

# WEDDING GUIDELINES

Welcome to the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the Roman Catholic Tradition. Marriage is a gift from God by which men and women are established in the community of the Catholic Church and with the world as a whole. Furthermore, in this sacrament God promises to bless, comfort and encourage those who seek him always in their sacramental marriage.

The importance of a Sacramental Marriage is very clear when you understand the endless graces received from inviting Christ in your life together as one. The Church announces God's promise in the Liturgy which begins the Marriage, in which a man and a woman commit themselves to one another in a life-long promise, forming a covenant with God, as husband and wife.

Furthermore, in a wedding mass, the churches people petition that God will be present to bless the marriage of the couple, and support for their endeavor choosing to be married in the church. The ceremony belongs to the whole church, not only to the bride and the groom on that day.

The Church is bound by certain guidelines for the celebration of the sacraments and these are not arbitrary rulings, but are collective teachings of the Church expressing the true meaning of worship. Please honor our efforts to ensure the Solemnity of the Wedding Day.

## Planning the Rite of Marriage:

The celebration of the Rite of Marriage is a very joyous and sacred celebration! Our parish communities want to celebrate this sacred sacrament with you in a very special way. Please honor the guidelines established in order to allow for lasting memories and extended graces on your wedding day.

### Let's Get Started:

- All communication is to be done **ONLY** by the **Bride** or **Groom**. All decisions, planning, requests, etc. will be discussed with the bride and groom. Anyone other than the bride or groom contacting the parish in an attempt to make plans regarding the wedding will be instructed to have the bride or groom contact us.
- At least six months notice prior to the anticipated wedding, those who plan to be married must first contact the parish office to make an appointment with one of the parish priests.
- No wedding can be scheduled over the phone or with the parish secretary.

- The parish priest must have an **initial** meeting completed before a final Wedding Date is given.
- A meeting with Marriage Ambassador to start Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage.  
Contact: Jackie Schratz 724-344-2683
- A visiting priest or deacon is permitted to celebrate. It is understood that he will be responsible for the preliminary paper-work. He must also follow our wedding guidelines.

## **Ceremony Guidelines:**

**Scheduling:** Weddings cannot be scheduled on a Friday or Saturday if it is a Holy Day. Marriages are typically not celebrated during Lent and Holy Week because of the solemn character of that time.

**Wedding Day:** Liturgies are scheduled for Saturdays between the hours of 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. On the day of the wedding, the wedding party, guests, and anyone else involved with the celebration may enter the church no sooner than one hour before the liturgy begins.

**Rehearsal:** The wedding rehearsal is scheduled for the evening before the wedding and is to last no longer than

one hour. The rehearsal times are as follows: Friday, 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm. Please check with your priest. Please have all members of the wedding party meet in the church **30 minutes** before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin.

**Wedding Coordinators:** Members of the parish Wedding Committee, will be present at your wedding to ensure that the needs of the bridal party are met. We ask that all members of the wedding respect the directions given by these volunteers.

Contact-Dianna Baumann-Fisher 724-941-8728

Nancy Huffner 724-941-6805

**Bridal Party:** Although there is no limit on the number of persons in the bridal party, there is to be only one best man and one maid/matron of honor. They are to be of adult age.

**Children in the Wedding:** We strongly recommend that children in the bridal party be at least four years of age. Our experience has shown that children under 4 may be too young for the responsibility of being in the bridal party.

**Ring Bearer:** If you choose to have one present, we ask that the real rings be kept with the best man and fake rings on the pillow.

**Readers:** You may ask friends or relatives to serve as lectors. Lectors proclaim the Word of God. They should be comfortable with and proficient in public speaking.

**Altar Servers:** If you wish to request the use of church altar servers or if you are bringing your own please notify us. Contact the Parish Office or the Wedding Coordinators.

**Offertory Gifts:** Occurs within the celebration of Mass, you may ask family or friends to bring up the bread and wine during the Preparation of the Gifts only two people are needed.

### **Flowers and Decorations:**

The following decorations are permitted in the church. Pew bows are the only items permitted to be tied to the pews in the church. They are not to be attached with thumb tacks, wires, or tape. Candles and/or arches are not to be attached to the pews.

Additional flowers are not to be placed in the church except for use with pew bows. No other items are to be brought into the church for decoration including candelabras or anything artificial.

Please remember that at the time of the wedding liturgy, the church may already be decorated for the

liturgical season or upcoming liturgical feast (i.e. Advent, Christmas, Easter etc.). Therefore, these decorations are not to be moved or taken down for the wedding liturgy.

Please note that these liturgical seasons have specific colors that are used (i.e. purple for Lent and Advent, red for Pentecost and Passion Sunday, and white or gold for Christmas and Easter).

NOT permitted in the church: Runners due to the floor slope, the use of Rice, Confetti, Birdseed, Rose Petals, or Balloons. Bubbles are permitted outside the church.

Taking flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother is permitted.

**Alcohol Use:** Absolutely no alcohol is permitted in the church or on church grounds during the rehearsal or the wedding.

Through the exchange of vows, the bride and groom administer the Sacrament of Marriage to each other. Therefore, they must both be of sound mind and judgment in order for the marriage to be valid. As witnesses, everyone in the bridal party must also be coherent.

**Food Use:** Absolutely **no** food is permitted in the bridal rooms or grooms area of the church. It is important to keep the solemnity of the sacramental marriage and the wedding festivities for the reception, after the mass.

### **Marriage License Required:**

You must secure a marriage license from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania **before** your wedding day. A marriage license is typically valid for sixty days. To obtain a license, please visit your local county marriage license center. A license from any county will suffice. The license should be given to the priest-celebrant on the evening of the rehearsal. Please make sure all information on the license is correct. You cannot be married if the information on the license is incorrect.

### **Florists, Photographers, and Videographers:**

It is the responsibility of the couple to give a copy of the guidelines to the florist, photographer and/or videographer. It is disrespectful, as well as a distraction to the presider and assembly if the photographer or videographer does not follow our restrictions remembering to keep the solemnity of the mass.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO LEAVE THE CHURCH IN THE  
CONDITION YOU FOUND IT.**

**\*\*\*CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS\*\*\***

**Music for the Ceremony:**

All arrangements for music for your wedding must be completed at least Four months in advance of the wedding. Contact: Tom Franzak at St. Benedict 412-851-1430 or Sean Thornton at St. Francis 412-477-7925. A fee is charged by the music directors providing the service of music for the ceremony.

**Church and Priest Fees:**

There are no set fees for the Wedding Ceremony. However, understand the expense for the church hosting weddings and providing extra church lights, sacramental supplies, and water, Bridal Room and Wedding Coordinators services, etc. used outside of Sunday masses. It is customary to recognize the Churches expenses and the Priest's extra time celebrating the wedding with a donation of appreciation. Your thoughtfulness is much appreciated.