**St. Gertrude’s Catholic Church**

690 King St. E., Oshawa, ON L1H 1G5

905-433-0828

Website: stgertrudesos.archtoronto.org Email: stgertrudesos@archtoronto.org

GUIDELINES



*FOR THE*

*CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE*

**PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE**

*Dear Newly Engaged,*

**Congratulations!**

You have made a decision, one of the very most important decisions of your life. We at St. Gertrude’s Parish are happy for you and will try to help you prepare for your wedding. While a wedding celebration lasts only a day, marriage is a lifetime. It is a covenant relationship which must be freely entered into with the ideals of fidelity, perpetuity, openness to the possibility of children, maturity, and the capacity to live out the vocation of marriage.

The Catholic Church is a community of Christian believers and you have asked this community to witness your marriage and celebrate with you. We believe that Marriage is one of the seven Sacraments instituted by Christ Himself; a visible sign of God’s invisible loving presence. This special Sacrament will give the couple the necessary graces to deepen and enrich their love in the relationship of Christian marriage. Today there is more emphasis on the lifelong graces of marriage and on the couple’s response to those graces. Sacramental marriage is not just a one-time magic shot to see couples through life. Rather it is a lifelong blessing as couples will continually reaffirm their “yes” to each other. When they cooperate with God’s graces in marriage, they acknowledge, draw upon and witness to the power and presence of Christ in their lives.

Since the laws of any community reflect what it believes, the marriage laws of the Catholic Church were compiled over the past 2,000 years, not to make it difficult to get married, but to help couples prepare for this lifetime union of love. As you begin your preparation for marriage, the Church is here to assist you in every way possible so that you will utilize these next few months to grow in your relationship with each other as well as with Christ and the Church. Our pastor will be most happy to help you in any way.

Your wedding is one of the most important events in your life. The following guidelines are meant to aid you in your preparations and set out for you the requirements of the Church and Parish for your wedding celebration. Please feel free to discuss any questions, problems or concerns with the Pastor.

We hope that the guidelines for Catholic Marriage in the parish of St. Gertrude’s will be helpful to you as you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

***Your Christian community of St. Gertrude’s offers you our prayers and support for a fruitful and blessed married life.***

***God Bless,***

***Fr. Michael Hughes, Pastor***

**1. MARRIAGE POLICY AT ST. GERTRUDE’S**

Church law specifies that the normal place for marriage is the parish of the bride or groom.

Consequently, Parishes restrict weddings to:

a) Parishioners who live within the parish boundaries

b) Registered parishioners who live outside the boundaries and have been attending

and financially supporting the parish for at least 6 months prior to the initial interview

with the Pastor.

***2.* BOOKING DATES FOR MARRIAGE**

A couple wishing to be married at St. Gertrude’s or within the Archdiocese of Toronto are asked to

Contact the Parish a year in advance of the planned wedding date. This will allow

sufficient time for a couple to attend the required marriage preparation classes.

***No wedding date can be set before the initial interview with the pastor.***

1. **CALL US**: Telephone the Parish Office during regular business hours at (905)433-0828

or email us at [stgertrudesos@archtoronto.org](mailto:stgertrudesos@archtoronto.org) and ask to make an appointment

with the priest to discuss your possible marriage.

Note: the office is closed each Tuesday as well as Thursday afternoon.

1. **FIRST MEETING**: At the first meeting, the priest wants to begin to get to know you

and help plan what will be one of the most joyful and meaningful events in your life.

A Christian wedding begins a life-long marriage within the Christian community.

If a marriage in this church is possible at this time, the priest will set a date for the wedding

and you will receive a Wedding Package.

***Note****:* ***If either party has been previously married, a date may not be set until the***

***Bishop’s Office has been consulted.***

1. **MORE MEETINGS...?** At least one more meeting will follow, where the pre-nuptial investigation

will be completed to fulfill the church and civil law requirements before Matrimony.

The priest may also wish to discuss your thoughts about the marriage course you will complete,

and he’ll be glad to answer any questions you have.

For Catholics, updated baptismal certificates, issued within six months of the date of wedding,

must be obtained and provided to the parish prior to the marriage. Furthermore, the couple

will need to obtain a Marriage License from the Government of Ontario., usually only

obtainable within 3 months of the date of the wedding.

**D**) **IN THE WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING:**

Decisions relating tothe wedding rehearsal time, arranging time of flower delivery,

choice of readings from the Sacred Scriptures and Exchange of Vows for the ceremony, etc.

will have to be made and settled. You may contact our wedding coordinator and/or

the priest to finalize these in the weeks before the wedding. You should aim to have your

marriage license ready for delivery to the church for further processing at least a

month before the planned wedding date, as well as your donation offering to the

Church for the celebration of your marriage at the Church.

**3. TIMES FOR MARRIAGE**

A Wedding may be scheduled on Saturday afternoons between 12:00noon and 2:00pm or on another weekday,

as long as it does not conflict with other parish activities. Weddings are not allowed on Sundays in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

**4. MARRIAGE INSTRUCTION**

No marriage may be celebrated until the couple has completed a Catholic marriage

preparation course. Many of these are offered online today but there is a fee payable to the provider. There are also a few in-person options available in the GTA and other local parishes.

**See Appendix II** at the back of this handout. If you are having difficulty settling this, notify the parish office.

**5. PRIEST FOR MARRIAGE**

The Parish Pastor will normally preside at the wedding. Visiting priests are always welcome to join the Pastor and concelebrate, but if that Priest is serving outside of the Archdiocese of Toronto, approval is required from the Chancery Head Office of the Archdiocese of Toronto. Leave sufficient time for this to be processed. Requests for another Priest from the Archdiocese of Toronto to officiate at the wedding will be taken under consideration and may officiate with prior permission and delegation from the Parish Priest.

**6. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED**

**A) BAPTISM CERTICATE:**

Every Catholic being married must provide theparish with a **newly issued updated certificate** of

Baptism (issued within 6 months of the date of the wedding).

Please contact your church of Baptism immediately after your first appointment.

A Non-Catholic Christian, if baptized, should also provide proof of Baptism.

**B) MARRIAGE LICENSE:**

The couple must obtain a Marriage License prior to the wedding date. This usually can only be issued

within 3 months of the date of the wedding. The license is obtained in person from the Government

of Ontario. A fee is involved. Please bring it to the parish office at least ONE MONTH before the

wedding along with your donation offering to the Church.

**C) WITNESSES:**

Required by the Government & the Church. The two (2) witnesses must be at least 18 years old.

A non-Catholic may be chosen to be one of the official witnesses.

Please furnish the parish office with the names and addresses of your 2 witnesses.

**D**) **CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION:**

Proof of completion of marriage preparation course is required, prior to the celebration of the Marriage.

Please do not delay taking this preparation until the last few months before your wedding, as you will

have too much on your plate and miss getting the full benefit of the program.

**E**) **PREVIOUS MARRIAGE:**

If there has been a previous marriage for either party, the following documents are required.

i) An authentic certificate or satisfactory proof of death of spouse, if applicable.

ii) An official Declaration of Nullity from the proper Catholic Marriage Tribunal.

iii) Proof that the prior marriage for the Catholic party did not take place in the Catholic Church.

**N.B.: IN THE EVENT OF A PRIOR MARRIAGE, NO DATE FOR THE MARRIAGE CAN BE**

**GIVEN UNTIL FREEDOM TO MARRY HAS BEEN DOCUMENTED AND APPROVED**

**BY THE OFFICE OF SPIRITUAL AFFAIRS AT HEAD OFFICE (The Chancery).**

**F) PARENTAL CONSULTATION:**

Parents (or guardians) must be consulted if one of the persons to be married is under 21 years of age.

**7. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION**

1. **Prayer and Mass**

It is earnestly recommended that the couple prepare themselves for marriage spiritually through

regular daily prayer, scriptural meditation and faithful participation at Sunday Mass each week.

**B) Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation**

All Catholic couples are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly and especially

a week or two before their wedding day either at your home parish or another Parish of your choosing

or close to your workplace. Appointments for individual confessions can be made at most parishes outside

the scheduled times.

**C) Holy Communion**:

According to the laws of the Church, Holy Communion cannot be given to the non-Catholic guests and

attendees. (1Col. 11:27-29). It’s important that this be explained to those non-Catholic members

of the wedding party, family members and guests.

However, non-Catholic guests would be most welcome to come forward at Communion time to

receive a blessing if they wish.

“It is a consequence of the sad divisions within Christianity that we cannot extend to fellow Christians not of the Catholic faith a general invitation to receive communion for the reason that there is not a shared common faith as to the reality and meaning of the Eucharist. Catholics believe that in the Eucharist celebration the bread and wine are changed (transubstantiation) into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and that His one eternal sacrifice for our salvation on Good Friday is made present in the Mass for our worship and nourishment. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not in full union with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist, and for which we must all pray.” (National Council of Catholic Bishops).

**8. INTERFAITH** **MARRIAGES**

Marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another denomination, or with an unbaptized

person is celebrated with an “Interfaith Ceremony”, that is, **without the Mass**. This allows both

families to participate fully in the Marriage Ceremony along with their friends.

**9. PLANNING THE LITURGY**

A wedding marks the beginning of a sacramental married life. The couple is encouraged to make

their marriage celebration personal by planning the ceremony with the presiding priest, particularly

with regard to the choice of Readings from the Word of God and the choice amongst the options

on offer for their Exchange of their wedding Vows.

**A) SCRIPTURE:**

The couple may choose the readings to be proclaimed from Sacred Scripture at their

wedding from a selection from the planning booklet provided by the Church.

**B) LECTORS:**

The couple may choose a mature person to proclaim the first and second

readings from Sacred Scripture. The reader must be a baptized Christian and proclaim the readings

clearly and devoutly, hopefully with prior experience of having done so.

**C) ALTAR SERVERS:**

The parish will try to provide altar servers for the wedding celebration.

We ask you to donate $20 to each of the two servers, if available. You can either

bring the money to the rehearsal or the best man can give this directly to the altar servers

on the day of the wedding before the celebration begins.

**D) MUSIC:**

Please email the parish office for contact details for our musicians.

All music/hymns sung at weddings must be SACRED MUSIC. It is the responsibility of the couple

to contact one of the parish musicians and to pay their stipend prior to the wedding celebration.

***Pre-recorded music is not allowed***.

Musician service fees are pre-approved by the Pastor.

**E) FLOWERS:**

Flowers for the wedding are the sole responsibility of the couple.

Florists should contact the parish office (905-433-0828) or by email to arrange for delivery of flowers.

We encourage you to leave one or two floral arrangements in the church after the wedding

in thanksgiving to God and for His glory.

***NO FLOWERS ARE PERMITTED IN THE CHURCH DURING THE SEASON OF LENT.***

**F) PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO:**

The couple makes their own arrangements for the photographer and/or videographer.

Please consult the GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY and share them with your photographer

and/or videographer beforehand. Please also advise any photographers to introduce themselves to the

priest in good time before the start of the celebration so that the Priest knows they understand

the guidelines.

**G) REHEARSAL:**

Rehearsal time is arranged with our wedding coordinator. Because of other Church activities

especially during the school year period, the rehearsal will likely have to take place in the late

afternoon or early evening. The best days would be Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

All those with an official role in the wedding ceremony should try to attend. However, please

remind all those coming to the rehearsal that this is taking place in Gods' house and as Catholics we

truly believe Jesus is present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Tabernacle in the Church

and therefore, we have to behave respectfully in His house and cannot forget this. We strongly advise

against scheduling the wedding rehearsal for the night before the wedding.

**H) PROMPTNESS:**

Common courtesy and consideration for others demands that the wedding couple arrive in

good time for the REHEARSAL and for the WEDDING itself. If a wedding begins more

than 10 minutes late the wedding liturgy celebration will likely have to be shortened accordingly.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Both the Groom and the Bride and their attendants are expected to arrive at Church no later

than **15 MINUTES BEFORE THE CEREMONY IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN.**

The bridal party usually gathers in the foyer or the parish hall, while the groom and groomsmen

gather in the family room of the church Sanctuary area.

**I) CLEAN UP:**

It is your responsibility to leave the church as clean as you find it. We suggest that you ask one of

your ushers to accept as part of their role to walk around and pick up any papers, flower boxes,

discarded film supplies, Kleenex, etc. and help in the general clean-up - the Church, vestibule

(lobby area), as well as the family room where the Groom etc. waited before the Celebration began.

This is important at any wedding we have, but especially when we must get ready to

celebrate Saturday evening Parish Mass.

**10. FURTHER DETAILS**

**A) PARKING**: Please try to **VACATE** the lot at a reasonable time so that others come after for

some other following celebration may make use of the space. Do not block the driveway at

any time as it is a “Fire Route” and the police can ticket you.

**B**) **CONFETTI**: The use of confetti or rice is **FORBIDDEN** both inside the church and on

church property. Please help keep the premises clean and attractive.

**11. SUGGESTED WEDDING OFFERING TO THE CHURCH:**

It is customary when a wedding is celebrated for the couple to make an offering in

thanksgiving to God for His blessings and providential care in their lives and for the

upkeep and maintenance of church buildings and the running of the Parish. Your offering

does not go to the priest for his personal use except for a nominal sum of $25.00 for

ministering at the celebration.

In principle and out of a spirit of faith and thanksgiving, the couple might prayerfully consider

tithing one tenth of the anticipated cost of the wedding to God’s church or even some smaller

percentage of the total cost. Should you decide otherwise, then by way of offering more specific

guidelines, we would suggest the following.

A) For people who are living in the parish boundaries and have been attending mass and

actively financially supporting the Parish by using the Parish Offertory Envelopes or the

Pre-Authorized Giving Program for at least one year prior to marriage.

- The suggested offering is $500.00

- OR

B) For couples who have not been attending and financially supporting the church over the prior year.

- The overall suggested offering is $1,000.00

***REMEMBER: THE PARISH COMMUNITY CANNOT LIVE BY PRAYERS ALONE (MICHAEL 1:1)***

**PLEASE NOTE: THE BOTTOM LINE**. If money is a problem and you are a parishioner, **DON’T**

**WORRY!** Speak to the Pastor and given your circumstances be generous and make an offering within your means in thanksgiving to God for His blessing in your life and love for His Church.

We appreciate your kind support of the church as an expression of your faith and gratitude to God.

Couples should make their cheque payable to St. Gertrude’s Church.

You must drop off your offering to the Church when you are dropping off your

marriage license to the office.

**12. FOR VALIDATIONS OF CIVIL MARRIAGE**

The recommended offering for the Validation of a Civil Marriage is $250.00

**13. DEPOSITS**

A deposit of $200.00 is asked of all those planning a marriage payable at the first meeting

with the Priest to book the marriage.

If the marriage is cancelled, a deposit refund will be remitted less $50.00 for time spent on the

paperwork if only the first meeting has taken place or a further added deduction of $50. if there has

been two meetings.

**14**. **CHANGE OF NAME:**

A woman may assume her husband’s name at the time of marriage.

It is her responsibility to change her ID with the Government of Ontario.

**15. WEDDING PLANNER**:

If you hire a wedding planner, please make sure the planner is aware of all the information

provided to you in this package and to confirm with the church any other plans or ideas not

mentioned in this document and contemplated for the actual ceremony for approval.

**16. CONCLUSION**

The way in which the marriage ceremony is celebrated is of great concern to both the couple

and the Church community. To ensure that the ceremony accurately reflects the values of both,

the Rite of Christian Marriage invites couples to participate directly with their parish priest

in the planning of their marriage ceremony. Through this mutual planning the actual marriage

ceremony can become as meaningful and beautiful as it should be. If you have any questions

concerning the above guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact the pastor or parish staff.

**ATTACHMENT I**

**St. Gertrude’s Catholic Church**

*690 King St. E.,* Oshawa, ON, L1H 1G5

905-433-0828

stgertrudesos.archtoronto.org Email: stgertrudesos@archtoronto.org

**GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS**

1. Photographers and Videographers are welcome to record the celebration of Weddings in the Church. However, their presence must not interfere or distract from the ceremony, nor should their activity cause the bride to arrive late or the wedding to begin late.
2. The Photographer and/or Videographer should arrive at least half an hour early and must introduce

themselves and present their business card to the Priest to discuss the ceremony with the Priest.

1. In all cases, the use of additional or accessory lighting is prohibited.
   1. In the case of photographers, this means **no flashes.**
   2. In the case of videographers, this means **no additional lights.**
2. The photographer is not permitted to be in the sanctuary nor to walk across the sanctuary during the ceremony. Photographic equipment may be used in the sanctuary only as specified by the Pastor in his discussion with you prior to the start of the wedding.
3. In the case of videographers, the person making the video may not walk about with the recorder during the ceremony. The video camera will have to be set up, as on a tripod, at a point where the best recording can be made but not in the sanctuary.
4. There are appropriate times for close-ups and times when pictures can be taken at a distance without a flash or light. Please confirm these times with the Priest.
5. The wedding party should leave the church property within at least thirty minutes after the wedding. Please do not uncork champagne at the entrance of the church, nor spend excessive time taking pictures there after the wedding.
6. Please provide a copy of these instructions to your photographer and videographer. Please ensure that they speak with the Priest before the ceremony so that these guidelines are clearly understood. Great care is exercised and shown when the Word of God is being proclaimed, when the couple are exchanging their vows and if the Eucharist is being celebrated, then during the Consecration and distribution of Holy Communion. We also recommend that you encourage your photographer and videographer to dress appropriately for the ceremony in the church.
7. If your Wedding Planner has input with your photographer or videographer, please provide them with these guidelines.

ATTACHMENT II

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION CLASSES**

**Marriage Preparation- JOY FILLED MARRIAGE We** are so happy your love has brought you to this beautiful time in your life. To help you enter marriage, as a vocation, **it is a** **requirement**of the Archdiocese of Toronto that couples complete an approved marriage preparation program called Joy Filled Marriage. This course covers not only the sacramentality and theology of marriage but also the practical life skills necessary to live out the rich Catholic vision of marriage. Below is a course preview. At the end of the course, couples will need to submit a certificate of completion.  
  
There are several courses of instruction conducted each year in the Archdiocese of Toronto. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements with one of the following:  
  
[Catholic Family Services](https://www.cfstoronto.com/) of Toronto1155 Yonge Street, Second Floor     Website: <https://www.cfstoronto.com/> **Tel:** 416-921-1163

[Queen of the Apostles Renewal Center](https://sites.google.com/site/queenofapostlesca/)  1617 Blythe Road

Mississauga, Ontario L5H 2C3   Email: [office@qoa.ca](mailto:office@qoa.ca)                      **Tel:** 905-278-5229

**COURSE BENEFITS**

The Joy-filled marriage invites participants to:

* + - See the significance of their call to married life
    - Appreciate what the Catholic Church teaches about marriage, and why
    - Embrace the gift of grace that makes a lifelong, joy-filled marriage possible
    - Learn the sound principles upon which successful marriages are built
    - Discover more about themselves and each other
    - Recognize topics of importance in their relationship, identify shared goals, and set concrete plans to build a joy-filled marriage

There is also marriage preparation courses offered on-line.

Pre-Cana: Living Our Faith in Love https://themarriagegroup.com/courses/pre-cana/

Catholic Marriage Preparation: <https://catholicmarriageprep.com>

Lastly, the couple can check with other local Parishes in the Durham Region for **In-Person Courses,**

such as Holy Family in Whitby and St. Leo’s in Brooklin to see if they are running marriage courses.