

Modesty and Reverence Guidelines for Weddings at the Church of St. Michael

Be as a good witness for Christ in your reverence and modesty.

Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love. It encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships; it requires that the conditions for the definitive giving and commitment of man and woman to one another be fulfilled. Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet. [Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2522]

For Brides

Take time to pray about and choose [with discernment] the different parts of the liturgy for your wedding with your fiancé. Be attentive and choose modest, beautiful dresses for yourself and the bridesmaids. Modesty is a virtue that shows forth one's inner beauty and keeps intact one's dignity. Modesty in dress protects the wearer from being seen as a sexual object and from being the scandalous cause of another person's fall into sin.

On a practical note, this means that the following must be avoided: low-cut fronts showing cleavage, mini-skirt-like bottoms, low cut backsides, open midsections, and/or tight-fitting designs. Contact the parish office to determine if a questionable choice is appropriate; ask a church-going family member [perhaps a grandmother, mother or aunt] about whether he or she believes the standards of decency are being kept.

In addition, keep in mind that the majority of current fashions do not maintain the standards of modesty; however, almost all bridal shops offer the possibility of modifications. **This presents an opportunity to modify gowns so that they are presentable in Church and for Divine Worship. Certain bridal companies offer 'modest' gowns and shawls or bolero-type cover-ups are available in a variety of styles.**

For Grooms

As you are called to be the spiritual head of your family, made in the image of Christ who was crucified for his bride the Church, you should make certain the holy nature of marriage is protected during the Liturgy. Thus, you should openly discuss with your fiancé the importance of modesty. In choosing a dignified gown and modest attire for the wedding party, others will be discouraged from stealing the dignity of any member of the wedding party by glances and the resulting impure thoughts. This need for modesty also includes the avoidance of attire such as top-hats, canes and such that add more of a party atmosphere and not one of reverence for the Sacrament of Marriage.

(Whether a Mass or a service of communion, please explain to those in attendance the holy nature of communion, wherein one receives the very Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.) Catholics believe communion brings the recipient to an intimate union with our Lord – this is likened to the marriage of one's soul with Christ. The Church—not wanting to defile this union—therefore limits this sacrament to persons who have made the unique commitment of being baptized Catholic and are in a state of grace. Confession can be granted to anyone who asks for it prior to the wedding; a special time allotted for this if requested. Alcohol must never be consumed or present on church grounds during your wedding day preparation and may cause a postponement of the wedding to another day. **Please inform your wedding party that smoking and all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on church property.**