.org church@cospq.org

Congratulations on your engagement. You've taken an enormous step by choosing to spend your lives together through Catholic marriage. The Catholic Church not only supports your love, but it seeks to support your entire married life by helping you to prepare for this very important Sacrament. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you prepare for a committed life-long relationship with one another, blessed in the love of Jesus Christ through His Church.

God Bless!

Father Leo, Pastor

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church takes your love and desire to be married very seriously. Our Church believes that marriage is an exclusive life-long commitment between a man and a woman for the good of each other and the procreation and education of children. Through our marriage preparation process, the Church provides special counseling, education and support for couples getting ready to take this important step. The process aims to do three things:

- 1. to help you assess whether you are ready for marriage:* You will meet with a Catholic priest who will ensure you are free to marry in the Church and guide you through a process to ascertain you are ready for the life-long commitment of a Catholic marriage.
- 2. To encourage you and your future spouse to address issues that will impact your life together:* Through a pre-marital inventory and a Church-sponsored marriage preparation program, you will be guided to identify issues you need to resolve before marriage.
- 3. To help you plan a Catholic marriage celebration:* Your Catholic wedding will be a liturgical event that takes place at the Church of St. Peter. The Catholic Church and the Church of St. Peter have rules to preserve the sanctity and the beauty of your wedding within the Catholic faith tradition.

Preparing for Marriage

STEP ONE: At least *six months before your proposed wedding date*, phone and arrange to meet with the Pastor and/or priest. The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois requires that you contact the Pastor/priest of your parish at least six months before your proposed wedding date to arrange an initial meeting. Weddings frequently are scheduled more than a year in advance! Please contact the parish office by phone or e-mail church@cospq.org in order to arrange a meeting with the Pastor or priest.

During your meeting, Pastor/priest will:

- make sure you are free to marry (i.e., no prior marriages, etc.)
- outline requirements for the marriage to be valid in the Catholic Church and for weddings to take place at the Church of St. Peter, Quincy (i.e., at least one person must be an active, practicing Catholic and a registered parishioner or child of a registered parishioner)
- cover co-habitation guidelines.
- Welcome Packet that includes wedding intake form, checklist, and our policies for celebrating marriage in the Catholic church.

STEP TWO: Fill out the Wedding Intake Form included in your packet that you received at your first meeting with Pastor/priest and return to the parish office within two weeks.

STEP THREE: You will receive an invitation via email from the Foccus test company. The test may be taken in the privacy of your own home. This questionnaire identifies issues that could derail a lifelong marriage commitment. After you complete the inventory, you and your fiancé/e will meet with the Pastor/priest to discuss the results. Most couples meet with the priest for two follow-up counseling sessions.

STEP FOUR: Call to set up a consultation with the parish Music Director, Monica Scholz at m.scholz@cospq.org or 217-214-0131.

STEP FIVE: Every couple married in the Catholic Church in our Diocese is required to attend a formal and approved marriage preparation program. Available options include a one-day Pre-Cana Workshop (typically offered in the spring and fall) or Evenings for the Engaged. You will be contacted with more information about these marriage preparation options.

Q. What is an active, practicing Catholic?

A. According to the precepts of the Church, an active, practicing Catholic is distinguished by the following characteristics. By definition, an active, practicing Catholic:

- Participates in Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation avoids activities that “hinder renewal of soul and body”;
- Leads a sacramental life receiving Holy Communion & the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly;
- Is confirmed and continues to study and advance the cause of Christ;
- Observes the marriage laws of the Church, including giving religious training to their children;
- Strengthens and supports the Church locally and universally;
- Does penance, including abstaining from meat and fasting as required;
- Joins in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church.

(Adapted from *Handbook for Today's Catholic* © 1994, Liguori Publications)

COHABITATION *(Living together before marriage)*

Choosing to live together before reception of the Sacrament of Marriage presents particular challenges to the local faith community. *The Roman Catholic Church does not condone cohabitation.* According to church law those who live together prior to marriage place themselves outside of the grace of the Church. This means they choose not to be active, practicing Catholics in the fullest sense (*reception of the Eucharist is not allowed under these conditions*). It is recognized that many couples do choose to live together before marriage because of social or economic reasons. The following guidelines exist to minimize any scandal and recognize this reality yet still allow for the reception of the Sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church. Couples who live together before marriage are encouraged to live separately until the Sacrament of Matrimony is received. *Those couples who are unwilling or are unable to separate may be married in the Church through the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and the Exchange of Vows (not a Mass).* They may have two witnesses (Best Man and Maid of Honor). This service is to be low key with immediate family and all elaborate trappings are to be avoided. This service then is kept simple as it formally recognizes the informal arrangement that is already occurring, namely the cohabitation (living together). An evening ceremony would be very appropriate.

Q. Neither my fiancé/e nor I live in Quincy. Is it possible to get married at St. Peter's?

Yes, providing your parents are registered parishioners and you are an active, practicing Catholic. However, you will need the written permission of the chaplain at your Newman Center or military base or the Pastor of the new parish where you are registered. You will also need to arrange to go through the required marriage preparation process for the diocese in which you reside. *Please note: you will still have to arrange an initial meeting with our Pastor and return the Wedding Intake Form before your wedding is scheduled.* You also will need to observe all requirements for weddings in our parish church.

Q. May a priest from another parish marry us?

As priests of the Church of St. Peter, our Pastor/Parochial Vicar are the proper ministers to assist with all marriages in this parish and are responsible under Canon Law for all marriages performed in this church. Other priests and deacons can also celebrate with their permission.

Planning Your Catholic Marriage Celebration

Every Catholic marriage celebration is a sacred liturgy – an act of worship where family and friends gather to praise God who has called you to celebrate your life-long commitment through marriage. In addition, you have chosen to celebrate your wedding in our parish church – the main place of solemn worship for the 1,600 families who belong to our family of faith.

Your wedding is very important to the life of our parish, but we ask you to remember that it is *only one of many sacred events that take place in our church each and every day.* We trust that you will extend proper respect for our space, our faith traditions, and members of our Pastoral Staff who have been trained and entrusted by the Church to preserve the sanctity of

every sacrament celebrated within our walls. As a Catholic liturgy, your marriage celebration should reflect the Gospel message of simplicity, honesty, and a genuine concern for others. **The following requirements share one purpose - to ensure that your marriage celebration reflects the sanctity, the dignity and the importance of the vows you will exchange.**

What Type or Marriage Celebration Is Most Appropriate? During Mass or Outside of Mass?

When two active, practicing Catholics are marrying, a marriage celebration during Mass may be celebrated. In other cases, marriage outside of Mass during a Liturgy of the Word service is the norm. The Church has two very beautiful marriage celebrations outside of Mass - one when a Catholic is marrying a baptized non-Catholic and the other when a Catholic is marrying an unbaptized person. Each option is sensitive to the faith tradition of both parties being married.

All Catholic weddings *will* include *Liturgy of the Word* and the *Rite of Marriage*. They also *may* include an *Entrance Processional* and *Recessional*. The marriage celebration during Mass also includes the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Wedding Masses are normally celebrated only when two active, practicing Catholics are being married for an excellent reason: the Catholic Church does not permit non-Catholics to receive Holy Communion, which we believe to be the Sacred Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

When Can Weddings Be Scheduled?

Catholic marriage celebrations normally are not scheduled during Lent or Advent. Friday evening weddings are encouraged and provide greater leisure and flexibility. Saturday weddings may be scheduled at 2 p.m. The marriage celebration normally takes less than an hour. You are welcome to arrive at the church up to two hours before your wedding and, for Saturday weddings, remain for photography until 3:30 p.m. The church must be vacated by that time because of our Saturday Reconciliation and Mass schedules. *No exceptions can be made.* A half-hour rehearsal will be scheduled at church prior to the day of the wedding.

Participants in Your Marriage Celebration

As you plan your wedding, you'll want to give some thought to ways you can involve family and friends. The following information based on the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois' Guidelines for Marriage may be helpful:

- *The assembly* includes everyone who is gathered to celebrate and witness your marriage.
- *The bride and the groom* are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage.
- *The priest* presides and is the official witness for the Church. When a wedding is outside of Mass, a deacon may preside.

- *2 witnesses* are required under Canon Law (think “maid/matron of honor” and “best man.”) Other attendants serve an honorary rather than a liturgical role.
- *Lectors* proclaim the Word of God. They should be good public speakers. You may invite 3 people to participate as lectors: two for scripture readings and one to present the intercessions.
- *Ministers of Hospitality* greet guests at the door, hand them a Wedding Program, and help them find a seat. Ministers of Hospitality may include a guest book attendant at the church, a person who distributes Wedding Programs, and ushers.
- *The Cantor*, a vocalist trained in liturgical music, leads the congregation in song and the psalm from the ambo. St. Peter’s Music Director will arrange a cantor, help you plan your music, and may be separately contracted to provide music as well. *The parish Music Director is the accompanist for most all Wedding liturgies*, and she can also help you select additional musicians.

For wedding Masses only:

- *Gift bearers* present the bread and wine to the priest. You may choose up to 4 active, practicing Catholics.
- *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* have been commissioned to help distribute the Body and Blood of Christ. Normally 2 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are enough.
- *Altar servers* are not required. If you choose to include them, they should be experienced. If they have not served at St. Peter’s, they should attend your rehearsal.

Wedding People Questions

Q. Are there any restrictions on the number of bridesmaids and groomsmen we have?

The Catholic Church requires that you have 2 witnesses. Other bridesmaids and groomsmen are members of the assembly who you choose to honor.

Q. What about flower girls and ring bearers?

As Catholics, we value and care deeply about children. However, flower girls and ring bearers are not required and may detract from the joyful solemnity of your wedding ceremony. Please consider the ages of the children you would ask and keep in mind that St. Peter’s does not allow wagons, strollers or other child conveyors in the wedding processional or recessional. Also please note that flower girls are not allowed to drop petals, which can cause guests to trip.

Planning Music for Your Wedding Liturgy

*Before you begin selected wedding music or contact any musicians, you need to contact our parish Music Director **Monica Scholz**. Monica will help you plan music for your wedding and can help to arrange for an approved cantor to proclaim the psalm and lead the congregation in singing. Monica is ordinarily the pianist/organist for all parish weddings.*

The Catholic Church requires that *all* music used in a Catholic wedding liturgy be “sacred music.” St. Peter’s requires that all wedding music be approved by Monica in advance. There is a large range of sacred music available, and Monica will help you select appropriate music that best fits your taste and preference.

Because the Catholic wedding is intended to “draw in” all who are present, we encourage couples to involve their guests in song. To schedule a meeting with Monica or discuss any music questions, please phone or e-mail her at m.scholz@cospq.org.

***The Music Director’s fee for accompaniment at your wedding of \$150 is due *by the night of the rehearsal*.

***If you choose to use one of our Parish cantors, the fee will be \$75. This can be paid directly to the cantor.

Q. Does the Church really have guidelines for music at weddings?

Yes. The Church details these guidelines in two liturgy documents, *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today*. These guidelines are intended to preserve the sanctity and the solemnity of the wedding ceremony.

Q. Does this mean I can’t have my favorite popular song at my Church wedding?

Sorry, but that’s exactly what it means. Your favorite popular song is great for your reception, but Catholic liturgies require sacred music. Our Music Director will help you choose appropriate music that best meets your taste and preference.

Q. Why are parish cantors required?

The cantor is a prayer leader, not just a musician who is a soloist. The cantor is a musician who also has received special training to lead the congregation in song during liturgies. The cantor also will proclaim the psalm in song from the ambo during your marriage celebration.

Flowers and Decorations

Our church is the main sacred space used by our entire parish family for liturgical celebrations. Decorations are painstakingly planned to ensure they are tasteful and liturgically correct for the season of the Church Year being observed. While church decorations cannot be removed or altered, you will be able to provide flowers or plants and specify additional decorating elements to make your wedding unique.

Guest Book Stand

We can provide a stand for your guest book. It is up to you to provide the guest book and pen.

Flowers in the Sanctuary

Flowers can add beauty to your wedding ceremony, honor special family members living and dead, and draw the entire congregation at St. Peter’s into your marriage

celebration. Our church has a wide assortment of appropriately scaled vases and silk flower arrangements that are available for your use at no charge. Decorating guidelines follow:

- 1) No flowers or plants are allowed over the tabernacle.
- 2) No flowers or plants are allowed on the altar (table of sacrifice) or may touch the altar.
- 3) Pedestals may be placed in front of the ambo for arrangements to honor deceased relatives.

Aisle Runners

Aisle runners are *prohibited* because they are a hazard to the wedding party and guests alike.

Common Decorating Questions

Q. When should I remove my flowers from the church?

Please have them moved no later than 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, and right after photography for weddings at other times.

Q. May I change the church's seasonal decorations?

No. Our church is decorated to for the specific liturgical season of the year in the worship space that serves our entire parish. However, you may add flowers, greenery, swags, or the parish wedding banner.

Capturing the Moment: Photography and Videography

Most couples wish to have photos or videos taken at church on their wedding day to capture the place and the special moments of the ceremony. Our goal is to support you in a way that respects our worship space and does not keep people from being fully engaged in your wedding liturgy. Please keep in mind that Jesus is present in our tabernacle. We must insist on proper reverence and respect in our church at all times. Our photography and videography rules are designed to preserve the reverent environment and keep our church from being changed into a photographer's studio. We ask that you keep posed photography in our worship space to a minimum. As the bride and groom, you can help us by understanding our photography and videography requirements and sharing them with your wedding party, photographer and videographer. Your assistance will help to preserve the sanctity and dignity of your marriage celebration.

Capturing the Moment: Posed Church Photographs

- You are welcome to take posed photographs until 1/2 hour before your wedding and for up to 30 minutes after the ceremony. The church must be vacated by 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

- No altar furnishings or decorations (including those in place for your wedding) may be moved and no extra backdrops or decorations (other than those that are in place for the wedding) may be brought into the church.
- Posed photos in the sanctuary may only be taken in front of the altar. Photos in other parts of our sanctuary (including the ambo, the tabernacle area, the priest's chair, and by musical instruments) are prohibited.
- No inappropriate poses, behavior or language can be tolerated. No smoking, food, or beverages are allowed in our worship space, and no alcoholic beverages are permitted on our church property.

Please remind your wedding party that anyone violating these rules will be reminded one time to cooperate. If there don't cooperate, they will be asked to leave. If such action is required before the wedding, the person(s) will be unable to participate in the ceremony.

Capturing the Moment: Photographs and Videos during the Wedding:

- Photographs and videos may be taken during the ceremony, but photographers and videographers must be discreet.
- Flash photography and extra lights for video are prohibited.
- The photographer and videographer may take pictures of the wedding party from the front of the church only during the processional. All other photographs and operator-assisted videos must be taken from the rear of the church
- The videographer may also set up a camera on a tripod by the family chapel before the ceremony for non-operator-assisted videos.

Q. Why does the Church of St. Peter have so many rules for photographers and videographers? Unfortunately, they are necessary to preserve the sanctity of our church and your marriage celebration. Sadly, there have been many, many instances of photographers and videographers "taking over" at weddings and treating our sanctuary like a photo studio; wedding party members forgetting they are in worship space; and Saturday after wedding photography extending beyond the 3:30 p.m. deadline, making it hard to have the church ready for parish Reconciliation and Mass. Please help us by ensuring your photographer, videographer and members of your wedding party understand and follow our rules.

The Evening of Your Rehearsal...

Rehearsals at St. Peter's are scheduled before the wedding. They normally last 30 to 35 minutes. We ask that you and your wedding party arrive promptly and meet in the narthex (the space inside the main doors to our church).

What to Bring to Your Rehearsal:

Adams County marriage license:

Who Needs to Attend Your Rehearsal:

All Marriage Celebrations:

- Bride and groom*
- Pastor (or Pastor's designee)*
- Couples' parents
- Two witnesses*
- Other attendants, ushers, flower girl and ring bearer
- Lectors with their readings
- Photographer/videographer (if they've never photographed a wedding at St. Peter's)

For Wedding Masses Only:

- Gift bearers
- Servers (if you've arranged for servers who have never served at St. Peter's)

The musicians do not attend the rehearsal.

** Required for Catholic Marriage*

The Day of Your Wedding...

2 hours before your ceremony:

Flowers should be delivered.

Up to 2 hours before your ceremony:

Preparation areas for the wedding party are available: The Martha Jane Room in the lower level of the church will be available for women and the Father Bauer Prayer Room, next to the sanctuary, for men. You may arrange to bring food and non-alcoholic beverages to the cafeteria or the Martha Jane Room. We assume that you will treat church property with respect and will clean up after yourselves. We encourage you and members of your wedding party arrive at the church dressed for the wedding and minimize the amount of time you spend at the church before the wedding.

*Please be aware that the Martha Jane room will not be locked during the ceremony and therefore, leaving valuables there will be at your own risk.

1½ hour before your ceremony:

The sanctuary area in front of the altar will be available for posed photographs. Please refer to our photography and videography requirements. You, your wedding party and your photographer are expected to maintain reverence and respect in our worship area. Please remember: this is *not* a photographer's studio.

After Your Ceremony:

Dismissing Guests and Receiving Lines: Due to a tight time limitations in our church, we respectfully discourage couples from dismissing wedding guests row by row or having lengthy receiving lines at church. In all cases, the church must be vacated after Saturday weddings by 3:30 p.m. We regret that there can be no exceptions. Rice, Birdseed, Rose Petals, Balloons, etc.: St. Peter's does not allow rice, birdseed, rose petals, balloons, etc. to be thrown or released on church property.

½ hour before your ceremony:

Pre-wedding photography in church is completed.
Guest book ready, staffed.
Ushers ready to seat guests.
Pre-ceremony music begins.

15 minutes before your ceremony:

Guest book stand put away.

5 minutes before your ceremony:

Remaining guests should take their seats.
Wedding party lines up for processional.

Up to ½ hour after your ceremony or by 3:30 p.m. Saturday:

Sanctuary in front of altar is available for posed photographs.
Personal belongings plus flowers you plan to use at the reception should be removed.

Fees and Honorarium:

There are a number of expenses the Church incurs for weddings. We therefore charge a fee of \$300 for couples married at our church. This fee should be paid to St. Peter Parish *by the night of the rehearsal*. This fee includes:

- Pre-marriage inventory and marriage preparation costs;
- Use of church facilities for the rehearsal and up to two hours before and one-half hour after the wedding;
- Normal and customary custodial services before, during and after the wedding ceremony;
- Use of church decorations (silk flower arrangements, candelabra, vases, marriage banner and swags);

Priest's honorarium is \$100. This fee is due *by the night of the rehearsal*.

***The fee does not cover any damage or extra cleaning resulting from your wedding.