# Wedding Guide Preparation

# Content

Getting Starter	4
Required Documents & Fees	4
Marriage Preparation	5
Liturgical Planning	6
Guidelines for the Days	7
Photography & Videography	8
Visiting Clergy & Ecumenical Weddings	9
Directions & Contact Info	10
Checklist	11

#### Dear Couple,

On behalf of the entire parish community at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, congratulations! You have chosen to be married in our community. We welcome you and are very happy for you. Our response to the love you share with one another and with us is to commit ourselves to providing you with the encouragement and support you will need for a beautiful wedding liturgy and a lifetime of happiness with each other.

Liturgy is very important to us. Liturgy is our communal prayer at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We take it seriously. As we look forward to your wedding liturgy we do so with a spirit of faith-filled festivity. Our joy at the marriage of a man and a woman calls us to ritualize this " symbol of Christ's love for the church" in a ceremony that is all-at-once community oriented, as well as highly personal for you, your family and the friends that you will invite to share in the celebration.

This communal focus does not mean that you will be unable to make the celebration "your own." In addition to choosing the members of your wedding party, you are also encouraged to decide who will participate as lay liturgical ministers in the celebration and to select the scripture readings, prayers and music that will constitute the liturgy.

We are eager to help you prepare your ceremony well. To this end we have developed a set of guidelines to assist you in your liturgy planning. These are intended to familiarize you with both the norms of the Roman Catholic Rite of Marriage and with the customs of our parish community.

This handbook also will answer some of the most often asked questions by couples who have preceded you. You may have others. Please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. We want to do all we can to help make your wedding celebration a truly memorable occasion.

Again, thank you for choosing our community in which to share your married love. We look forward to getting to know you in a special way during your coming months of preparation. Be assured of our prayers.

Sincerely,

Rev. Ricardo Ortega, Jr.

# **Getting Started**

#### **Congratulations**

Congratulations on your engagement! You have made the initial step in preparation for your marriage at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by contacting the Parish Office and booking the date and time for your wedding. You will be contacted soon to setup your first appointment with the priest that will be marrying you.

#### **Welcoming Session**

At your first session with the priest he will discuss the preparation process with you and answer any questions you may have. Several items are covered in the Welcoming Session. You will complete the Pre-Nuptial Investigation (P.N.I.). This questionnaire determines your canonical freedom to marry. You will also complete a survey of values and attitudes called FOCCUS, this is not a test, but rather a tool to help you identify the strengths of your relationship, as well as areas of needed growth. The results of the FOCCUS questionnaire are confidential and will prove to be an important part of your preparation. During this session, the priest will also discuss eligibility requirements for marriage in the Catholic Church and inform you of the documents you will need to gather.

#### **Contact Information**

Parish Office: 973-694-5700

E-Mail: abvmparishsecretary@gmail.com

# **Required Documents & Fees**

#### **Church Documents**

Please obtain a baptismal certificate from the church of your baptism. It can be issued no earlier than six months prior to your planned wedding date. (If you were baptized at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, inform the priest/deacon and he will obtain this document for you.)

#### **Civil Documents**

A civil license is required for a marriage. You must apply for a civil license in the city hall of the township of the bride's legal residence. Please note, Civil authorities DO NOT work weekends, so your license must be applied for at least 72 hours before the time of the wedding. If you are marrying on the weekend, this means 72 hours before 3:00 PM Friday. (That's Tuesday!)

#### Fees

The fee for weddings at Annunciation Parish is \$850.00 which includes the fee for the church and the stipends for the organist and singer. Your check should be made payable to Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. *Must be paid and brought to the parish office during the wedding preparation process.* 

# **Marriage Preparation**

#### Meeting with the Priest /Deacon

This step is your first meeting with the priest/deacon who will officiate at your marriage. He will discuss the Pre-Nuptial Investigation with you to obtain your background information and determine that there are no impediments to your marriage. He will then review the results of your FOCCUS.

Normally, you will receive the book, Together For Life, at the Wedding Preparation Evening. If you have not received a copy, your priest/deacon celebrant may supply the book at your first meeting with him.

Non-Catholic ministers are welcome to participate in marriages in the church. Generally, the details of such celebrations are worked out with the couple, priest and minister/rabbi during the year of preparation. It is permissible, with a dispensation, for the marriage to be celebrated in the church of the non-Catholic partner. If this is the case, please let the priest/deacon know early on in the time of preparation.

#### Pre-Cana

Pre-Cana is a requirement for marriage in the Catholic Church. It provides an opportunity for you to meet with other engaged couples as well as married couples to share experiences and information on some of the issues that you will face as partners in your marriage.

Pre-Cana consists of presentations and discussion of these important issues followed by a private sharing time between you and your future spouse. We recommend that you attend Pre-Cana at least six to nine months before your wedding. These sessions are intended to be helpful, interesting and informative as you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. Please contact the Parish Office for further information.

# **Liturgical Planning**

#### The Readings

- All readings during the Wedding ceremony must be taken from Sacred Scripture.
- Those who are doing the readings should attend the rehearsal.

#### Music

If you wish to use a pianist/organist for your Wedding, you must use our Church organist; however, it is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to hire any vocalist. Music played in Church during the Wedding ceremony must be approved by our Liturgy.

Alex Birchwale is our musician and he can be contacted at 201-580-1966 or alexanderbirchwale@gmail.com.

Please remember that you should book the Church Organist as soon as your Wedding date is confirmed. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO CALL as he may not be available. Please note that Musicians fees are set by the Musicians.

#### **Unity Candle**

Some couples choose to include the unity candle in their ritual. Inform the priest/deacon if you wish to include this in your ceremony.

#### **Wedding Rehearsals**

A rehearsal for the ceremony will be scheduled at the same time you schedule your wedding. You are asked to contact the priest/deacon four to six weeks before the wedding to finalize the liturgy. At this meeting the priest or deacon will complete a wedding rehearsal form with you.

It is extremely important that you bring your civil marriage license to your rehearsal.

# **Guidelines for the Days**

#### **Punctuality**

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church is a very vibrant and active community, with many liturgical services each week. Therefore, it is very important that your wedding begin on time. While some in the wedding industry may actually encourage one to be "fashionably" late, lateness is, in fact, not fashionable, but inconsiderate of your guests and those who minister here. In order to ensure a prompt wedding, both bride and groom should arrive at the church no later than thirty minutes prior to the scheduled start of the wedding.

#### Confession

Marriage is one of the seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church. In order to receive any of these seven Sacraments, one needs to be in a state of grace by making a Confession prior to receiving a Sacrament. Your friends will definitely want to share your joy on your Wedding Day and join in prayers for your happiness. You will want them with you at Holy Communion. Opportunity for Confession will be available at the time of the rehearsal at your request.

#### Etiquette

At Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we take very seriously the sacredness of your wedding liturgy. Therefore, we remind all present of the importance of reverence, and ask that all present refrain from practices such as eating, gum chewing, conversing, etc. during the liturgy, and that all take the opportunity to become fully engaged in prayer and worship by participating fully in the prayers, responses and music of the liturgy.

#### Rice, Confetti, Bird Seed, Balloons, etc.

Due to our commitment to safety and the environment, we cannot permit the use of rice, confetti, bird seed or balloons at any time on Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary grounds. Your cooperation is most appreciated!

#### **Flowers**

It is recommended that there be no more than two (2) floral arrangements for use in the sanctuary. No flowers are to be placed on the altar. There are liturgical reasons for which flowers and other special arrangements are used in the church. These items may not be moved or changed (e.g. Christmas, Lent, Easter, November). If you order floral arrangements, please ask your florist for stands. We do not provide stands. They will be removed immediately after your wedding. Florists are responsible for their property.

#### Decorations or flowers of any kind are not permitted on the ends of the pews.

#### Aisle Runner/Rose Petals

As per a directive from the Paterson Diocese, due to insurance regulations, aisle runners are not permitted under any circumstances. Tossing of rose petals (real or fake), or any other objects, in the aisle is not permitted.

# **Photography & Videography**

#### **Photography**

Professional photographers are welcome at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In hiring them, please advise them that flash equipment may not be used during the ceremony, that is, once the wedding party has made its entrance into the church. Please ask your photographer to consult with the wedding assistants at least one-half hour before the ceremony begins. If another wedding is scheduled at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary following your wedding, the wedding party and the photographer should plan to be completely finished in the church one hour after the start of the wedding (i.e., a 2:30 p.m. wedding should exit the church no later than 3:30 p.m.). Due to the sacredness of the liturgy, it is the policy of Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church that any and all photography be limited to those professionals hired by you for the day. Your full cooperation is appreciated.

#### **Videography**

Professional videographers are also welcome at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You should inform them that floodlights and mobile cameras are not permitted in the church. Stationary tripods must be used. Your videographer should also be told to meet with the wedding assistants at least one-half hour before the ceremony begins. The center aisle must be kept clean of tripods at all times. As with still photography, we ask that any videography be limited to those professionals hired by you for the day, in order to preserve the sacredness of the liturgy. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

# **Visiting Clergy & Ecumenical Weddings**

#### **Visiting Priests**

- 1. Visiting priests are always welcome to perform your Marriage ceremony; however, the Parish Priest who is making the arrangements should be informed that a visiting Priest/Deacon will perform the ceremony. Please have the visitor contact the Parish Priest well in advance of the wedding.
- 2.A visiting priest who is going to perform the marriage ceremony is obligated to have a letter from the Bishop of his Diocese or the Superior of his community stating he is a priest in good standing with his diocese or community. In addition, he should write to the pastor of the parish requesting delegation to witness the marriage.
- 3.A visiting Priest/Deacon who is performing the ceremony is obligated to prepare the Bride and Groom in their entrance to the Married State (including the mandated paperwork as required by Canon Law and the Common Policy of New Jersey).
- 4. Visiting Priests are to perform Weddings in accordance with parish guidelines, and to conduct the rehearsal.

"By virtue of the sacrament of Matrimony the spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligations, they are infused with the Spirit of Christ... thus they increasingly advance their own perfection, as well as their mutual satisfaction, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God."

Constitution of the Church in the Modern World

#### **Wedding Arrangements**

Your wedding day will be one of, if not the most important days of your life. We here at Annunciation will do all in our power to make it as happy and smooth and memorable a day as possible. Very often in the hustle and bustle of preparing for the big day, many important questions go unasked and unanswered until it's too late to do anything about them.

"Ordinarily, couples who want to marry in a Catholic ceremony within the Paterson Diocese are to begin preparation one year in advance of their marriage."

(Marriage Policy; Diocese of Paterson)

Normally either the bride or groom who wishes to marry at Annunciation must be a registered member of this parish. It is presumed that couples wishing to marry in the church regularly participate in the Eucharist and are involved in the life of the parish.

#### **Dispensations**

Church Law (Canon Law) treats all marriages as though between two Catholics, (man & woman) and requires that the ceremony be in Catholic Church. Any exception to this norm means that a dispensation from the law of the Church must be obtained. All dispensations take time, and some take more time than other. Keep this in mind when planning your Wedding.

#### **Ecumenical Weddings**

In marriages between a Catholic and a baptized or unbaptized non-Catholic, a dispensation from Mixed Religion/Disparity of Worship must be obtained for marriage.

Non-Catholic Ministries are welcome to participate in marriages in the Church. Generally the details of such celebrations are worked out with the couple, priest and minister/rabbi during the year of preparation. It is permissible, with a dispensation, for the Marriage to be celebrated in the Church of the non-Catholic partner. If this is the case, please let the priest know early on in the time of preparation.

### **Directions & Contact Info**

#### **Directions**

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary 45 Urban Court Road Wayne, NJ 07470 Website: www.abvm-wayne.org

Phone: 973-694-5700

# Checklist

wedding Date	
Rehearsal Date:	
Checklist	Date Completed
Meetings with Priest/Deacon:	
Pre-Cana:	
Meeting with Music Director:	
NOTES:	

