

# Partner Parishes of St. John Baptist de la Salle and St. Mary's, Our Lady of Lourdes Delmont/Export, Pennsylvania

## *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage*

*The celebration of a wedding is certainly a special time in the life of a couple, their families and friends and also their parish community. The celebration of love between a man and a woman is certainly a grace-filled moment where the love of God is truly present. The church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their wedding in the context of prayer as Christians. In fact, this moment in the lives of a man and a woman was instituted by Jesus himself as one of the seven sacraments of the Church.*

*We celebrate the sacraments as a community of faith and therefore your wedding is a celebration of the entire Catholic community whose responsibility it is to continue to affirm and nurture you in your life together.*

*In the spirit of joy and love, we provide you with the following guidelines for celebrating your wedding at our partner parishes.*

### ***I. Setting the Wedding Date:***

A wedding date may be reserved by calling the parish office, but the date may only be confirmed after the pastor has met with the couple to establish their freedom to marry. It is advisable that the couples secure the date with the pastor before making further plans. In some cases, a Declaration of Nullity may need to be obtained. No wedding date can be reserved if a Declaration of Nullity is necessary.

### ***II. Time of the Wedding:***

Weddings are scheduled on **Saturdays at 1:00 p.m.** – No exceptions! **Only one (1) wedding will be scheduled per Saturday.** By diocesan policy, weddings are not scheduled on Sundays. It should be noted that there are some times during the Church year, such as Lent, when the celebration of a wedding is discouraged or not permitted.

### ***III. Marriage Preparation:***

It is the policies of the Diocese of Greensburg that every couple planning to celebrate marriage attends some form of marriage preparation. Couples can fulfill this requirement by attending the following (pre-registration is required):

- **Sponsor Couples** involve one married couple and one engaged couple. The couples meet in the home of the married couple over the course of several evenings that are scheduled at the convenience of those involved.
- **Engage Encounter** is a weekend program that begins on a Friday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. This program takes place in the Greensburg area and is led by two or more married couples with up to twenty engaged couples in attendance.

- **Attendance at a Pre-Cana** session or sessions at a parish in or outside the Diocese of Greensburg.
- In addition, the couple will take part in a process known as **FOCCUS – Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study**, which helps the couple deal with various issues prior to marriage.

#### ***IV. Meeting with the Priest:***

A couple should schedule an appointment with the priest who will witness their marriage within six (6) months of the wedding. Prior to this meeting, the couple should obtain the following documents, which become part of the wedding file:

- *Record of Baptism:* All baptized parties must present copies of their baptismal record. The record of the Catholic baptism must be issued within six (6) months prior to the marriage date. A new certificate is required. If you were baptized in another parish, you must call that parish and request a copy of your baptismal record. Also, the non-Catholic party, if baptized, is required to obtain a copy of their baptism certificate.
- *Declaration of Nullity:* if one of the parties was married before, a copy of their Declaration of Nullity from the Catholic Church is necessary.
- *Pastor's Permission:* If one of the Catholic parties is from another parish, they will need written permission from their pastor.
- *Member of another Catholic Rite:* If one of the parties getting married is a member of another Catholic Rite, (Byzantine, Maronite, Ukrainian, etc.) written permission from the respective diocese of that rite is necessary.
- *Marriage Preparation Certificate:* Received after a couple completes one of the marriage preparation programs.

*Also, couples will fill out required marriage forms when meeting with the priest.* These forms deal with biographical information as well as testimony of the intentions of the couples desiring marriage within the Catholic Church. If one of the parties is not Catholic, additional forms will be required.

#### ***V. The Wedding Liturgy:***

In the Roman Catholic Tradition, the bride and the groom administer the sacrament of Matrimony to each other. A priest and two other persons (the best man and maid or matron of honor) witness the sacrament.

The wedding liturgy is modeled after the Sunday Eucharist in terms of the flow of the liturgy. Couples are encouraged to take an active part in planning their wedding liturgy. The couples are given the opportunity to plan much of the liturgy themselves. A planning booklet is provided to couples to guide them in this process. This booklet contains the selection of readings, exchange of consent, blessing of rings, nuptial blessings, etc., from which the couples can choose.

A priest-relative or friend of the couple may preside at the wedding liturgy. He must first receive delegation to preside at your wedding from the pastor and this done by calling or talking to the pastor directly and not through the couple. He must be willing to abide by the marriage guidelines of the parish and not alter them in any way. **He is also responsible for assuring that all marriage forms are completed for the marriage and that the marriage is recorded in the proper marriage register.**

Ministers of another denomination are not permitted to participate in the liturgy in any of the liturgical roles.

### **Couples need to adhere to the following guidelines concerning the wedding liturgy:**

- Normally, if the couple is both Catholic, the wedding is celebrated within Mass. If the couple desires to have a ceremony only, permission from the diocesan Bishop is required and the couple must state their reasons for wanting only a ceremony. Also, when one person is not Catholic the *Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass* should be celebrated. If the couple desires that a Mass be celebrated, they must seek permission from the diocesan bishop and state their reasons for wanting a Mass. If one of the persons is not baptized, then the *Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass will be celebrated.*
- Many customs and traditions have been introduced into the wedding liturgy, **which are not part of the Roman Rite.** These include but are not limited to:
  - *Unity Candle:* The unity candle is not part of the wedding liturgy of the Church and therefore is not permitted to be used.
  - *Flowers to the Blessed Mother:* Private devotions are normally celebrated outside of Mass. However, if both parties hold a special devotion to Mary, the presentation of flowers will be permitted.
  - *Aisle Runner* or Crash: Not permitted.
- **Music:** A Christian wedding is a liturgical celebration that in many ways is patterned after the Sunday Eucharist. Therefore, those present are an integral part of the celebration and not considered spectators but worshippers. They should be drawn into full, conscious and active participation in the wedding liturgy by prayer and song. The wedding liturgy is to focus on the sacramental encounter with our Lord. Because music is very important to this encounter, couples are asked to bear in mind the following:
  - An organist will be scheduled for your wedding through the pastor. Any desired music must be approved by the pastor. **Please contact Mrs. Marybelle Weber, Coordinator of Music Ministry who will discuss planning the music for your wedding liturgy.** She can be contacted at the Parish Center (724) 327-0647.
  - Music texts must be consistent with Catholic teaching: *“indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy scripture and from liturgical sources.”* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, CSL, 121)
  - What an individual desires in the selection of music is not by itself the guiding principle in choosing music. Choices made must be based on sound liturgical, pastoral and musical judgments.
  - Use of instrumentalists and soloists are permitted but they are limited to playing prelude music and music during the Preparation of the Gifts (for a Mass).
  - The use of pre-recorded music is not permitted before or during the liturgy.

- **Liturgical Ministers:**

The wedding is a liturgical celebration of the entire Church and Parish. The usual ministries should be represented. These include: lectors, altar servers, and extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (if needed). **The parish will provide these liturgical ministers for the wedding.** If a couple desires to have a member of our Partner Parishes who is trained in these ministers participate in their wedding liturgy, they are to simply inform the Pastor of their wishes. *Lectors and altar servers from other Catholic parishes are permitted to participate in these roles as long as the Pastor of their parish verifies that they are currently serving in these roles.*

- **Procession**

All ministers and members of the wedding party will process down the center aisle in one of the following orders:

- *Cross Bearer, Servers, Presider, Couples (bridesmaids and groomsmen as couples), witnesses (best man and maid or matron of honor as a couple), parents of bride and groom, bride and bridegroom (as a couple). OR...*
- *Cross Bearer, Servers, Presider, Couples (bridesmaids and groomsmen as couples), witnesses (best man and maid or matron of honor as a couple), groom with parents, and bride with parents. OR...*
- *Cross Bearer, Servers, Lector, Presider, Couples (Bridesmaids and Groomsmen as couples), Witnesses (Best Man and Maid of Honor as a couple), Bride escorted by her father who will meet the groom in the middle of the nave of the Church. Then the bride and groom process to the sanctuary.*
- **Note:** Those serving as flower girls and ring bearers should be of an age so as to be able to follow directions. We recommend, based on our past experiences that children be at least 7 years of age to participate in the wedding liturgy.

### **Church Decorations:**

- Seasonal decorations in the Church may not be removed or altered.
- No decorations of any kind are to be attached to any candles or liturgical furnishings.
- Only two (2) flower arrangements are permitted. Flowers will be placed in front of the altar and the ambo (pulpit). They are not to be placed anywhere else unless done so by the parish personnel. Only freshly cut flowers and greens may be used within the church. No artificial flowers and or greens are permitted.
- The throwing of or releasing of rice, bird seed, flower petals, balloons, butterflies, birds, etc., are not permitted on church property. (Bubbles will be permitted outside after the wedding.)
- Pew decorations may be attached by string or elastic. No candles, pins, torches, tape or glue are to be used on the pews.

## **VII. Photography and Videographer:**

- Those taking pictures or videotaping the liturgy are asked to remember that the wedding is first and foremost prayer and worship. The worship space is not to be treated as a photography studio.
- Photographers and videographers are to limit their movement and always be unobtrusive to the liturgical action. They should not enter the sanctuary at any time during the liturgy.
- Anyone other than the professionals taking the pictures or videotaping is asked to remain in their seat during the liturgy. We ask that this statement be placed in any wedding program.
- Videographers are not permitted to attach microphones of any kind to existing church microphones.
- Photographers or videographers are not permitted to move any liturgical furnishings.
- No photographs or videotaping is to occur in the sacristy prior to the liturgy.
- The priest will not do a “reconstruction” of the marriage rite after the liturgy.
- **Any photographer or videographer is to consult with the presiding priest before the liturgy begins. There are specific requests that the pastor has that need to be clarified before the liturgy begins.**

## **VIII. Rehearsal:**

Rehearsals are usually scheduled on the evening before the wedding liturgy. Rehearsals can be scheduled at a time mutually agreed upon between the pastor and couple. Rehearsals will be scheduled no later than 6:30 p.m. on any given day. All participating in the wedding liturgy must attend. The couple is to remind their wedding party that proper dress and conduct is required at the rehearsal. **Rehearsals must begin on time.** Since other events may be scheduled in the church before or after the rehearsal. If members of the wedding party are excessively late, the rehearsal will be conducted without them.

## **IX. Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

The opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation is provided for after the rehearsal.

## **X. Civil License:**

The state of Pennsylvania requires a civil license for marriage. This civil license is to be obtained by the couple and delivered to the church office at least one week before the wedding.

## **XI. Offerings:**

A priest does not “charge” to administer any sacrament. If the couple wishes to give an offering to the priest for their wedding liturgy as well as to the other ministers the following serves as a guideline/suggested offering:

- **Priest:** \$250.00 as suggested by the Diocese of Greensburg
- **Altar Servers:** \$10.00 per Altar Server
- **Organist:** \$150.00
- **Cantor:** \$100.00

## **XII. Miscellaneous:**

- *Alcoholic beverages:* absolutely no alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property. Limousine drivers are to be notified of this regulation.
- *Drugs and Firearms:* are absolutely forbidden on church grounds
- *Smoking:* the parish properties of the Partner Parishes are a smoke-free environment. Please adhere to our no smoking policy.
- *Programs/Worship Aid:* permitted, but not required. They must accurately reflect the movement of the liturgy.
- Following the liturgy, please remove all hangers, garment bags, boxes, pew bows, etc., from the church. The parish assumes no responsibility for them.

We hope these guidelines prove helpful to you in planning your wedding liturgy. Certainly know we are always here to help you with any questions. Please call us at (724) 327-0647.

May God Bless you and your family as you prepare for this special day in your lives and in the life of the parish.