

# WEDDING GUIDE

FOR

## THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AT ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA CHURCH



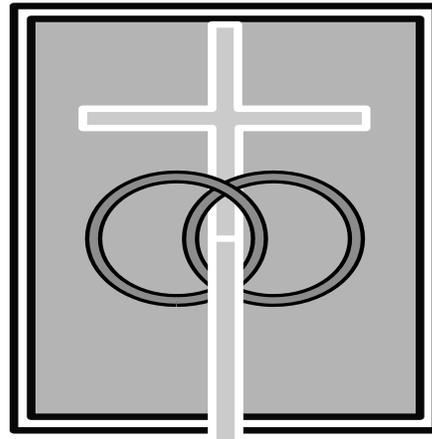
**31 Chamberlain Ave  
Little Ferry, NJ 07643  
201-641-2988**

## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! The parish community of St. Margaret of Cortona rejoices with you on your engagement. It must be an exciting time in your lives. We hope you will find this booklet helpful as you prepare for the celebration of your Christian marriage.

### What is a Christian Marriage?

Why do you want to get married? You love each other. You want to raise a family together. You want to live your lives together. These simple reasons for marrying begin to touch the wonderful reality of what Christian marriage is all about.



each other.  
want to  
for  
of what

God's revealed Word in Sacred Scripture tells us that God as a part of creation gave marriage to humanity. (See *Genesis* 2:20-25.) There are two equally important purposes to marriage. One is the fostering of a life-long supportive relationship of love between a man and woman as husband and wife. The other is that their covenantal partnership of life and love provides the appropriate way of bringing children into the world and nurturing them.

Our Savior Jesus Christ raised the covenant of marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church, a sign that makes present the saving life and love of Christ. The relationship between husband and wife, grounded and deepened in their relationship with Christ, is a sacrament, which mirrors Christ's union with his Church. What are some of the characteristics of this relationship? First there is an unconditional and mutual self-giving love between husband and wife, a love that leads to another characteristic of Christian marriage, fidelity. Marital fidelity is not a burden. It flows from a commitment mutually chosen and freely embraced by the couple over and over and over again. Couples living out their marriage faithfully and in the spirit of mutual self-giving love will best be able to fulfill the second purpose of marriage, that of giving birth to and parenting children in a loving and supportive family. All of these characteristics of Christian marriage make possible another that is integral to its sacramental nature, that is, the permanence or the indissolubility of the

marriage union of a man and woman as spousal partners in Christ.

Obviously, the commitment to marriage is a challenging one that entails serious and awesome responsibilities. However, the Lord does not leave a husband and wife to rely on their own strengths. He helps them to fulfill their responsibilities. The difficulties of Christian marriage are real. But the joys are a deeper reality because they are rooted in the mystery of God's eternal and unconditional love for us, a love that is exemplified in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE**

### **MEETINGS WITH THE PRIEST FROM ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA**

The first step in beginning your preparation for Christian marriage is to meet with the pastor from St. Margaret of Cortona, Fr. Kevin Carter, soon after your engagement. This initial contact should normally take place one year prior to the planned wedding date.

Your meetings with Fr. Kevin constitute the formational aspect of marriage preparation. What does this mean? In addition to gathering and filing all the documents needed, he will assist and guide you in preparing for your special day. Most importantly, he will try to help you appreciate God's role in the wonderful reality that has brought you together, the divine vocation you have received, and the significance of your marriage plans, not only for yourselves, but also the Church. If you have been somewhat inactive in the Church's life and worship, you will be encouraged at this special moment of your life to begin again to worship with your brothers and sisters in faith. Since God has called you to love one another, how appropriate for you to give thanks and praise to God, to pray for each other and with each other in the community of the Church.

At the beginning of the preparation process Fr. Kevin will have you fill out an Archdiocesan Pre-Marriage Survey. This survey is a self-diagnostic instrument to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. It can be a tool to help couples name and work through issues before marriage. It provides individualized couple feedback on where each partner stands in regard to topic areas important to marriage. The results of the inventory provide affirmation of strengths and areas of convergence in a relationship, as well as point to issues that may need to be addressed.

Remember, this is not just a time of preparation for you, but also a time of formation. A time for you to grow closer to the Lord who authored your love now and forever.

### **GOD’S PLAN FOR A JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE AND PRE-CANA . . . the instructional phase of marriage preparation**



As a Christian Community the Church is interested not only in celebrating your wedding, but also in providing support and assistance in your preparation for a life-long happy marriage. The Archdiocese of Newark, together with all the dioceses of New Jersey, has adopted a Common Policy on Marriage that requires engaged couples to participate in a marriage formation program. All couples desiring to marry in a Catholic Church in the state of New Jersey are required to complete *God’s Plan For a Joy-Filled Marriage* and/or *Pre-Cana*. You can register for these programs and a *Natural Family Planning Seminar* online at [www.rcan.org/famlife/marriagefamily.htm](http://www.rcan.org/famlife/marriagefamily.htm) .

**God’s Plan For a Joy-Filled Marriage** is designed to help engaged couples understand the Catholic teaching on the Sacrament of Marriage. It is based on Pope St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body.

**Pre-Cana** is the well know marriage instructional sessions that help couples practically prepare for their married life. Topics covered include: Communication, Conflict

Resolution, Family Life, Finances and more.

**Natural Family Planning Seminar** teaches couples a moral way to space, avoid or achieve pregnancy and be faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Couples living outside the Archdiocese may fulfill the requirements of marriage preparation by opting for an instructional program available in another diocese.

## **DOCUMENTS NEEDED**

PRE-NUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE - This will be filled out during your meetings with Fr. Kevin.



BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE(S) - If you are a Catholic, we will need a baptismal certificate issued within six months of the marriage date. Call or write the church where you were baptized and they will send it to you. If you are a baptized member of another Christian denomination, a copy of your original baptismal certificate will suffice.

WITNESSES - Unless known by the parish priest or deacon, each of you must provide two witnesses (parents are fine) to testify in front of a priest that you are free and able to marry. A form is provided for this.

PRE-CANA OR ENGAGED ENCOUNTER CERTIFICATE - After attending Pre-Cana you will be given a certificate of attendance. We will need this document or its copy. Contact Fr. Kevin soon after the Pre-Cana for your second appointment.

COUPLES CURRENTLY LIVING OUTSIDE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OR OUT OF STATE - who complete the requisite pre-marital sessions with a parish priest or deacon and the pre-marital instructions (Pre--Cana or Engaged Encounter) in the diocese of their residence are to provide all documents regarding same to Fr. Kevin here at St. Margaret's.

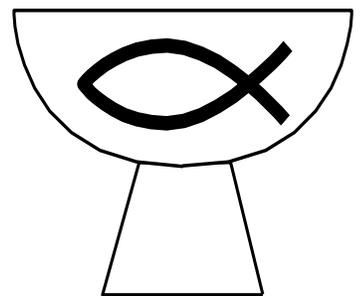
**OTHER DOCUMENTS** - might be needed if there is a special circumstance regarding your marriage (e.g. a previous marriage, an interfaith marriage, if neither of you is a parishioner of St. Margaret of Cortona). Fr. Kevin will indicate which additional documents are needed. All required documents are to be filed before the rehearsal.

**CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE** - This may be obtained in the town of your (New Jersey) residence. According to New Jersey state law prospective New Jersey resident brides apply for a marriage license in the town where they reside, not in the community where the wedding will take place. A witness over 18 years of age must accompany the prospective bride and groom at the time of application and verify the information presented. The registrar may need a copy of the birth certificates as proof of age. If the bride lives out of state, the couple applies in the town where the prospective groom resides. If both the bride and groom live out of state, the couple applies in the community where the marriage will take place. A 72 hour waiting period is required between the time the application is completed and the marriage license is issued. The marriage license, once issued, is good for 30 days, and should be given to the priest at the time of the rehearsal.

## **THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

### **CHOICE OF LITURGY: MASS OR CEREMONY**

The liturgical celebration of marriage is an expression of the faith of the couple as well as that of the Church. The choice is yours. A marriage may be celebrated within the context of the Eucharist or a service of scripture and prayer. In a Mass your commitment to one another would be solemnized within the celebration of the Lord's unconditional bond with all of us, the Eucharist. Normally, the Church expects and encourages a Catholic bride and groom to celebrate their wedding within a Mass. Another liturgical format is a service of scripture readings, prayers and blessings. This alternate form of liturgy may be preferred if both parties have not been participating in Mass. This would certainly apply if one of the parties were not Catholic.



Ecumenical guidelines urge that a marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another tradition be celebrated in a way that highlights their shared unity of faith (ie. in a service centered on Sacred Scripture). A marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person is celebrated in this liturgical format with adaptations for the religious convictions of the other party. Should you wish, clergy from another tradition would be welcome to participate in an ecumenical or interfaith wedding.

Fr. Kevin will be ready to help you in making the right choice. Try not to let time be a factor in this very important decision. A Mass will ordinarily run about an hour, and a scripture service about 35-45 minutes.

## TIME FOR WEDDINGS

Ordinarily Saturday weddings may be scheduled at 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM, and Sunday (not all Sundays are an option) afternoons after 2:00 PM. Of course, Sunday mornings are an option if you are willing to exchange your vows amidst the faith community gathered for regular worship. For Friday or other times please consult with the priest. Weddings are forbidden on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Eve and Day.



## CELEBRANT



Normally, Fr. Kevin from St. Margaret's who has been working with you will be available to celebrate and witness your wedding. However, a priest or deacon friend or relative of yours would be most welcome. In such a case, we request that you inform Fr. Kevin as soon as possible. Your guest celebrant should contact him for proper canonical delegation to witness your marriage and to clarify who will be responsible for the requisite documentation and rehearsal. In almost all cases Fr. Kevin would do the paperwork. Also, if your guest priest or deacon is from another diocese other than the

Archdiocese of Newark, he will need a letter stating that he is a priest in good standing from his diocese.

## **MUSIC**

Music is an important part of your wedding liturgy. Our very gifted and accomplished organist and music minister, Eileen Ballone, is ready to help you plan the music for your wedding. You may schedule an appointment with Eileen at the church by calling 201-843-1097. She will also guide you as to what music is appropriate for the liturgical celebration of your wedding.



## **PROCESSION**

There are a number of styles of opening processions you may choose. Do not be limited by what you have seen done at other weddings. Here are some examples:

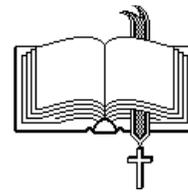


1. Bridesmaids, maid of honor, bride and escort (father or other) process down the center aisle.
2. Ushers, bridesmaids, maid of honor, bride with escort process down center aisle.
3. Bridesmaids and ushers paired, maid of honor, the bride and escort process down the center aisle.
4. Bridesmaids with ushers, maid of honor with best man, groom with parents and bride with parents all process down the center aisle.
5. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the bride and groom processing in together.

6. Other creative options are possible.

One thing to consider when including a young child as a ring bearer or flower girl is the potential for him/her being nervous and awkward. This could detract from the order and dignity of your wedding liturgy. We recommend that any children in the wedding party be of school age (5).

## SCRIPTURE READINGS



Selections of the Scriptural Word of God are probably the most important choices you will make in planning your liturgy. Ordinarily a selection is read from the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament letters and the Gospel. You are encouraged to appoint someone to read the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament readings at the liturgy. The reader(s) should be adept at reading in public. This web site, <http://catholicweddinghelp.com/wedding-planning/06-choose-readings.htm>, will help you select your readings. Read them and pray over them before your selection.

## EXTRA CANDLES



The only candles permitted in the sanctuary are the normal altar candles and the wedding candle. Lighting of the wedding or unity candle is optional and is not a part of the Church's ritual. Choose to do this ceremony for your own reasons, not because you have seen it done elsewhere! St. Margaret of Cortona has a wedding candle set and stand for you to use if you choose to. The placement of the wedding candle is not optional. It goes on the corner of the right front corner of the sanctuary.

## **GIFT BEARERS**

If you are celebrating a Mass, two (or more) people may be invited to present the (2) gifts of bread and wine during the “preparation of the gifts.”



## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

In both a Mass and Scripture Service intercessory prayers are offered for the needs of others in the world. You can prepare your own or use ones already prepared. You may also invite someone to read them. In this case the celebrant would introduce and conclude them. The website for the readings listed above can help you with the prayer of the faithful.

## **FLOWERS**

Flowers are traditionally a welcome part of wedding celebrations. Flowers should enhance the natural style of the church and the spirit of the liturgy. It is not appropriate to create a whole new environment with flowers. Huge floral displays that would tower over the altar would not be appropriate. The flower arrangement should highlight, not cover the Eucharistic table. If your wedding closely follows a major feast like Christmas or Easter, the church will already be elaborately decorated with flowers so plan accordingly. Seasonal arrangements may not be removed or rearranged for a wedding. Although it is not encouraged, if your wedding is during Lent, no flowers will be allowed on the altar. If you have any questions, ask the priest. If there are other weddings that day, you may want to contact the other couple(s) about sharing the cost of flowers.



## PHOTOGRAPHERS



We understand the importance of this day for you and why you will wish to preserve this memory. It is also important that the technical recording of your wedding does not become a distraction from the sacramental event. Photographers and Video Technicians will be admitted on the condition that their activity, movement and placement are non-intrusive in the liturgy. They should not plan on use of lighting other than the church's own. Flashes should be kept at a minimum. The photographer is not to delay the beginning of the ceremony or the ability of the wedding party and guests from leaving at the end. This is especially necessary if your wedding is followed by another function.

## REHEARSAL

Consult Fr. Kevin who will conduct the rehearsal for an appropriate time. Be sure that your rehearsal time is recorded in the book in the parish office. If a visiting clergyman is performing the ceremony, the time should be cleared far enough in advance to avoid conflict. Your party must be on time for the rehearsal. Often there are other rehearsals or functions in the church so being prompt is very important. A rehearsal normally takes 45 minutes. Details regarding the entrance procession and other options in the liturgy are to be decided prior to the rehearsal time.

## FEES/OFFERINGS



- A \$600 offering is set for the church. If neither one of you nor your families have been parishioners, then the church fee is \$1,000.
- A \$300 stipend for the parish organist covers the planning sessions and the liturgy. If you wish to use your own organist, then you must arrange payment with him or her and St. Margaret's organist must still receive her

fee.

- A \$50 stipend for the sacristan who will set up for your wedding
- A nominal tip for the altar server(s).

Handing in these fees at the time of the rehearsal or earlier is expected.

### **THROWING OF RICE, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI**

We request that your guests refrain from the throwing of rice, birdseed and confetti. Environmental, safety and cleaning concerns are the reason for our policy in this matter. The blowing of bubbles would be permitted.

### **LATENESS**

It is impolite and inconsiderate to keep wedding guests waiting beyond the announced time of a ceremony. Significant lateness in beginning the ceremony may require the priest to eliminate some aspects of the ceremony or some musical selections due to another closely following function or regularly scheduled parish service. Needless to say, lateness would jeopardize the opportunity for a receiving line after the ceremony. This is especially so with a Saturday 3:00 PM wedding because of the 5:30 PM Mass or a 1:00 PM wedding if a 3:00 PM wedding follows.

### **PICTURES AFTER CEREMONY**

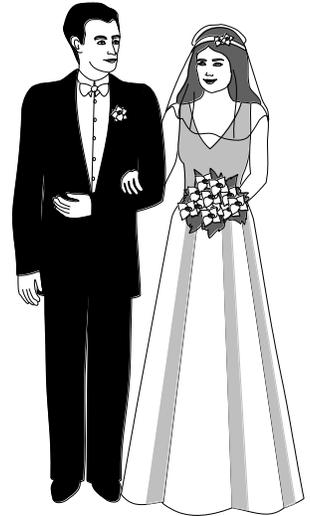
Picture taking will be allowed in the church providing there is no interference with other services after your wedding. On Saturdays the church is to be vacated by 4:30 PM at the latest.

### **CHURCH AISLE**

The length of the center aisle in the church is 66 feet. There are 16 pews on the left side of that aisle and 14 on the right.

## CONCLUSION

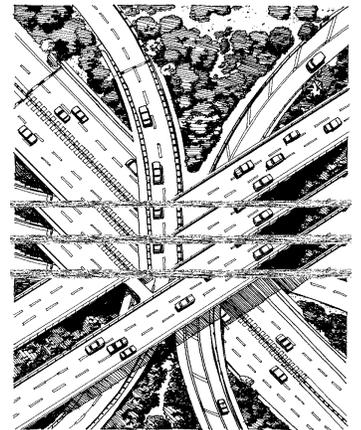
Hopefully we have provided answers to many of your questions about your wedding at St. Margaret of Cortona. This booklet is not meant to limit our involvement with you. Do not hesitate to call upon us for anything regarding your wedding. We are here for you. Congratulations again on your response to the call to Christian marriage. May the Lord who called you to this marriage enrich your lives and your love for each other.



## DIRECTIONS TO ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA

### *From the Lincoln Tunnel:*

Lincoln Tunnel to Route 3 West. Go over the Hackensack River Bridge. Stay in the right lane and get off the exit at the base of the bridge to Route 120 North. Continue straight to Route 503 (You will pass Met Life Stadium on the right and the Izod Center on the left.) Route 503 will bring you through Carlstadt, Moonachie and then Little Ferry. When you enter Little Ferry, the road will bend to the left and you will see Craig D's Deli and Pizza on your right. Make a right turn at the corner after Craig D's, which is Chamberlain Ave, and the church is halfway down the block on the right hand side.



### *From Route 17 North:*

Route 17N to Moonachie Avenue exit. Make a right off the exit ramp and proceed to the second traffic light; Graycliffs on your left. Make a left and when you enter Little Ferry, the road will bend to the left and you will see Craig D's Deli and Pizza on your right. Make a right turn at the corner after Craig D's, which is Chamberlain Ave, and the church is halfway down the block on the right hand side.

*From New Jersey Turnpike North:*

Turnpike North to Exit 16W. Take first right after toll booth (Service Road for Route 3). Follow signs for 120 North. The exit is on the right. The road goes up and over Route 3, stay to the left. Continue straight to Route 503 (You will pass Met Life Stadium on the right and the Izod Arena on the left.) Route 503 will bring you through Carlstadt, Moonachie and then Little Ferry. When you enter Little Ferry, the road will bend to the left and you will see Craig D's Deli and Pizza on your right. Make a right turn at the corner after Craig D's, which is Chamberlain Ave, and the church is halfway down the block on the right hand side.

*From George Washington Bridge:*

GW Bridge to Rout 46 West. Go over Hackensack River Bridge. At the foot of the Bridge is a series of lights. Go through the lights and continue on Route 46 West. On the left is a Popeye's Chicken Restaurant. Make a left at the second light past Popeye's.

This is Liberty Street. Continue straight through the light at Main St and the one by the school and make a left onto Chamberlain Ave (American Legion is on the left). The church is halfway down the block on the right hand side.



*From Route 80 East:*

Route 80 East to Exit 64 onto Route 17 South. Stay in the left lane. Get on Route 46 East. After traffic light after Teterboro Airport, stay in the right lane and get off South Hackensack/Little Ferry exit (Just past Dunkin Donuts). Continue straight and make a right at the traffic light. This is Liberty Street. Continue straight through the light at the school and make a left onto Chamberlain Ave (American Legion is on the left). The church is halfway down the block on the right hand side.

**CHECKLIST**

***DOCUMENTS*** (Check if given to priest or deacon)

Baptismal certificate                      Bride  Groom

Witnesses (2 Each)                      Bride  Groom

Pre-Cana certificate                     

Marriage License                     

Fees                     

Other Documents ( if needed)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***WEDDING SELECTIONS***

Date of Wedding \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Rehearsal \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Mass  Ceremony (Check one)

Celebrant:  Father  Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
Procession

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sripture Readings:**

Old Testament: *Book* \_\_\_\_\_ *Chapter* \_\_\_\_\_ *Verse* \_\_\_\_\_

read by \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament: *Book* \_\_\_\_\_ *Chapter* \_\_\_\_\_ *Verse* \_\_\_\_\_

read by \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel \_\_\_\_\_ or  Chosen by Celebrant

Prayers of the Faithful :  Chosen by Celebrant or  Self-made

read by:  Celebrant or  \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Bearers \_\_\_\_\_

Candle Ceremony:  Yes  No (Check one)

