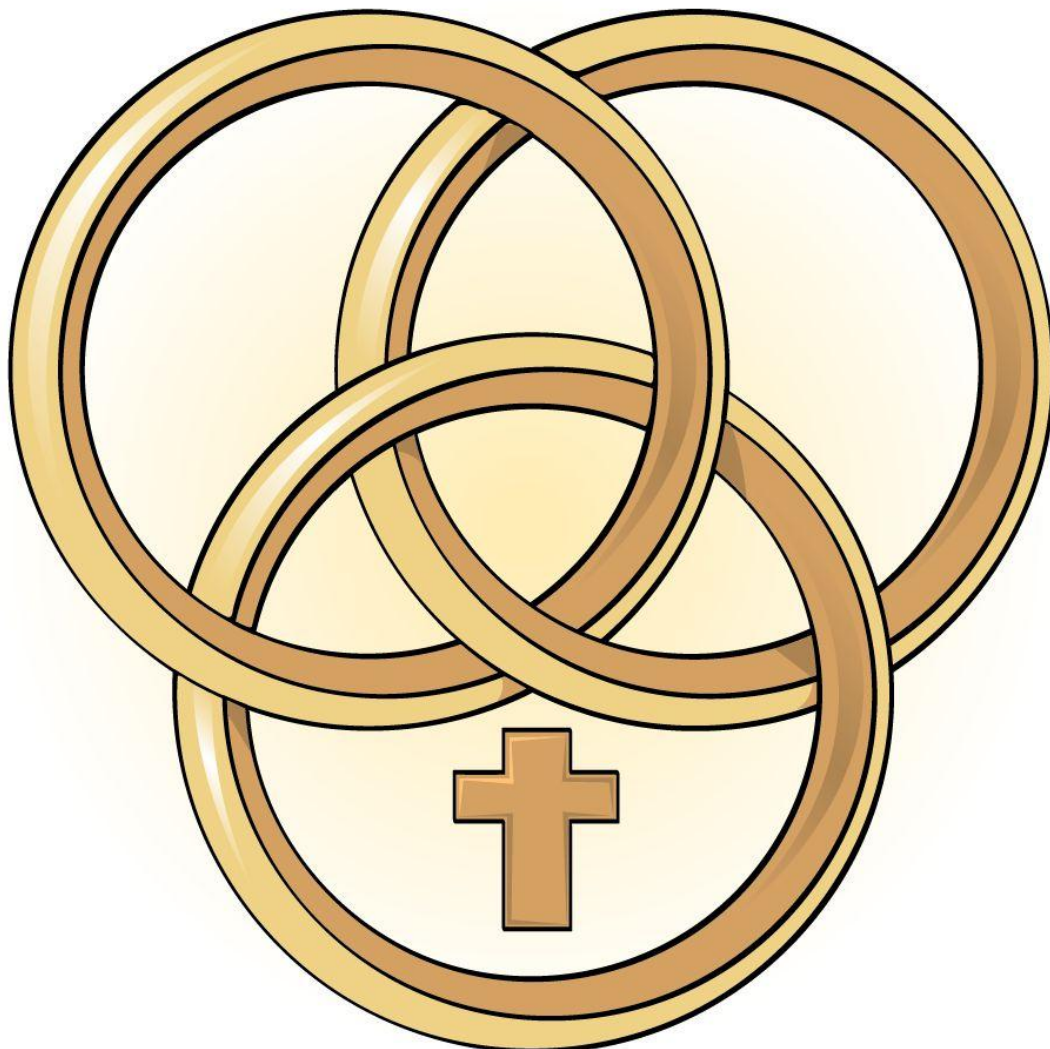




*Our Lady of the Woods  
Catholic Community*

# *Having a Wedding*

**At Our Lady of the Woods**



**MITCH ALBOM**

## **THERE'S MORE TO MARRIAGE THAN A LICENSE**

Last week, a group of Michigan lawmakers, hoping to stem the alarming divorce rate, proposed a law: couples would have to undergo four hours of pre-marital counseling.

If they refused, they would have to wait 27 days for a marriage license, instead of just three.

Now, I can hear our married readers screaming, "Go for the 27! Are you crazy?" This only shows the disconnect between those who dream of jumping over the broom and those who are already sweeping up.

Here is my problem with this the law: In the four hours, the counselors will inevitably speak of "love" and "commitment" and "devotion".

And as any married couple will tell you, what does any of that have to do with the toilet seat?

If I were in charge of handing out marriage licenses, I would begin by asking the following questions:

- 1. Have you ever seen your partner first thing in the morning?
- 2. Have you ever seen your partner throw up?
- 3. Do you know the exact temperature that makes your partner say, "It's too cold"?
- 4. Is it within 10 degrees of yours?
- 5. Do you know how often your partner needs the bathroom on a road trip?
- 6. Have you ever seen your partner actually clean a room?
- 7. Have you met your partner's friends?
- 8. Could you stand them once a week?
- 9. Can you make your partner laugh?
- 10. Can you talk all night to your partner without getting bored?

If the answer is "no" to any of these, sorry, come back in 27 days – and try again.

### **DIVORCE ISN'T THE FIRST OPTION**

If the couple passed Section One, I would pull out Section Two. Answer these questions:

- 1. Do you think your relationship is special because "We don't fight!"?
- 2. Are you certain of your love because "We like all the same things!"?

- 3. Do you say, "I don't care if my partner ever earns a penny; money doesn't matter in a marriage."?
- 4. Do you ever say, "I know my partner has a nasty temper, but it will get better once we're married"?
- 5. Do you model your relationship after a Hollywood couple?
- 6. Is the core of your relationship that "opposites attract"?
- 7. Do you have different views on having children, but figure you'll work it out during the marriage?
- 8. Do you think your mother's and father's problems will never happen to you because you're "different"?
- 9. Is your favorite thing about your partner, when you are really being honest, his or her shape?
- 10. Do you ever say, "If it doesn't work, we can always get divorced"?

If the answer to any of these is "yes", come back in 27 days – and try again.

### **FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE**

Finally, I'd ask the following:

- 1. What would you do if your partner got a debilitating disease?
- 2. What would you do if your partner suddenly went bald or got obese?
- 3. What happens if your partner wants to move and you don't?
- 4. What happens if you had a sick child?
- 5. What happens if one of you cheated?
- 6. What happens if your partner said your parents were "impossible"?
- 7. What happens if you achieve your dreams but your partner fails?
- 8. What happens if it is the other way around?
- 9. What happens if you wake up one day and suddenly feel trapped?
- 10. What happens if you fall out of love?

If your answer is "It won't be a problem, because we love each other so deeply." – sorry, that's the movies. Come back in 27 days.

But if your answer is "I don't know. Marriage is a shared risk. We know that we have a deep respect for each other, we love *and* like each other, and we are committed not just to the other person, but to the idea that a marriage itself is worth preserving". – well, here is your paperwork.

Don't forget to hire a good caterer.

**This article is reprinted with the permission of Mitch Albom, of the Detroit Free Press Newspapers.**

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## Marriage at Our Lady of the Woods Parish

### “A Perspective from the Pastor”

*From the very dawn of creation, when God joined the first man and the first woman in a union of love and fidelity, marriage was deemed sacred. It is in this same perspective that the Church looks upon marriage, i.e., **something sacred**. It is a sacrament in which God, man and woman are given grace and share the graces of love and peace and trust with each other.*



*It is a serious moment in one's life. That is why we consider the preparation program for Christian marriage a high priority at Our Lady of the Woods. We will give you our time, our counsel, and our guidance in the hope that we can help you solidify your love for one another and make your marriage a beautiful and Christ-filled experience. A lot of time will be expended by you and the marriage preparation team because our focus is to help you stay married and in love.*

*We are talking about **a sacrament**- meaning a holy moment and sacred encounter that is happening in the context of your broader journey of faith. Before we begin the marriage preparation process, please make sure **either you or your fiancé are a registered, active and practicing member of our parish** for at least six months .prior to the beginning of the marriage preparation process. We also ask that, as active members of this Roman Catholic Faith Community, you support this parish financially on regular basis at the level your individual situation allows.*

*Per Canon of Law and the archdiocesan guidelines for sacramental marriage, it is required that the **marriage preparation process begin a minimum six months prior to your wedding date** and that it includes various components such as a pre-marriage inventory, individual, one-on-one meetings (counseling sessions), as well as natural family planning classes, and other programs which are offered periodically in different locations across our Detroit Metro Area. Details will be explained in later sections of this bookset.*

*The people from the parish who will be involved in this program are:*

*The Pastor or a Deacon,  
Professional Marriage Counselors  
Parish Secretary  
Liturgical wedding coordinators*

*You could also chose to work with one of our carefully selected couples from the parish who could serve as your mentors not only during the preparation process, but also down the road after you become married. (this will be an option offered to you ).*

*I ask you to read over carefully the following information so that you will understand our program and give us your cooperation and time.*

## Pre-marriage Preparation Process

*At least six months prior to the wedding date, meet with the pastor to begin the preparation process and to file the necessary forms. Please understand that without these forms on file, per Canon of Law, we may not book any wedding date. As a result, you cannot reserve your wedding date over the phone.*

*The Pastor of the parish, (or in some cases another priest to whom the formal delegation has been granted by the pastor), will witness the marriage of two Catholics, and will preside over the Wedding Mass, as Catholic parties should have their marriage blessed in the context of Mass.*

*The marriage of a Catholic with a non-Catholic, (the so called mixed marriage) will usually be witnessed by the Deacon in the Parish, as it is a celebration without a Mass. In some cases the Pastor, or another priest delegated by the pastor, may officiate this type of wedding ceremony.*

*When you are ready to begin the pre-marriage preparation process, please call the Pastor directly to set up an appointment for the initial interview. This appointment will require that both you and your fiancé be present. You will need to set aside approximately 45 to 60 minutes for this meeting.*

*The Catholic party must bring a **recent** copy of their baptismal certificate. “Recent copy” means one that is issued by your church of baptism within the 6 months prior to the wedding date.*

*If your initial interview with the pastor takes place more than six months prior to your wedding date, you will need to re-submit the recent baptismal certificate later on, (meaning within the required six-month time frame). Please understand that this is not our internal policy, but rather a mandate of the Canon of Law and it must be followed.*

*The non-Catholic, if baptized, should also bring proof of his/her baptism.*

*If either you or your fiancé have been previously married (either in or outside of the Catholic Church), the previous marriage must be formally annulled by the proper authority of the church before we will be able to start any preparation process with you. Should you or your fiancé have been granted an annulment in the past, please bring the copy of the letter to your initial interview.*



*If there is any previous marriage situation and you do not have the required paperwork, this matter will have to be fully resolved before we could schedule a wedding date for you. We will try to assist you in this case as much as possible; however, depending on the circumstances and the process involved, obtaining an annulment will delay your wedding significantly. Please note that all of the above applies to anybody who intends to get married in the Catholic Church, as it is a canonical requirement.*

*As a part of your preparation for the sacrament of marriage, you are **required** to attend the Natural Family Planning Program offered at different locations and at different times. You may also chose to attend one of the other marriage preparation programs in the Detroit Metro area. During your initial*

*interview the pastor will explain the details, and he will also give you a list of the various programs available to attend.*

*Secondly, a PMI (pre-marriage inventory, a compatibility indicator) is a mandatory and integral part of your marriage preparation. This inventory will be administered to you directly by one of the approved marriage counselors. The pastor will provide you with the most up to date list of names and contact numbers of the marriage counselors in our area. Please note that one of them—Ms. Barbara Froehlich-Stapleton, L.P.C., C.S.W—is seeing couples right here at the parish. You can set up an appointment with her by calling (313) 381-0748. Sr. Betty Leon at Sacred Heart Church (Grosse Ile) is also available for counseling. She can be reached at (734) 676-1377.*

*No matter which counselor you choose, it will be your responsibility to arrange the meeting to take the PMI, and to review the results of the inventory with that counselor. Different counselors may administer slightly different formats of the pre-marriage inventory.*

*Please note that there will be an out of pocket cost associated with this process, and each counselor determines their own fees. At this point, on average, the cost for the entire process, (meaning for the administration, processing of the PMI and follow-up sessions) is around \$400.00 per couple.*

*Even though this amount may seem like a lot of money for some couples, please think about as a critically important investment in your own future. A well-done and properly processed and discussed pre-marriage inventory is one of best and the most effective tools currently available to us to help couples avoid a lot of various problems down the road. Also, please know that the cost of the PMI and follow-up counseling sessions will be spread over the duration of your sessions, and so it does not have to be paid all at once.*

*After the marriage counselor finishes the review of the inventory with you, he or she will be asked to write a formal letter to the pastor indicating in general terms his or her observations, that the preparation process has been completed, and that the couple is ready to be married in the Church.*

*Following receipt of this letter, the couple will be asked to meet directly with the pastor to focus specifically on the spiritual aspects of the inventory, and to talk more in-depth about the sacramental aspect of the Christian marriage.*

*During this meeting you will also be given the book, “Together for Life” to help you plan your wedding liturgy. The pastor will explain to you what choices need to be made and how to go about making them. The liturgical planning sheet, together with the marriage license, have to be returned to the pastor no later than one week prior to your scheduled wedding day.*

**Kindly read through the rest of the booklet to understand some of the options and guidelines for marriage at this parish.**

## ALCOHOL

There is to be no alcohol on the premises prior to, during, or following the ceremony. This is to include popping of champagne by limousine companies. If there is any alcohol on the premises – the wedding will not take place.

## ARRIVAL TIME

Set up appointments for the pre-marriage sessions and be on time for them. Be on time for the rehearsal. The wedding party should arrive at least 1 / 2 hour before the wedding is to start.

## BOOKLETS

To add some meaning to the ceremony and event, you may wish to make up a wedding booklet. The work will be yours, but we have some examples on file in the office if you would like to see them.

## BOWS

There are 12 rows of pews on the main aisle. Bows are optional. To secure them to our pews, plastic clips are used. No nails, pins or tacks are allowed. **We do not permit candles to be used on the pews or carried by the bridesmaids.**



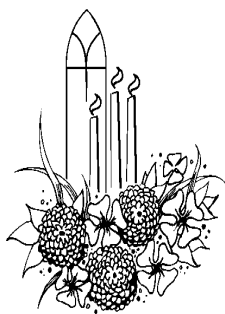
## BRIDE'S ROOM

*Available for the bride as she waits for the beginning of the ceremony is the Chapel in the Woods, used for weekday Masses. The chapel is located north of the main entrance to the church. **There is NO dressing at the church.***

## CALENDAR DATES AND TIMES

*Most weddings are on Fridays and Saturdays. On Saturdays, the time for a wedding to start is 1:00 PM. The reason for this early time is that the Saturday evening Mass starts at 4:00 PM and there are Confessions at 3:00 PM.*

## UNITY CANDLE



*This is an optional part of the ceremony. The lighting of the wedding candle symbolizes their commitments to bring together their separate lives. The candle (unity and the 2 tapers with holders if placed on the altar table) are furnished by the Bride and Groom. The unity candle (center) should be 3 inches in diameter. The candleholder stand is provided by the church. Flowers can be added to the candle to dress it up.*

## **CELEBRANTS**

*We **do not guarantee** who will be available to witness your marriage. We will guarantee, however, that the church date is reserved and a priest or deacon will witness your marriage. Also, we will make every effort to insure that the person who works with you through the preparation process is the one who witnesses your marriage and presides over the Mass (if applicable). We can confirm with you the name of the celebrant within 3 months of the ceremony.*

## **CEREMONY CHOICES**

*You will be issued a marriage booklet entitled "Together for Life". This booklet will give you several examples of prayers, scripture readings, vows and blessings. You can make your choices from this text for your ceremony. You are not completely restricted to the material in this booklet, but it is usually sufficient for most couples. We want you to make your ceremony as much "yours" as possible.*

## **COMMUNION**

*Since Holy Communion (the EUCHARIST) by definition is part of every Mass, those in the wedding party who share our faith tradition, particularly our belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, who are in good standing with the Church, and in the state of grace, are invited to receive Holy Communion.*

*Those who are of different faith, or who can't receive communion because of other circumstances, are welcome to come forward at the proper time to receive a special blessing. We ask that those who are not receiving Holy Communion but wish to be blessed cross their hands on their chest as a sign to be given a blessing instead of the Holy Communion.*

*If, among your family members or guests are those who are trained and formally certified to serve as Eucharistic ministers, please let us know during the preparation process and we will be happy to incorporate them in the celebration. However, please note that in order to perform their liturgical functions, they will be asked to provide a written statement from their respective pastors indicating their credentials and good standing condition with the Church. This written statement must be given to the pastor before the wedding liturgy begins and, if possible, at the day of the rehearsal.*

*Finally, for all practical purposes, and since their role in this very special liturgy is unique – it would be preferred that the couple celebrating their marriage not serve as Eucharistic Ministers at their own wedding, even if they both are certified to exercise that ministry.*

## **CHILDREN IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

*Children in the wedding party should be at least 6 years of age and they must sit with adults in the congregation. The reason for this is because children become frightened by the crowds the day of the wedding and take away the attention from the bride and the groom.*



## CRY ROOM

*You may want to advise your guests bringing young children that a cry room is available. The sounds of crying children can certainly ruin your video and ceremony.*

## FEES

*To help defray the costs of your marriage preparation process, we recommend the following fees and stipends:*

- *\$200.00 as a donation to the church to offset operational costs (facility rental fee). This donation is tax deductible and will appear on your annual Statement of Contributions.*
- *A stipend to the presider. This item is optional and is made at your discretion. Presently, the suggested amount is \$150.00.*
- *Fee for the Music Director. Determined per individual agreement.*

*Note: if, for whatever reason, you cannot afford the fees listed above, please make the pastor aware of this during your meeting with him. We understand that individual financial situations vary from couple to couple and we do not want money to become an issue preventing you from getting married in our church.*

*Please bring these fees, together with your marriage license, to the parish office approximately one week prior to the wedding date.*

## FLOWERS

*You are welcome to bring flowers into the church for a wedding; however, they must be left for Sunday's services, with the exception of "Unity Candle" flowers. If there are 2 weddings on one weekend, we suggest you coordinate with the other wedding couple. Contact the parish office to find out if there is another wedding. There are **NO Runners** allowed down the aisle.*



## GIFTS



*We encourage the parents of the couple or someone from the family to bring up the bread and wine during the Mass ceremony.*

## LICENSE

*The responsibility for obtaining the marriage license belongs to the couple getting married. It is advisable to apply to the county for the license one month before the date of the ceremony.*

**The license must be brought to the office no later than one week before the ceremony. At that time, please give the secretary your new mailing address, the church fee and reaffirm your choice of best man and maid/matron of honor.**



Here are a few local area County Clerk offices:

Wayne County Clerk.....	(313) 224-5514
Westland Branch of Wayne County Clerk.....	(734) 326-4690
Oakland County Clerk.....	(248) 858-0571
Macomb County Clerk.....	(810) 469-5210
Washtenaw County Clerk.....	(734) 994-6592
Monroe County Clerk.....	(734) 240-7020

## MARRIAGE CEREMONY

When both people getting married are Catholic, there is usually a Mass for the ceremony. When it is a mixed marriage (**one is Catholic and one is not**), it is the policy of the Archdiocese to have a service that is more inclusive to all present. A minister from another denomination may take part in the ceremony in this church, but arrangements should be made far in advance.



### MUSIC

Music is very important to the ceremony. It sets the tone and lets you, your friends and family praise and thank God for your gift of marriage. The Music fee is \$200.00. You may also use another musician during the ceremony, but this person must be approved by our Music Minister and there is a charge of \$75.00 (bench fee).

[Questions on this fee should be directed to the Music Minister.] Please call our Music Minister to arrange an appointment at (734) 671-5101, ext. 15.

## PLANNERS

The wedding ceremony and rehearsal will be under the direction of Our Lady of the Woods rehearsal coordinators. Paid professional wedding planners are welcome to attend and to observe.

## PICTURES

You hire your own photographer. He/she may take pictures during the ceremony if they are not going to distract from the bride and groom.

**The photographer must contact the rehearsal coordinators before the ceremony. Pictures can be taken after the ceremony only for a half hour.**



This is due to the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If a video camera is used to record the ceremony, the celebrant must be contacted. Extra lights cannot be used and the location of the camera must not distract from the bride and groom.

## READINGS



*Members of the wedding party or of the families of the couples will be responsible for two of the readings at the service. **Start thinking of two people who can read well and have reverence for the Scriptures.** They do not have to be Catholic; however, for the sake of embarrassment, please choose people who can proclaim the Scriptures well.*

## RECEIVING LINES

*Because of the time restriction on pictures, we ask that there be **no** receiving line at the church.*

## REHEARSAL

*Day and time are scheduled with the parish secretary two months prior to the wedding. Because of the busy schedule of the church, only one hour is allotted for the rehearsal. Please be **on time** and please leave after the rehearsal. The presider may, or may not, be present at the rehearsal—depending on his schedule. Our wedding coordinators will conduct your rehearsal and be present the day of your ceremony. They are volunteers. Please treat them with respect.*



## **NO RICE, CONFETTI, BIRD SEED, FLOWER PEDALS, BALLOONS, BUBBLES**

*None of these items may be thrown before, after or during the ceremony or any place on the property. If a mistake is made, the Bride & Groom or the parents will be billed \$50.00 for custodial fees.*

## SHRINE VISIT

*It is a tradition in the Catholic Church for the couple to make a visit to the Shrine of the Blessed Mother. However, this is optional.*

## **PARISH REGISTRATION**

*If you are registered with your family in the parish, you are not automatically registered after the ceremony. In fact, you are then deleted from the family registration. If you wish to be registered as a married couple, please fill out a registration form when you have your first interview with the pastor.*

*When you drop off the marriage license at the office the week before the wedding, please update your/our records if you have a **Change** of address & phone.*

*If you **Cancel** your wedding, please notify the parish offices.*

## **A PERSPECTIVE:**

**“You are planning and training for a shared life that will last for the rest of your lives.**

**The wedding is important, but it is only one day in the many days of the marriage.”**

*All policies in this booklet are **subject to change without notice.**  
If you have any questions, please call the parish office.*

*No purses, wallets or anything of value should be left unattended in the church.*