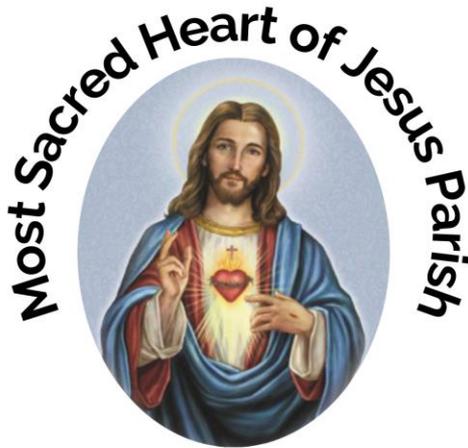


THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

A WEDDING GUIDE FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM



St. Catherine of Sienna Church
St. Joseph Church
St. Margaret Mary Church

Welcome

What a rich blessing and deep joy it is to celebrate, in faith, the sacrament of the marriage covenant! This information is to assist you in preparing for this special lifetime commitment. This great call of God is through His church: a man and woman pledge and promise a lifelong commitment of love and fidelity through their most sacred vows. One must not take this step lightly or haphazardly, but rather after deep reflection, discernment, and prayer.

This booklet contains specific guidelines for couples arranging to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. Please read through it and carefully follow any instructions. Your cooperation is appreciated and will help you better prepare for your wedding.

INTRODUCTION

We are aware of how important your wedding is to you and to the Church. For a Christian couple, the most important aspect of your wedding day should be the Liturgy, in which you make your commitment to each other.

Arrangements for marriages should be made at least six months in advance. The priest must be consulted before setting the date.

PRE-MARRIAGE ASSESSMENT

Preferably one year, but no less than six months before your wedding, you should contact the parish and make an appointment with the priest to discuss your intention to marry in the Catholic Church. At that meeting, the priest will confirm your freedom and ability to enter into marriage within the Catholic Church. He will ask questions that deal with such matters as previous marriages, age, maturity, proper intention, etc.

If applicable, please be prepared to discuss fully any previous marriages. This includes those that took place before a Justice of the Peace or other civil official. Please note that the Catholic Church generally considers the marriage of two non-Catholics before a civil official, including a Justice of the Peace, to be valid. In the Catholic Church, these people are not free to enter into marriage again without some disposition of that previous marriage. Therefore, any previous marriages must be declared null by a formal canonical process (e.g. a process of annulment) before entering into a new marriage.

It is only after this pre-marriage assessment that any formal plans may be made.

Special Circumstances

There are circumstances that may become apparent during the course of the initial interview. When one or more of these circumstances is encountered, the issues must be resolved satisfactorily before proceeding further with the plans for the marriage.

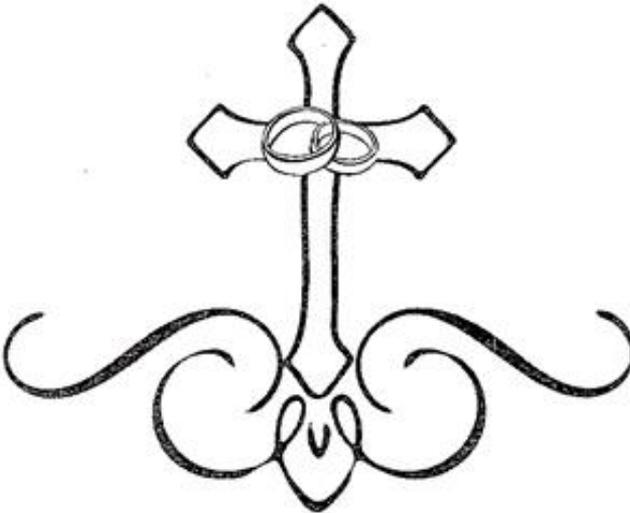
These circumstances could include a lack of readiness for marriage as assessed by the priest; a lack of appreciation for the spiritual and sacramental aspects of marriage; non-practice of Catholic faith; cohabitation (living together); a decision to permanently exclude children from the marriage; refusal to take part in a pre-marriage program or refusal to participate in the pre-marriage assessment.

In instances where one or both of the parties to be married is under the age of twenty-one, there may be a need to interview a parent or guardian to corroborate the statements which were made regarding maturity and readiness for marriage.

Another special circumstance is a premarital pregnancy. Formerly, it was assumed that pregnancy was ample justification for marriage, Today, however, pregnancy is an indicator of a need for special sensitivity and pastoral care. In this instance, the priest may want to meet with the parents of the couple or seek the assistance of an independent evaluation. The goal is to assist the couple in arriving at a mature decision based upon all the factors involved.

Interfaith Marriage

When two people 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 to any children who might be born into their marriage. One of the forms to be completed before their marriage in the Catholic Church is one which is 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."



MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Every couple must complete and fulfill a Diocesan Accredited Marriage Preparation Instruction Program and receive a certificate of attendance. Programs are offered through parish classes, online and weekend retreats. To find and register for an approved Marriage Preparation Program please visit:

www.diopitt.org/marriage-preparation

At this website you will find the following options:

- 1) Parish Sponsored classes (St. Joseph Church may offer classes. Please call the Administrative Office for updated information)
- 2) “Renew the I Do”, a Joy Filled Marriage Prep in 4 formats:
 - Weekend
 - Virtual via Zoom
 - 5 week session
 - Private one on one sessions
- 3) Online Program
- 4) Engaged Encounter Weekend

You must receive a letter of recommendation from the parish priest to attend one of the above options.

There will be a Natural Family Planning presentation during your Marriage Preparation session. If you would like additional information and upcoming class sessions on “Modern Fertility Care”, please visit the following website: www.diopitt.org/office-faith-formation/natural-family-planning

Documents

An initial interview and accompanying paperwork are to be done when reserving a wedding date. The parish priest will complete this interview. However, if the priest performing the wedding ceremony is a relative or a visiting priest, that priest is encouraged to do the paperwork.

The following documents are required:

- 1) For Catholics:
 - a) A recent baptismal certificate from the church where you were baptized. This certificate is to be issued no earlier than 6 months prior to the date of your wedding. This certificate is proof of your baptism and indicates any previous marriages in the Catholic Church.
 - b) Your church of baptism should have a record of your Sacrament of Confirmation. Please ask that the date and place of your reception of Confirmation be included on the baptismal certificate.
- 2) For non-Catholics: a copy of your) baptismal certificate. (It does not need to be a recent copy.)
- 3) Witness affidavits.
- 4) A Pennsylvania Marriage License
The Marriage License is valid for 60 days after it is received. Be sure to bring your license to the rehearsal.

THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

Every wedding in the Catholic Church is celebrated within some form of the Liturgy of the Word together with the exchange of wedding vows. This may be at a Wedding Mass (Eucharist) or a Wedding Ceremony outside of Mass (No Eucharist).

The Wedding Mass (Eucharist)

Two Catholics who marry should be married within the context of Mass. If a couple wishes to be married at Mass, it is expected that the celebration of Mass is part of their lives before the wedding. Catholics not practicing their faith will be asked by the priest preparing them for marriage about their intention to remain within the Church and their willingness to begin an active practice of that faith.

Reception of Holy Communion at Mass

A Saturday Wedding Mass which starts before 4:00pm, does not fulfill the Sunday obligation for Catholics.

Keep in mind the one-hour fast for those who will be receiving Communion.

It is the directive of the Catholic Church that only Catholics in a state of Grace receive Holy Communion. If Mass is celebrated as part of your wedding ceremony, please make this directive known to non-Catholics who may be attending (Please see the following guidelines for the reception of Communion in a Catholic Church.)

GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION

As Catholics, we believe that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the consecrated hands of the priest. Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine. This is not merely symbolic. The presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery that the Church can never fully explain in words. It is at the heart of our beliefs, the source and summit of the Christian faith.

Therefore, to receive Holy Communion, a person must be Catholic and free from serious sin. One must also have fasted for at least one hour prior to receiving Communion.

If you are not Catholic or not able to receive Communion for any reason, you are welcome to approach the priest with your arms folded across your shoulders. The priest will offer you a blessing.

You are also welcome to remain in your pew in prayer during the distribution of the Holy Eucharist.

The Wedding Ceremony Outside of Mass (No Eucharist)

If one of the parties is not Catholic (or if one or both are non-practicing Catholic), the wedding may take place within the context of a wedding ceremony without the reception of Holy Communion. It is important for couples to seriously consider this matter.

There are other compelling reasons couples should exchange their marriage vows within a ceremony outside of Mass rather than within a Mass with the Eucharist. Among these are:

- that the Mass be given the respect it deserves as central to one's life,
- that non-Catholic family and friends may more fully participate in a ceremony rather than a Mass,
- that the symbols be those of unity and not disunity when non-Catholics are not permitted to receive Communion,
- that the Eucharist not be celebrated amid a group of people, many of whom may lack an understanding of its meaning or faith in what is taking place.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR WEDDING

Respect for the Church

Because the church is a sacred place, please consider the spiritual and religious aspects of the marriage sacrament. We ask your cooperation with the following:

1. Modesty is an important component in a wedding held in church. We ask that you show special care in the dresses worn by the bride and bridesmaids.
2. Readers, lecturers, gift bearers, etc. should wear proper attire.
3. Absolutely NO possession or consumption of alcohol or other drugs is permitted in the church and anywhere on the parish grounds.
4. Talking and conduct in the vestibule and the church proper should be in keeping with the sacred character of the surroundings.
5. Silence all cell phones.
6. Refrain from chewing gum.
7. Be prompt for the rehearsal and the wedding. It is important that these events start on time.

Thank you for the respect shown for the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Facilities

If the bride and attendants wish to dress at the church, they may use Siena Hall at St. Catherine of Siena Church, Healy Hall at St. Joseph Church or the bridal room at St. Margaret Mary Church.

Time Limits

Weddings are scheduled no later than 1:30 p.m. on Saturdays due to the anticipated Saturday Vigil Mass. Only half an hour is allowed for picture taking after the ceremony. Please notify your photographer as to adhering strictly to this time limit. All must comply with this policy without exception. Photography time is not to be stretched into the time necessary to prepare the church and altar for the afternoon anticipated Mass.

There is no receiving line in church after the wedding ceremony due to the limited time restraints.

Donations

Sacraments are the activity of Christ within His Church. They are never “for sale” nor can the ministry of Christ on behalf of His people ever be offered on one’s ability to pay. Likewise, the ministry of the priest is one of service in the name of Christ and His Church.

There are, however, genuine costs related to celebrations held within a church. Therefore, the following directives are provided for those considering a wedding at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish:

Church Building use: Suggested offering - \$300.00

Organist Fee: \$200.00 + \$25.00/hour for additional music consultations

(Note: there is a “Bench Fee” of \$200.00 to compensate the church organist if you want to bring in your own organist)

Cantor/Soloist Fee: \$100.00

Altar Server: Suggested offering - \$20.00 per server

Priest: Because a significant amount of preparation by the priest presiding over your wedding is put forth, a monetary gift for the priest is customary. This gift should be payable directly to him.

Please give the appropriate payments to the priest at the rehearsal. Checks or cash are acceptable. Each fee should be paid in a separate envelope, addressed to the appropriate person (ie. Organist, Altar Server, etc.). Any concerns should be discussed with the priest before the day of the wedding.

Wedding Coordinators

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish has a volunteer Wedding Coordinator Program to assist couples with their ceremony and planning. Two wedding coordinators are assigned to each couple and will be available to assist at the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. One of the coordinators will be in touch with you approximately two weeks before your wedding to discuss details and answer any questions you may have.

Invitations

Please confirm the date and time of your wedding before printing your invitations. This is very important!

Wedding Programs

Some couples provide programs for their weddings. It is not necessary to have programs, but if you do, please discuss with the priest what might be included in the program so he can help you to organize it properly. It must be submitted to the Director of Music Ministry & Liturgy for final approval before printing. (See Wedding Music Planning Sheet insert)

Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals should be scheduled with the priest. The rehearsal generally takes place the evening before the wedding and lasts approximately one hour. Due to other parish events that may be scheduled, it is imperative to begin the rehearsal at the designated time. Please make sure that everyone in the wedding party knows the location of the church and arrives on time. Our Wedding Coordinators will be present at the rehearsal and at the wedding ceremony to assist you with the procession and other details.

Organists do not attend the rehearsals.

Checklist of items to bring the night of the rehearsal:

1. Marriage License
2. Copies of Readings
3. Wedding Programs (if using)
4. Offering for Church Building Use
5. Offering for Altar Server (cash only)
6. Fee for Organist
7. Fee for Cantor and/or soloist
8. Priest (optional)

Confessions

It is a Catholic tradition that the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) be received regularly and most especially preceding major steps taken in one's life. During the time of preparation for the wedding, the bride and groom should arrange to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available upon request.

Seating of Guests

Ushers should promptly escort guests to their seats. The mother of the groom and then the mother of the bride should be seated a few minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin. This should not be delayed to seat any guests who arrive late. Late arrivals may seat themselves after the entrance of the wedding party. (In fairness to others who are to use the church after you, weddings must begin at the scheduled time.)

The Entrance Procession

In recent years, several options have emerged for this aspect of the wedding. In all cases, the order of the entrance is left to the discretion of the couple after consultation with the priest.

Liturgy of the Word

Readings from the Scriptures (one from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament, which includes the Gospel reading) may be chosen by the couple from the marriage booklet provided by the priest. Readers may be chosen from family and friends to proclaim the first two Scripture passages. Please note that the readers should be familiar with the Catholic liturgy, feel comfortable with public speaking and are dressed appropriately.

The Offertory Procession

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

Vows

Vows (consent) may be chosen by the couple from the marriage booklet.

Music and Organist

Only sacred music in union with the teachings of the Catholic faith, the sacramental nature of the Mass/Ceremony, and the guidelines of the Diocese of Pittsburgh will be allowed for the Rite of Marriage. Also, if music is considered not appropriate for the Mass/Ceremony, it will also be considered as inappropriate prior to Mass, although there is some leeway regarding the music before Mass. (Please see the list of musical selections inserted in this booklet.) All selections, outside musicians and/or soloists are subject to approval. No prerecorded music is to be used at the Wedding Mass/Ceremony. To make your musical arrangements and answer any questions, please set up an appointment with the Director of Music Ministry & Liturgy at least six weeks prior to your wedding. (Contact information in the back of this booklet.)

Altar Servers

Altar servers will be automatically scheduled for your wedding. If you have a preference or have family members who are experienced altar servers, please mention this to the priest when going over your ceremony.

Photography

Photographers and videographers should adhere to proper etiquette during the sacred ceremony. Each couple has half an hour to exit the church upon completion of the ceremony. Pictures may be taken in the church following the ceremony. However, the receiving line is to be held at the reception.

The photographer is:

- ❖ not to take flash pictures during the Homily, Consecration, or distribution of Communion
- ❖ to keep a low profile at all times
- ❖ never to enter the sanctuary/altar area during the Mass/Ceremony
- ❖ to be responsible for conducting the session in an orderly and respectful manner
- ❖ to be responsible for containing all cables and cords to not obstruct the aisles.
- ❖ not to move chairs, candlesticks, altar furniture, etc. without the expressed consent of the priest.

Flowers

Flowers are to be placed on the stands on either side of the altar. Flowers are never to be placed directly on the altar. No artificial floral displays are permitted in the Sanctuary. Wedding flowers may be left in the sanctuary after the wedding, but it is not necessary that they remain in church. If your wedding is one of two wedding celebrations in the church on the same day, you may wish to contact the other

couple to discuss sharing the flower expenses. NOTE: flowers may NOT be left at church during Advent or Lent.

The altars are decorated for liturgical seasons and holidays. These decorations have priority over things brought in for weddings and therefore, may not be moved, removed, or altered.

Flowers for the bridesmaids and ushers may be distributed in the vestibule of the church.

Exchange of Peace

At a Wedding Mass/Ceremony, you may wish to include some exchange of a sign of peace. Some couples choose to present flowers to their parents at this time.

Pew Decorations

Bows, ribbons, and flowers (no dried flowers) are allowed if no tacks, metallic tape, nails, or any other item that may destroy the wood or varnish on the pews are used to fasten them. A suggestion is the use of ribbons, pipe cleaners, floral wire or rubber bands. These decorations need to be removed following the ceremony.

Center Aisle Cover

A paper, plastic, or cloth crash may be used and will be removed by the wedding coordinators after the wedding ceremony.

Below are the dimensions for each church:

Church	Pews Per Church	Center Aisle Length
St. Catherine of Siena	22 pews on each side	78 ½ feet
St. Joseph	25 pews on each side	93 feet
St. Margaret Mary	15 pews on the right side of the main aisle and 15 pews on the left side of the main aisle	75 feet

Candles

No additional candles are needed beyond those prescribed for the liturgy.

Rice, Birdseed, Balloons, Etc.

Throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, artificial snow, etc. is not permitted because of the potential danger of an accidental fall from the slippery surface.

Balloons are not permitted.

Bells or bubbles are permitted.

**RITE FOR CELEBRATING MARRIAGE
DURING MASS
(EUCHARIST)**

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Greeting the Bridal Party

Procession (Congregational Song and/or Instrumental Music)

Sign of the Cross

Greeting

Introduction

Gloria

Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm (Cantor and Congregation)

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia - Cantor and Congregation)

Gospel

Homily

RITE OF MARRIAGE

Address to the Bride and Groom

Questions before the Consent

Consent

Reception of the Consent

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Universal Prayer (General Intercessions)

The Lord's Prayer (Congregation)

Nuptial Blessing

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts and Altar (Instrumental and/or Soloist)

Eucharistic Prayer

Holy, Holy, Holy (Congregation)

Memorial Acclamation (Congregation)

Amen (Congregation)

Lord's Prayer and Doxology (Congregation)

Nuptial Blessing

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread and Lamb of God

(Cantor and Congregation)

Distribution of Holy Communion

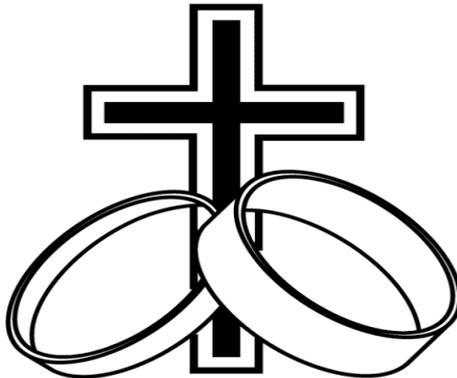
(Cantor and/or Congregation)

Prayer after Communion

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing and Dismissal

Recessional (Congregational Song and/or Instrumental Music)



**RITE FOR CELEBRATING MARRIAGE
OUTSIDE MASS
(NO EUCHARIST)**

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting the Bridal Party

Processional (Congregational Song and/or Instrumental Music)

Sign of the Cross

Introduction

Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm (Cantor and Congregation)

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia - Cantor and Congregation)

Gospel

Homily

RITE OF MARRIAGE

Address to the Bride and Groom

Questions before the Consent

Consent

Reception of the Consent

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Universal Prayer (General Intercessions)

The Lord's Prayer (Congregation)

Nuptial Blessing

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing

Recessional¹ (Congregational Song and/or Instrumental Music)

**RITE FOR CELEBRATING MARRIAGE
BETWEEN A CATHOLIC AND A
CATECHUMEN (NON-BAPTIZED) OR NON-
CATHOLIC
(NO EUCHARIST)**

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting the Bridal Party

Processional (Congregational Song and/or Instrumental Music)

Introduction

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm (Cantor and Congregation)

Second Reading (optional)

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia - Cantor and Congregation)

Gospel

Homily

RITE OF MARRIAGE

Address to the Bride and Groom

Questions before the Consent

Consent

Reception of the Consent

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Universal Prayer (General Intercessions)

The Lord's Prayer (Congregation)

Nuptial Blessing

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing

Recessional¹ (Congregational Song and/or Instrumental Music)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish

Administrative Office

One Parish Place
Moon Township, PA 15108
412-264-2573
www.mshj.org

Priests

Reverend Frank M. Kurimsky, Pastor
fkurimsky@diopitt.org

Reverend Robert Seeman, Sr. Parochial Vicar
rseeman@diopitt.org

Reverend Mingwei Li, Parochial Vicar
mli@diopitt.org

Wedding Music

Brenden Griffey, Director of Music Ministry & Liturgy
412-264-2573
music@mshj.org
Available after the weekend Masses and by appointment

To contact a Wedding Coordinator:

Sandy Carlisle
704-654-1327
sandycpittsburgh@verizon.net

January 2022