

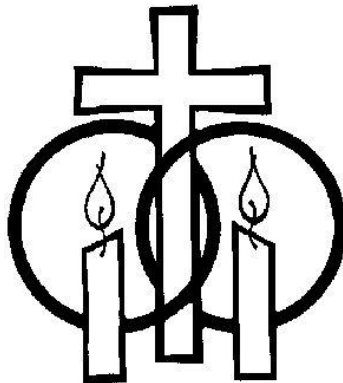
TRIUMPH OF THE HOLY CROSS PARISH

Parish Office
139 Gill Hall Road
Jefferson Hills, PA 15025
412-755-2046

Wedding Guidelines

Celebrating the Sacrament of

MATRIMONY



Your interest in celebrating a wedding is a source of happiness for our entire parish community because it is a sign of life and growth in our midst. We pray that God will bless you abundantly during your engagement as you prepare for your wedding. This booklet has been prepared to assist you in planning your wedding by presenting, as clearly as possible, our wedding policies and procedures.

We are hopeful that your wedding be a joyful celebration and source of pride for you and your families. It is also our concern that it be an expression of faith with a ceremony appropriate for a Church setting. Finally, it is our hope that your preparations for the wedding, which lasts a day, not overshadow your commitment to marriage, which lasts a lifetime.

Reverend Paul J. Zywan, Pastor

Reverend William R. Terza, Senior Parochial Vicar

Reverend Patrick C. Barkey, Senior Parochial Vicar

Reverend Michael J. Faix, Parochial Vicar



PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Inquiries

Only after a priest or deacon has conducted the required pre-marriage assessment will a date and time be confirmed in the parish schedule book. Before that, any questions answered or information about availability of our Church does not ensure permission for the wedding to take place in the Catholic Church.

2. Who Can Marry?

You both must be at least 18 years of age, with no prior bond of marriage (that is, not previously married unless the former marriage has been annulled by the Catholic Church).

You must be entering the marriage freely. The married couples are called to welcome children joyfully from the Lord. Christian marriage is both life-giving and life-uniting.

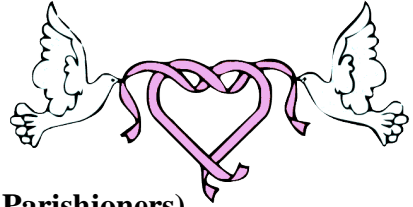
When a Catholic wishes to marry someone of another denomination of faith (this also applies to weddings which will take place in a Church of another denomination), permission or a dispensation must be obtained from the Diocese. The priest will arrange for this dispensation.

Please refer to the Diocesan Marriage Preparation Policy entitled "The Sacrament of Marriage - A Living Reflection of God's Love", and the Pennsylvania state laws concerning marriage.

3. Days and Times for Weddings and Rehearsals

Weddings may take place on any day of the week except Sundays. Most weddings are held on Friday evenings or on Saturday afternoons. One hour is set aside for your wedding ceremony; one half hour for pictures after the ceremony. All members of the bridal party, readers, gift bearers, flower girl(s) and ring bearer

are expected to attend the rehearsal. Lateness will not be tolerated except in cases of emergencies or inclement weather. The marriage license should be brought to the rehearsal and given to the priest. **Absolutely no changes to the Wedding Mass or Ceremony will be made after the rehearsal is complete.**



4. Fees and Suggested Offerings

The following should be used as guidelines:

Donation to Church	\$250 (Registered Parishioners)
	\$300 (Non-Parishioners)
Director of Music	\$200 *
Parish Cantor	\$100

The above offerings should be presented **the day of the rehearsal**. For the Director of Music, cash is preferred, but if paying by check, please make the check payable to “name” (of the Director of Music). Likewise, the check for the cantor should be made payable to the name we will provide.

Director of Music Ministry: Sean Thornton – Contact no less than 6 weeks before your wedding.

412-755-2046; musicministrythornton@triumphoftheholycrosspgh.org

Marriage License. A Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Marriage License is required for any marriage taking place in a Catholic Church. This license can be obtained from any county license bureau within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Your marriage license must be brought to the wedding rehearsal and given to the priest. Immediately after your wedding Mass or ceremony, your marriage license will be returned to you or a member of your family.

* When a couple decides to bring in their own organist, it is expected that the parish organist will still receive the \$200 fee. Also please note, that if a friend/family member would like to sing a solo, there is a \$50 rehearsal fee.

PART TWO: PREPARATION FOR A WEDDING IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. Introduction

Since the Catholic Church believes that marriage is a commitment made for life, the preparation for marriage must clearly recognize the significance of that commitment. Preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church is provided to ensure that both parties are capable of making such a commitment.

2. Pre-Marriage Assessment

Between eighteen and six months before your wedding, you should contact the parish priest to discuss your intention to marry in the Catholic Church. **Please remember, no date or time for a wedding may be confirmed until this meeting takes place.**

At this meeting, the priest will conduct the required assessment to confirm your freedom and ability to enter into marriage within the Catholic Church. His questions will deal with matters such as previous marriages, age, maturity, knowledge about marriage, intentions, etc.

In order for the priest to conduct an accurate assessment, please be prepared to discuss fully any previous marriages. This includes those which took place before a Justice of the Peace or other civil official. Please note, generally the marriages of non-Catholics before civil officials (including Justices of the Peace) are considered valid by the Catholic Church. Thus, these parties are not free to enter marriage again in the Catholic Church without some dispensation of that previous marriage (e.g. through a formal process of annulment).

During the assessment process, the priest may also ask you to complete some pre-marriage inventories or instrument to assist in determining a couple's readiness for marriage within the Church. The assessment process may require more than one meeting.

3. Required Documents and Pre-Nuptial Forms

Since marriage is a step recognized both by the Church and the state, it necessarily involves the gathering of information. This involves the completion of a standard set of forms by the priest/deacon who will be the official witness of your wedding.

If you are a Catholic, baptized or confirmed in a parish other than one of the four parishes in our grouping (St. Clare of Assisi, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Holy Spirit or St. Thomas à Becket) we must have a recent Baptism and Confirmation certificate (dated no more than six months before the wedding is to take place). This can be obtained by phoning or writing the parish where you were baptized. These recent certificates will verify that you are baptized, confirmed and free to marry within the Catholic Church. All the documents submitted will remain on file in the parish office as a permanent record.

If you were baptized in a faith community other than Catholic, you, will still need a copy of your baptismal certificate. A certificate of whatever age will suffice. It will be returned to you after the appropriate information is recorded.

Often couples of different faith backgrounds decide to marry. There should be time devoted to discussing how each partner will contribute to the spiritual growth of the other and any children who might be born in their marriage. Among the forms to be completed before marriage in the Catholic Church, is one signed by the Catholic partner marrying a non-Catholic. This form confirms the intention of the Catholic "...to continue practicing the Catholic faith and to do all in my power to share that faith with our children by having them baptized and raised as Catholics."



4. Marriage Instructions

The specific preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church involves a program of listening and discussion. The stated policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh requires that engaged couples participate in a pre-marriage program best suited to their needs. The content of these programs centers on the areas of the sacraments, spirituality, communication, financial responsibility, family life, responsible parenthood, sexuality and continuing formation within marriage. There are a variety of ways in which this can be accomplished. Among these are the following:

Weekends for the Engaged: A local program sponsored by a parish whereby married couples treat various topics dealing with married life. Included with these presentations is the opportunity for questions and discussion. These programs are usually conducted in the spring and fall, and are conducted by various parishes at different times of the year. The Diocesan Office for Family Life (412-456-3000) maintains a listing of many of these programs.

Engaged Encounter Weekends: A Diocesan program whereby married couples along with a priest/deacon present various topics dealing with married life. This program consists of an entire weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon conducted at various sites in the Diocese. A complete listing of Diocesan and Parish sponsored Pre-marriage Classes is available on the Diocese of Pittsburgh website: diopitt.org. Engaged Encounter Weekends are held several times each month. Please contact the Parish Office for dates and a contact through whom arrangements may be made.

Diocesan Marriage Preparation: See Appendix A

PART THREE: THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Sacraments are celebrations of the entire Body of Christ. Therefore, your wedding liturgy has special meaning for the entire parish community and should be celebrated with the joyful dignity that this implies. It is a time of prayer, promise, joy and hope. This special celebration should be carefully planned with the mutual cooperation of the priest/deacon and the couple, for it is meant to deepen your love while praising God in the midst of a parish community of faith.

The Liturgy of the Word: Readings from the Scriptures (one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament) may be chosen by the couple in consultation with the priest/deacon who will witness the marriage. Readers may be chosen from family or friends to read the Scripture and the Prayers of the Faithful. Any person who is proclaiming a reading in Church should be a good speaker, familiar with Catholic liturgy and feel comfortable in a Church building. Remember, this is the proclamation of the Word of God. Please note that a wedding ceremony has the same number of readings as a wedding Mass.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: Every wedding in the Catholic Church is celebrated with the Liturgy of the Word and the rite of marriage. Two Catholics who marry must be married within the context of the Eucharist (Mass). If one of those to be married is not a Catholic, the couple may request that the Mass be celebrated at the wedding, but this is optional.

It is important for these couples to seriously consider this matter. There are compelling reasons why an interfaith couple may not choose to request Mass. Among these are so that non-Catholic family and friends may fully follow and participate in the celebration of marriage. The marriage of a Catholic and a catechumen or an unbaptized person takes place during a liturgy of the Word.

Confession: It is a Catholic tradition that the Sacrament of Reconciliation precedes major steps taken in one's life. During the time of preparation for the wedding, the bride and groom, the wedding party and family, should arrange to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession). Consult your parish bulletin for the times when this sacrament is celebrated.

Reception of the Eucharist: It is the directive of the Catholic Church that only Catholics may approach the table of the Lord to receive Holy Communion. If Mass is being celebrated as part of your wedding ceremony, please make this directive known to non-Catholics who may be attending. We look forward to the day when all Christians will unite around one table.

Wedding Party: The attendants should arrive at the Church no later than one-half hour before the scheduled time of the wedding. The groom and best man should go directly to the sacristy. Please do not bring any food or beverages into the Church. The consumption of alcohol is prohibited on Church property.

Seating of Guests: Groomsmen should promptly escort guests to their seats. Because the Church is a house of prayer, please be respectful in the vestibule. The mothers of the groom and then the bride should be seated a few minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin. This should not be delayed to seat those who arrive late. In fairness to others who are to use the Church after you, weddings must begin on time.



WEDDING MUSIC GUIDELINES

During the celebration of weddings, just as at weekend liturgies, the members of the assembly are to enter into full, conscious and active participation in singing the various parts of the liturgy. This is to be of primary importance and enhanced with competent musical leadership. According to the Diocese of Pittsburgh, “All music before, during and following the wedding liturgy must:

- Reflect the reverence and dignity of the occasion
- Intensify the Christian meaning of the liturgical service
- Dignify and enhance the sacredness of the wedding liturgy and must be consistent with the theological and liturgical tradition of the Catholic Church.”

When you meet with the organist, he/she will guide you in choosing music for the Mass or wedding ceremony. Only sacred music will be permitted. Non-religious (secular) music can be very meaningful and should be played at the reception and not in Church. The music for your wedding should focus on the worship of God and the spirituality of the Sacrament of Marriage. Please note that the Church does not permit the use of Richard Wagner's *Bridal March* and Felix Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* because of their secular nature.

Meeting with the Director of Music:

Approximately six (6) to eight (8) weeks prior to your wedding date, you will need to schedule a music planning meeting with the Director of Music to allow adequate time for the vocalist to prepare. At this meeting you will:

- Select music for your ceremony
- Determine if you desire additional vocal or instrumental music
- Choose a vocalist for your ceremony (talk to the Director of Music about this)
- Determine if future meetings or rehearsals are necessary

You do not need to find an organist, vocalist, etc. on your own. Your wedding musicians will initially consist of an organist/pianist and a vocalist, both from the Church where the wedding is to take place. The Director of Music will serve as organist/pianist at your wedding. Please do not ask to bring in another organist. You will be given a list of talented and competent vocalists who are prepared to offer beautiful music at your wedding.

If a friend/family member would like to sing a solo, there is a \$50 rehearsal fee. All music must be received by the director one month in advance and the rehearsal will have to take place no later than a week before the wedding. All plans that involve guest instrumentalists, i.e., flutists, harpists, etc. or vocalists must first be discussed with the Director of Music.

Please understand that if the Director of Music is not contacted within 30 days of the actual wedding date, all musical selections will be chosen and a vocalist/cantor will also be selected so that all concerned may have adequate time to prepare and rehearse.

WEDDING CONSULTANTS

Wedding Consultants: Two Wedding Consultants will be assigned for your wedding. Outside or freelance bridal/wedding coordinators are not permitted. Our Wedding Consultants are trained volunteers who assist every bride and bridal party. One of the Wedding Consultants will contact the bride 4-6 weeks before the wedding to discuss details surrounding the Mass or ceremony. The Wedding Consultants are present at the rehearsal and the wedding itself.

Bridal Room: There is a private Bridal room for each wedding. This room is to be used only by the bride, maid/matron of honor and bridesmaids. Brides are encouraged to bring their programs, pew bows, and other wedding-related items to the rehearsal so they may be placed and securely locked in the Bridal room.

Pew Bows and Accessories: Pew bows are permitted. They must be secured with ribbon or rubber bands only. No thumb tacks or tape are permitted, however, the church can provide pew bow holders if needed. Please inform the Wedding Consultant if any pew bows, flowers or other accessories are to be kept as “keepsakes”. Any items left behind after a wedding will be disposed of immediately.

Additional Aspects: If you would like to include any other features in your wedding, they must be discussed with the priest/deacon beforehand.

Flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary: An ancient Catholic wedding custom is the presentation of flowers at a statue of the Virgin Mary. If Mass is part of the wedding, this custom is observed following Communion. If Mass is not part of the ceremony, it may be included shortly before the conclusion of the ceremony. The bride usually performs this gesture accompanied by her new husband.

Flower Girl(s): If you should choose to have a flower girl, they should be no younger than 4 years of age. No flower petals, real or synthetic, should be dropped by the flower girl(s).

Ring Bearer: If you choose to have a ring bearer, they should be no younger than 4 years of age. Fake rings are to be attached to the pillow to be carried down the aisle.

Guest Celebrants: Guest Celebrants MUST obtain permission from the pastor or administrator, before they can celebrate a wedding. Some couples ask a priest/deacon (relative or special friend) other than ones assigned to the parish to be the official witness at their wedding. When initial contact is made with the parish, please indicate your intention to do so. That guest priest/deacon, then, is expected to handle all the details of the wedding including obtaining the required documents, completing the required forms, ensuring that the couple is properly instructed, conducting the rehearsal and the wedding and submitting the papers to the parish following the wedding. The priest or deacon must be in good standing with the Church and, if not from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, must present proper documentation.

Photography: You are welcome to have a photographer take pictures and/or make a videotape of the wedding provided that there are no distractions during the liturgy. The operative principle is that the Church is first and foremost a house of prayer and not a photography studio. Please ask the photographer to introduce him/herself to the priest before the wedding and become familiar with any local restrictions that may apply. Taking pictures in the sanctuary following the wedding is permitted provided that the Church is able to be prepared for the parish Mass.

Flowers: Flowers have traditionally been a part of the wedding ceremony. If you have flowers purchased for use at your wedding, arrangements should be made with the florist of your choice. Two large floral arrangements are permitted in the sanctuary. Please inform the florist that no arrangements may be placed on the altar of sacrifice. It is customary to leave flowers in the Church following the wedding as a gift to the people of the parish. The Church will be available for florist preparations one hour prior to the time of the wedding. Because of the other parish activities, this time frame needs to be maintained.

Crash: Wedding crash (aisle runner) can often be a tripping hazard, especially for the elderly. Wedding crash is not permitted.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Entrance Procession: In recent years, several options have emerged for this aspect of the wedding. There can be an entrance procession similar to that observed at Sunday Mass whereby the congregation is asked to stand and sing an entrance song while the wedding party and ministers enter, usually in pairs (including the parents and bride and groom). Some brides are escorted down the aisle by their mother and father. At some weddings, the attendants are escorted down the entire aisle, at others, only part way, meeting the groomsmen at the center. In any case, the matter of an entrance is left to the discretion of the couple after consultation with the priest/deacon.

Offertory Procession: If the Mass is celebrated at your wedding, you may choose to ask some family members or friends to bring to the altar the bread and the wine. This may include as few as two and as many as four people.

Exchange of Peace: Even if the Mass is not celebrated at your wedding, you may wish to include some exchange of a sign of peace. If this is the case, some couples choose to present flowers at this time to their parents (and grandparents).

Wedding parties: are expected to vacate the Church no later than a half hour before the Saturday Vigil Mass: St. Elizabeth of Hungary (5:00pm); Holy Spirit (4:00pm); St. Thomas à Becket (4:00pm); St. Clare of Assisi (No vigil Mass. We ask that the Bridal Party and all guests leave the Church by 7:00pm for a Friday evening wedding).

Post-Wedding Customs: The throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed or flower petals in the Church or anywhere on Church property is not permitted. Bubbles may be used outside. Helium balloons are not permitted inside or outside the Church.

PART FOUR: LIFE AFTER THE WEDDING

It is indeed true that the marriage begins after the wedding ceremony. The Catholic Church is, of course, most concerned about the marriage. Catholics relate to Christ's universal Church as members of a Catholic parish. We strive to support our newly married parishioners in various way.

If you will be living in the area after your wedding, please register with one of the Churches in our grouping by calling the office and completing a new parishioner form. This can be returned to the parish office or placed in the collection basket on Sunday.

You are valuable to the life of the Church. Please become a part of your parish community. If the priest or staff can assist you in any way after your wedding, please do not hesitate to contact the Church Office. Phone numbers are listed on page 1 of this program.

Prayers and Best Wishes!

Love

is patient, is kind

it does not envy, it does not boast

it is not proud, it is not rude

it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered

it keeps no record of wrongs

it does not delight in evil

it rejoices with the truth

it always protects, it always trusts

it always hopes, it always perseveres

Love Never Fails

Appendix A: Marriage Preparation

To receive the Sacrament of Marriage in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, every engaged couple is required, by Canon Law, to participate in an approved marriage preparation program. The following programs are offered in the diocese of Pittsburgh. **After you attend the course, download or keep a hardcopy of the course content to discuss with the priest or deacon who will be presiding at your wedding.**

In-person Courses

1. Joy Filled Marriage Prep

Renew the 'I do' offers the Joy Filled Marriage Prep in 4 formats:

1. Weekend- There are 4 in-person weekends each year
2. Virtual – LIVESTREAM via Zoom offered for any in-person session
3. 5 Week Session – 5 consecutive Thursday evenings, 2.5 hours each
4. Private one on one sessions

To register, go to: <https://www.renewtheido.org/marriage-prep>

2. Parish Sponsored Classes

Parish programs offer a variety of settings and arrangements from larger groups to webinars to mentor-couples. Given this period of social distancing, some parishes continue to offer virtual and mentor couple opportunities.

To register, go to: <https://diopitt.org/marriage-preparation>

Please note: This schedule is updated as they are made aware of additional programs, or changes to the programs. Some programs may not be in person at this time, so please call the contact person to confirm.

Virtual Courses

3. Joy-Filled Marriage Prep

Engaged couples are invited to participate in: *A Joy-Filled Marriage*, a lively, insightful, and resourceful experience with your future spouse. You will gain the wisdom, receive the tools, and ignite the passion to help form a thriving marriage! Topics include: *What are you saying "I do" to?*, *Communication*, *Love style*, *Resolving conflict*, *Building happiness*. Start the journey to a joy-filled marriage today! Cost is \$47.95 per couple.

<https://ascensionpress.com/products/joy-filled-marriage-certification-course>

4. Catholic Marriage Prep (Agape Catholic Ministries)

Given limits to group gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic, couples may need an online program. Cost ranges from \$194 - \$245 per couple (depending on time frame available).

To register, go to:

<https://www.catholicmarriageprep.com/course-info/courses-info>

5. Engaged Encounter Marriage Prep Weekend

Engaged Encounter is a weekend retreat that assists couples to dialogue honestly and intensively about their future -- their strengths, weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, attitudes about money, sex, children, family, church and society. Engaged Encounter invites couples to deeper communication, which is vital for the growth of a healthy relationship and marriage.

pittsburghengagedencounter.org | National Website: engagedencounter.org

For local reservations email: pittsburgh@engagedencounter.com or by phone: 412-861-0262

Contact for Pre-Marriage Information

Deacon Tom Lopus tlopus@diopitt.org

Revised August 11, 2022