

St. Pius X Church
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How Catholics Define Marriage

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.” (Code of Canon Law, #1055)



Note that the word used to define a Catholic marriage is “covenant” - not “contract.” A contract is a business term. It means an agreement to exchange goods or services. A covenant, on the other hand, is a religious term. It means an agreement to pledge ourselves to one another ... forever.

Policy On Marriages - St. Pius X Parish

Weddings are one-hour ceremonies. Marriages are life-time commitments. Therefore, our priorities in assisting couples who wish to marry at St. Pius are:

- 1) The quality of your commitment to each other and of your the practice of the faith.
- 2) The requirements of the Catholic Church for a valid marriage.
- 3) The wedding ceremony itself.

Who Is A Parishioner?

We are authorized by church law to officiate only at the marriages of our own parishioners. A parishioner of St. Pius X Parish is a baptized Catholic:

- who is a registered member of the parish and actively participates in the life of the parish, or
- whose parents are registered in the parish - if the party is living with his/her parents and actively participating in the life of the parish.

If you live within the territorial boundaries of the parish, but are not registered in any other parish, permission to be married at St. Pius X is at the discretion of the pastor. Former residence or membership in the parish does not constitute present membership in the parish.

Separate fees apply for parishioners and non-parishioners and are based on parish membership at the time of marriage registration. (See Pages 3)

Your Readiness For Marriage

Because marriage is a life-time commitment, the process of ascertaining your readiness for it is your most important obligation to yourself and to one another, and our most valuable service to you. Therefore, the priest who is working with you in preparation for your marriage will assist you in the following ways:

1. He will investigate
 - your freedom to marry according to Church law (the presence or absence of canonical impediments to marriage);
 - the depth of your commitment to one another;
 - your understanding of Catholic teaching concerning permanence, mutual fidelity, and openness to children in marriage.
2. He will ensure your mutual awareness and compatibility with regard to all the basic aspects of the marriage relationship: personal adjustment, interpersonal communication, in-laws, finances, sexuality, parenting and spirituality.

All of this will require you to meet several times with the priest.



Marriage Instructions

The Diocese of Norwich requires each couple to attend one of the following Pre-Cana programs:

- The Engaged Couple Weekend or
- “The TwoGether in Love” Program.
- Diocesan Marriage Preparation Classes
- Remarriage Classes
- Online Marriage Preparation Class
- Arrangements to attend one of these programs should be made at least six months prior to the wedding date.

Paperwork

You will be asked to provide:

- a baptismal certificate issued within six months prior to the wedding date from the church where you were baptized; it should include any notations.
- a certificate of Confirmation (if either of you has not been confirmed, you will be asked to make arrangements to celebrate that sacrament, prior to the wedding, if possible.)
- a certificate showing that you have completed one of the Diocesan Pre-Cana programs listed above.
- a marriage license, issued by the City of Middletown (if the wedding is to be performed here at St. Pius X Church), to be presented to the priest at the wedding rehearsal or before.

The application for your Marriage License is done at the Middletown Health Dept., 245 DeKoven Drive, Middletown, 860 638-4960. The License is valid for 65 days. It becomes effective as soon as it is in your hands (no waiting period).

Arrange the Wedding Date

Dates and times are reserved on a first-come first-serve basis. Weddings may be scheduled at the following times:

- Friday evening at a mutually agreeable time, but no later than 8 p.m.
- Saturday at 10 a.m., 12 noon or 2 p.m.

Weddings are not permitted on Sundays or on holy days of obligation. Because of other services held in the church, we cannot permit any exceptions to these days and times.

Planning the Ceremony

The priest will help you to choose between the various ceremonial options allowed at Catholic weddings.

Local requirements:

- the use of a runner in the aisle is not allowed;
- no rice or confetti is to be thrown inside or outside the church, including the sidewalk and parking lots, for reasons of safety and cleanliness.
- it is imperative that the ceremony begin on time. Our church is reserved for weddings and other ceremonies on a tight schedule.
- you will be provided with guidelines for photographers and videotaping. Please be sure to pass them along to the parties concerned.

Fees

The parish fee for your wedding at St. Pius X Church is \$425.00 (parishioners) or \$500.00 (non-parishioners). A \$150 deposit is required to reserve the wedding date. It will be returned if the date is cancelled prior to one month before the wedding. This fee includes the use of the parish facilities and paperwork. A gift to the celebrant is at your discretion. Separate fees for the organist/vocalist apply (see below). Additionally, a separate, refundable cash deposit of \$150.00 is required and will be returned on the day of the wedding, provided that the wedding rehearsal and wedding ceremony begin **on time**, as agreed upon. All fees should be given to the celebrant no later than one week prior to the wedding date. Flowers for the altar will be provided by the church.

Music

All music for your ceremony (organ/piano and vocals) will be coordinated through our Parish Organist. As soon as possible after booking your date, please contact the Parish Organist, Andrew Berezowski at a.berezowski@saintpius.org,

Wedding music must be appropriate for use in church -- some selections may be more suitable for the reception. Please keep this in mind when thinking of possibilities -- be assured that every effort will be made to present an enjoyable musical setting for your ceremony. Currently, the organist's fee is \$200.00. . Do not make arrangements with other musicians without speaking with the Pastor first. The average fee for a vocalist is \$150.00. (If you provide your own vocalist or additional musicians and a music rehearsal is required, an additional fee may be required and depending on complexity, the fee will be determined by the organist.) All fees should be paid no later than one week prior to the wedding. The musicians do not attend the ceremony rehearsal.

Special Considerations

In the following circumstances, the setting of a date for the wedding may have to be delayed:

1. **Previous Marriage:** If either party has been married before in a manner recognized by Church law, the couple will be referred to the diocesan marriage tribunal for possible annulment of the previous marriage. No wedding date can be set prior to the actual granting of the annulment.
2. **Teenage Marriages:** Our policy is to discourage teenage marriages. In any case, we cannot agree to ~~witness~~ celebrate such a marriage unless the priest has interviewed the parents of both parties and their consent to the marriage has been obtained. Ordinarily, the couple will also be referred to a counseling service for evaluation, in order to ascertain if they are sufficiently mature to handle the responsibilities of marriage.
3. **Pregnancy:** By itself, pregnancy is not a sufficient reason for planning a marriage. On the contrary, it can be a sign that the couple lacks sufficient maturity for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Therefore, all parties concerned (parents, priest, and couple) must be especially cautious in agreeing to a wedding date. Particularly if the couple is younger, we will advise maturity testing and counseling by Catholic professionals to help them arrive at a wise decision.
4. **Non-practicing Catholics:** Those who were baptized in the Catholic Church, but no longer choose to exercise the rights and duties of membership, particularly the right and duty of participating in the Sunday Eucharist, pose a special concern for us in terms of their readiness for the Sacrament of Marriage.

The reason: marriage is not only a celebration of the couple's love for each other but also a sign of Christ's love for his Bride the Church; therefore, the couple is making a commitment both to each other and to the Church, which is represented by the local community to which they belong. This reality presupposes regular participation in the life and worship of a particular parish. We will do our best to help remedy this situation where it exists, but we may have to suggest in good conscience that the wedding be delayed in the meantime.

5. **Mixed Marriages (i.e., marriages between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian):**

We welcome marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian provided that:

- both partners are practicing their faith, i.e., attend church regularly. The non-Catholic partner is welcome to attend at St. Pius if he or she wishes.
- the partners have agreed on how their religious values will be transmitted to their children
- permission is granted by the Bishop, and
- the Catholic partner is willing to sign a promise “to do all in my power to share the faith with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics.” The non-Catholic partner must be informed of this promise.

A Final Word

We expect that you will regularly attend Mass and receive Holy Communion together (unless, of course, one partner is not Catholic) during the time of your engagement. God is the third party in every sacramental marriage, and He has a special way of blessing engaged couples by nourishing their love for one another.

Likewise, after the marriage, we are happy to welcome you as active members of St. Pius X Parish. We will do all we can to help you keep God alive in your relationship, because we are convinced that with His help, your love for one another will never fail.

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