



ST. CAMILLUS AND ST. AGNES

WEDDING AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION HANDBOOK



51 MEDFORD ST., ARLINGTON, MA 02474
WWW.CPARL.ORG | INFO@CPARL.ORG | 781.648.0220



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT!

Marriage is a sacred reality for all people. Like other major life-events, celebrations, blessings, receptions and religious rites that speak of significance. Catholic Christians recognize marriage as a sacrament, a sacred experience of God's presence in human life. We believe that the human love of a married couple is a unique expression of God's love for God's People. In this light, marriage takes on the new dimension of a divine vocation — a call from God to share a unity of life and love with this particular person for the rest of my life.

What follows should help you as you prepare during the next months for the biggest step in your life. You will notice that there are two major sections. The first deals with *Marriage Preparation*. While it might be comparatively shorter, it is, without doubt, the most important. The second section of Wedding Preparation addresses the many practical questions you undoubtedly have, and also presents a few challenges to you to re-think some of the presumptions our society tells us are about how weddings should be celebrated.

We ask that both of you read all of this thoughtfully and prayerfully. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. God Bless!

I. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The Church expects that those who marry in the Church are persons who practice their faith regularly and who participate in the life of their parish community, most especially at Sunday Eucharist (Mass). If regular participation at the Sunday Parish Liturgy is not currently in your life, you are encouraged to prayerfully consider attending Mass together as a way to prepare for your married life.

Preliminary arrangements should be made in person as soon as possible (at least six months, and preferably a year in advance). Such time is needed to assure that all requirements and preparations are made in a timely fashion.

In choosing the date and time for your wedding, please be aware that the prayers, readings, music and the overall tenor of the celebration cannot be separated from the seasons and feasts of the Liturgical Year (e.g. a wedding during Lent should still in some way reflect this penitential season). Once the date has been set, it will be necessary for each of you to contact the church where you were baptized to have current certificates sent directly to Saint Agnes for our permanent records attesting that you have celebrated the sacraments of initiation and indicating that you are free to marry in the Church.

The official policy of the Archdiocese of Boston requires that all couples planning a wedding participate in an approved program of Marriage Preparation. A listing of various Marriage Preparation programs in the area is located on the Archdiocese of Boston website, <https://www.bostoncatholic.org/familylife/transformedinlove>. It will then be up to you to register and meet the requirements of the particular program. This preparation, along with your meetings with the priest or deacon who will preside at your wedding, forms the heart of the formal preparation for marriage.



II. WEDDING PREPARATION

A. Mass or Ceremony?

One of the first issues that might arise is whether or not the Eucharist should be celebrated at your wedding. If you or your fiancé(e) is not a Catholic, then it is not authorized to celebrate Eucharist, as one of you would not be allowed to share in Communion, which is the pre-eminent sign of our unity in Faith. If both of you are Catholic, then it would be most appropriate to share in the Eucharist as well, unless circumstances suggest otherwise. (The length of one form of celebration or the other should not form a basis for this decision.) The minister will assist you to make the proper decision for you.

B. Music Selection

The selection of music is based not only on the fact that a wedding is a special celebration in the lives of two individuals, but also that it is an “act of worship” by the Church. Thus, everything about its celebration should enhance and support this sacred act. Musical selection should be made according to accepted Church norms. While it may be meaningful, popular music does not meet these norms.

There are three criteria which can help us decide if any given piece of music is appropriate at your wedding:

- **The Musical Judgement**—is it good music by accepted standards, or is it trite and of poor quality?
- **The Liturgical Judgement**—are the words and music appropriate to this celebration and in concert with the season of the liturgical year?

- **The Pastoral Judgement**—is it singable? Church music is meant to be sung and not merely listened to. Therefore, the appropriate musical choices are of utmost importance.

Our Parish Music Minister will be able to assist you in these judgements. We ask that you make **all** music arrangements through him. Roger Mansen, the Director of Liturgy and Music, can be reached at 781-648-0220 X411. Please call him at your earliest convenience to begin making these plans.

C. Musicians

The Parish Director of Worship and Music, Roger Mansen, is contracted by the Parish to oversee all weddings in the Parish. You should be in contact with him well in advance of your wedding to make the necessary musical arrangements. He has available for your selection, an excellent and well-trained group of other professional musicians (singers, violinists, cellists, flutists, trumpeters, etc.) and he will inform you as to the amount and payment of all such additional musicians’ fees.

D. Other Liturgical Roles

It has become customary for family members/friends to participate in the ceremony by having them proclaim God’s Word or bring up the gifts of bread and wine (at a Mass). Readers should be adults who are comfortable and competent in this ministry. Please be selective in choosing your readers, provide them ahead of time with legible copies of their respective readings, and be sure that they are at the church rehearsal. Gift bearers should be Catholic and also be comfortable in this role.

WEDDING AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION HANDBOOK



E. Servers

The Parish will provide servers for the wedding. If you have someone in mind for this role, please inform the parish priest/deacon who is planning the wedding with you. It is customary to give a gift to each of the altar servers. (\$20.00 per server is customary)

F. Rehearsal

You may schedule your rehearsal at a mutually agreeable time. Usually, thirty minutes is allotted for such rehearsals, so be sure that your party is on time, as the church is often scheduled for other uses afterward. Please bring the following items with you: completed Liturgical Selection Form, Marriage License, your Offering for the Church, gift for the altar servers and give it to the person who conducts the rehearsal.

G. Photographs/Video

As you may likely be making arrangements for a professional photographer/videographer, we ask that you ask your relatives and friends not to take pictures during the ceremony. Some picture taking distracts from the celebration. Also, the professionals you hire must see the priest/deacon before the wedding to discuss what is and what is not acceptable, and to be clear on this.

H. Offering

Effective for all weddings scheduled after August 1, 2024, the offering is as follows:

The Parish receives an offering of \$300.00. This is an offering to the Parish and not to the priest/deacon performing the wedding. This helps defray Church expenses and should be

seen as a support to the Parish Church as it renders you services in both the preparation and celebrations of your wedding.

Offerings and Fees: (One check made out St. Agnes Parish for \$975.00 is appropriate)

\$300.00 offering to the Church

\$125.00 fee to the Wedding Coordinator (they are present at the Rehearsal and the Wedding)

\$550.00 fee Cantor and Organist (special musical requests may require further payment.)

\$20.00 per altar server (Cash)

I. Flowers

You may place as many or as few flowers in the Church as you wish. In this regard, keep the spirit of the Lenten Season in mind if your wedding is scheduled during that period. **Flowers should be considered a gift to the Parish and should not be removed after the wedding.**

If another wedding is scheduled for the same day, you may find it helpful to share the cost of flowers with the other couple. Any flowers or ribbons placed on the pews should be attached with plastic hooks, elastic or soft string. Please instruct the florist not to use wire or metal clips.

To avoid the danger of fire or other damage, candles should not be a part of any such arrangements and should not be placed in or on the pews.

J. Rice

We ask that your guests refrain from throwing rice, birdseed, rose petals, flowers, bubbles, or confetti on Church property. This can pose a safety problem on the steep steps of our Church, as well as a clean-up issue.

WEDDING AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION HANDBOOK



K. Please Be on Time

An important element of your wedding celebration is the consideration shown to those you have invited to be a part of it (family members, friends and guests), as well as those who have specific roles and ministries (musicians, presider, servers, custodial staff). Because our Church is a busy place (often with several weddings or funerals on the same day, in addition to regular weekend activities) we ask that you pay special attention to arriving at least fifteen minutes before the ceremony so that the celebration might begin on time. This will contribute to making your wedding the joyous occasion it should be.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to call upon the priest/deacon who will be presiding at your wedding.

In conclusion, be assured of our prayers and support as you prepare for this most significant event in your lives. May we make our own the following prayer from the "Rite of Marriage":

*"Lord, may they both praise you when they are happy
and turn to you in their sorrows.*

*May they be glad that you helped them in their work
and*

Know that you are with them in their need.

May they pray to you in the Community of the Church,

And be your witness in the world.

May they reach old age in the company of their friends,

And come at last to the kingdom of heaven."

AMEN.

Fr. Marc Bishop x402
Fr. Alwin Chinnappan x403
Fr. Dominic Ngo x404
Dcn. Peter Bujwid
Mr. Roger Mansen x411

OFFICE:
51 MEDFORD STREET
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02474

ST. AGNES:
32 MEDFORD STREET

ST. CAMILLUS:
1185 CONCORD TURNPIKE

PHONE:
781.648.0220
EMAIL:
INFO@CPARL.ORG
WEB:
WWW.CPARL.ORG

