

**Guidelines for the Wedding Liturgies
in the Roman Catholic partner parishes of
St. John Baptist de la Salle, Delmont
and St. Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes**



Dear friends,

Congratulations on your engagement! God has called you to live powerfully a most beautiful sacrament. We are delighted that you have chosen to be married within our Catholic Community in the presence of Jesus Christ with the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church. We pledge to you our prayers and support as you prepare to become one in marriage. Personally, preparing for and celebrating your wedding is one of my greatest joys as a priest!

Married Christians, in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church. Marriage in our Catholic Christian tradition is also a solemn celebration that demands instruction and prayerful preparation. In that spirit, we are happy to present to you the official Wedding Guidelines for our Catholic Community.

While there are many hands that will assist in your wedding in our Catholic Community, none are perhaps more significant than your hands and how you embrace this holy and sacred ritual. We invite and encourage you to make Christ the center of your lives. At the same time we ask that you keep a proper perspective relative to what you are about to do. As the saying goes, “A wedding is a day. A marriage is a lifetime.”

Jesus said, “At the beginning of creation God made them male and female; for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and the two shall become as one. They are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore let no man separate what God has joined.” (Mark 10:6-9) As you prepare to become one in marriage, I along our wedding coordinators, organist and staff pray that such a union may be realized .

If you have any questions about the enclosed information, please contact us. Please be assured of a remembrance in our prayers. We hope you will do the same for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Daniel Ulishney, pastor

Deacon Daniel Frescura, permanent deacon

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS

The wedding ceremony is a public acknowledgement of a couple’s willingness to take on the responsibilities of marriage. A priest or deacon is the ordained minister of the church who can officiate at your wedding, and witness your vows of mutual love. **Our ministry begins to you before the actual ceremony, and is offered to you with the love and support of the members of the Partner Parishes of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and St. Mary.**

Wedding Workshop

Each year (if there are enough couples and usually in January) a wedding workshop will be held at the parish to meet and welcome engaged couples and to go over some practical matters. At this time parish policies and guidelines are explained. Additionally, practical, pastoral, and liturgical details are filled in and questions answered. Couples planning to get married are invited and expected to attend this workshop. Contact the parish office for exact dates and times.

Wedding Celebrant

Fr. Daniel Ulishney, pastor is the usual celebrant for weddings. However, a couple is welcome to have a priest relative or friend concelebrate or even serve as celebrant for their wedding. Likewise, a deacon relative or friend is welcome to celebrate the *Marriage Rite Outside of Mass* (used for mixed marriages) or celebrate the *Rite of Marriage within a Mass* (which of course would be celebrated by a priest). A visiting celebrant is required to comply with all policies for both the liturgy and/or ceremony as well as diocesan guidelines. Requests for ministers of other denominations to participate are also welcome, but all requests should be made early in the process of preparation for your wedding.



Deacon Dan Frescura



Fr. Daniel Ulishney



Spiritual Preparation and Participation in Parish Life

Remember that Christ is at the heart of your marriage. It is expected that all Catholic persons entering into the Sacrament of Marriage will properly prepare themselves spiritually by availing themselves of the **Sacrament of Penance** (Confession).

Parish Registration: If you will be living outside one of our parishes, know that you need to register at the local Catholic Church. (And hopefully be an ACTIVE member of that community.) If you continue to live in the area, you are invited and expected to continue to remain a member of our parishes and ACTIVELY share the faith life of our church community. Your parish status is VITAL in allowing you to be a sponsor for Baptism or Confirmation.

Scheduling

1. **Date.** A marriage date is set by first contacting the parish office. The parish secretary will let you know if the date is available. An appointment must then be made to meet with a parish priest to ensure that there is nothing standing in the way of a valid Catholic marriage. **Only then will the date be considered “set.”** Please DO NOT make any other commitments relative to the wedding until the date is officially set. **A six (6) to twelve (12) month advance notice for preparation is required.** A date cannot be set if one of the parties has a declaration of nullity case pending.
2. **Location.** The Diocese of Greensburg does not permit weddings to be celebrated outside the church building. (I.E. **NO outdoor, gazebo, beach, forest, cave, backyard, living room, ski slope, lakeside, etc.**) A priest or deacon may only celebrate a wedding in the (Catholic) church building. Permission can be given, however, for a mixed couple to be married by the minister of the non-Catholic party in the non-Catholic party’s **CHURCH.**
3. **Day of the week and Holidays.** Weddings are usually scheduled for Saturdays, but may be celebrated on another day of the week, with the exception of Sunday and some Church or civil holidays. Occasionally other dates may be unavailable due to previously scheduled parish events. Weddings are not scheduled during Lent and are not encouraged during Advent. During the Liturgical Seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Easter the sanctuary is already decorated and additional flowers are not permitted.
4. **Time.** The **normal time** for Saturday weddings is **1:00 or 1:30 PM.** An earlier or later time can be arranged depending on the parish schedule, and mindful of Saturday evening liturgies.

Pre- Marriage Instruction

Diocesan policy requires that every couple planning to celebrate Marriage have some form of instruction for the sacrament. This requirement is normally fulfilled by participation **in one** of the following ways, and the **certificate of completion** is to be presented by the couple to the priest and kept in the marriage file:

1. **Meeting with a Sponsor Couple**—Each engaged couple meets with one married couple in the home of the married couple over the course of several evenings. These times are scheduled at the convenience of all involved. The Director of Faith Formation will assist each engaged couple in attaining a Sponsor Couple.

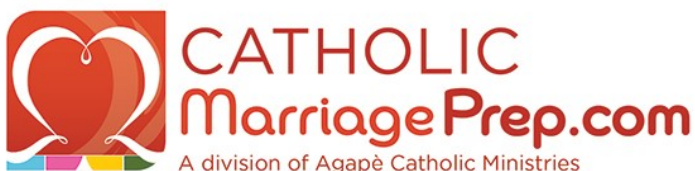


2. **An Engaged Encounter Weekend.** An international program that begins on a Friday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. This program usually takes place in the Greensburg-area and is led by two or more married couples with other engaged couples. It is advisable to schedule and attend the weekend earlier, rather than later. It is acceptable to do so as early as eighteen months prior to your wedding day. <http://www.engagedencounter.org> or <http://www.greensburgcee.com>



**CATHOLIC ENGAGED
ENCOUNTER**

3. **Attendance at an approved Pre-Cana session or sessions** at a parish in or outside the Diocese of Greensburg.



PROXIMATE PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

1. **Meeting with the Priest/Deacon.** You will have a series of meetings with the parish priest or deacon, beginning six to nine months prior to the wedding date. It will be your responsibility to contact the priest and schedule the first appointment. These meetings are essential to our ministry to you and to your preparation. In these meetings the basic wedding paperwork will also be completed. Prior to these meetings, 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 from the church of baptism or its successor parish.
 - *Declaration of Nullity:* If one of the parties was married before, a copy of their Declaration of Nullity from the Catholic Church is necessary.
 - *Member of another Catholic parish or another Catholic Rite:* the priest will work with you to obtain the proper permissions from your pastor or eparchy.
2. **FOCCUS Inventory.** You will have the opportunity to participate in a process known as the FOCCUS (*Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding Study*), which the Diocese of Greenburg requires for couples preparing for marriage. This is a very useful tool to ascertain a perception of yourself and your future spouse. The FOCCUS will be set up for you to take online, and afterwards reviewed. A small fee is associated with this service.
3. **Together for Life.** The parish will provide you with a copy of the *TOGETHER FOR LIFE BOOKLET* which will aid you in the planning of your ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator/Sacristan will also assist with your rehearsal and ceremony.
4. **Practice of the Faith.** A couple seeking to be married in the church **should be practicing the faith.** (I.E. celebrating the Sunday Eucharist regularly - WEEKLY - with the community.) The fundamental purpose of the Sunday gathering is to acknowledge God's presence and offer Him worship. It is for this same holy purpose that you have chosen to celebrate your wedding at St. John-Baptist de La Salle or St. Mary, and not at the courthouse or in non-religious venue. **This purpose guides all decisions relating to what happens here on the day of your wedding.**

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Type of Ceremony

Nuptial Mass. Normally, if both parties are Catholic, the wedding is celebrated within a Nuptial Mass. If the couple desires a wedding ceremony only, permission from the diocesan bishop is required and the couple must state their reasons for wanting only a ceremony.

Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass. When one party is not Catholic, the *Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass* is celebrated. If the couple desires a Nuptial Mass, they must seek permission from the diocesan bishop and state their reasons for wanting a Mass. If one of the parties is not baptized, then this rite IS celebrated.

Wedding Party

In the Catholic tradition, the bride and groom administer the sacrament of Matrimony to each other. A priest and two others witness the sacrament in an official capacity. Your Best Man and Maid or Matron of Honor (the official “witnesses”) need not be Catholic, but all who are asked to participate should believe and live according to Christian traditions regarding marriage.

While children and teenagers are sometimes in the wedding party, **it is not advisable to have very young children as part of the wedding party;** they very rarely do what they are expected to do.

If a flower girl is used she may drop petals as she goes down the aisle BUT it will be the responsibility of the party to clean them up afterwards.

The church does not regulate the size of your wedding party. All that is necessary is a bride, groom, priest (or deacon), and two witnesses. Additional members of the wedding party are at your discretion. Ordinarily, the wedding party is seated in the first pew.

For the actual Rite of Marriage (immediately after the homily) the couple and their witnesses move to the front of the altar (their position for the rest of the Mass or ceremony), whereas the remainder of the party stays in the pew.

Wedding Rehearsal

Rehearsals are generally scheduled the evening prior to the actual wedding day and should not last longer than one hour. We ask you to please stress punctuality with your wedding party and schedule according to when everyone can be there. Please note that there is no music at the time of rehearsal. Typically the sacrament of reconciliation is offered after the rehearsal

Usage of the Church

The facilities available to you have been provided through the sacrifice and generosity of deeply committed people of faith., and it is expected that you will treat these holy places with the respect and reverence due them and their benefactors.

The church will be open and available to your wedding party and guests one hour before the wedding and one hour afterward. This is important because of other liturgical services in the churches. For example, on Saturdays Mass begins at 4:00 PM at St. John, and from about 3:00 PM on, people will be entering this church for prayer. You are asked to be respectful of those who are in prayer.

REMEMBER: The church is a holy place, a house of prayer; respect for the house of God is expected. This means that the church (and its grounds) are not to be treated as mere social gathering places. While absolute silence is not expected, a reverential quiet should be observed at all times in the church proper. Chewing gum should be disposed of and dress should be modest. Gentlemen are NOT to wear hats of any sort at any time while in church. This includes the rehearsal and wedding day. **Please conduct yourselves as befitting God's house and kindly alert you wedding party and guests to do so also.** It is your responsibility to share this information with your family, wedding party, wedding guests, and photographer.

Decorations for the Ceremony

Flowers: Only live (fresh) flowers are permitted for use in the church and those used in the sanctuary are to remain for the weekend liturgies. No artificial flowers or greens are permitted. Nothing is to be placed ON the altar of sacrifice, and the sanctuary will not be rearranged to accommodate flowers. If you choose a holiday time for your wedding, for example, the Christmas or Easter season, please be aware that the church decorations will stay in keeping with the season and not be changed or moved for the wedding.

Other Décor: Pew bows, if desired, are to be secured by clip, elastic, or string. No tape or adhesives are permitted on any of the furnishings. A crash (the white runner covering the main aisle) is NOT permitted as it presents a safety hazard. Please do not use glitter-filled bouquets or have your bridesmaids covered with glitter. This creates quite a mess in the pews. Rice, birdseed, or confetti may not be used after the ceremony to greet the newly married couple, nor may balloons be released. However bells or bubbles may be used, but not brought into the church.

It will be your responsibility to have the church cleared of all decorations and left as you found it.

Videographers and Photographers

We welcome videographers and photographers to ceremonies. It is important that you be made aware of several things. A separate handout will be made available for them.

1. There are specific locations in each church which work best for taking pictures and filming. In general they are the side aisles and at the center aisle rear of the churches.
2. NO cameras are permitted in the sanctuary (altar) area during the wedding. A stationary camera may be set up in the front, but not manned. Please check with the pastor BEFORE hand.
3. Extra lighting, flashes, ladders, and other such equipment are not permitted.
4. Flash is permitted only during the processional and recessional.
5. Photographers and videographers are asked to be as discreet as possible and professional. Please be mindful that we are gathered for a prayerful experience and ask that you respect our worship.
6. Processions are not to be slowed or interrupted for taking pictures/video.
7. A **livestream option** is available at St. Mary's. If interested, speak to your presider.

Receiving Line and Photographs

A Receiving Line is at the discretion of the couple. Bear in mind, however, that a Receiving Line limits the time available for post-ceremony pictures. When pictures are being taken all are reminded to be conscious of the presence of the Eucharistic Lord reserved in the tabernacle. Respectful behavior at this time is expected.

Wedding Ceremony "Add Ons"

Unity Candle. The history of the unity candle is unclear but it appears that it was invented in the 1970s. The ritual was popularized on television soap operas in the 1980s and has since enjoyed widespread commercialization by the wedding industry. (I.E. another way to get your money!)

The use of the Unity Candle is **NOT permitted** in the partner parishes because of the candle's secular origins and lack of Christian symbolism. The TRUE symbolism is your exchange of Vows and exchange of Rings. The usual placement of the Lighting of the Unity Candle after these important moments makes it appear that THIS gesture is the culmination of the Rite rather than a totally gratuitous addition. Upon request, a prayer service to be celebrated at your reception involving a Unity Candle can be provided.

Flowers. Couples may choose to take flowers to their parents during the Kiss of Peace, but it is not required. Taking flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother is not (despite common perception) part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. This gesture only makes sense if a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary exists. In such cases the couple may take flowers to a representation of the Blessed Mother following the Prayer after Communion.

Other General Policies

- The State of Pennsylvania requires a **civil license for marriage**, which must be obtained by the couple and brought to the rehearsal.
- All alcoholic beverages are **STRICTLY prohibited** both inside and outside the church or on church property. If anyone in the wedding party consumes alcohol before the ceremony, they will NOT be permitted to participate in the ceremony. It is your responsibility to be sure that everyone is aware of this policy. **If either the Bride or Groom are found to be consuming alcohol prior to the ceremony NO MARRIAGE WILL TAKE PLACE.** According to the Canon Law of the Church a couple under the influence of alcohol are incapable of freely and validly exchanging consent.
- **Smoking is prohibited** (in keeping with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) inside the church. Outside the church, if one must smoke, proper disposition of cigarette butts is expected. Much effort has been expended by our parish volunteers to beautify the parish grounds. We DO NOT appreciate you or your guests marring what has been accomplished at such loving effort.
- The Church cannot be responsible for any personal property left behind.
- It is within the right of the priest/deacon to delay witnessing a marriage for a just cause. This would include:
 - Lack of minimum faith
 - Severe faith conflicts
 - Lack of readiness for marriage
 - Refusal of the couple or party to adhere to pre-marriage requirements. Professional pre-marriage counseling may be required.

Music

A Christian wedding is a liturgical celebration patterned in many ways after the Sunday Eucharist. Therefore, those present are an integral part of the celebration and not considered mere spectators but worshippers. They should be drawn into the full, conscious, and active participation in the wedding liturgy by prayer and song.

As you begin your initial planning and preparation, **please contact our pastoral associate for music and liturgy, Ms. Xenia Yelovich who will discuss planning music for your wedding liturgy** and will work with you to help make suitable music selections for the wedding liturgy. She can be reached at the parish office: 724-327-0647.

Since the nature of the ceremony is religious, only liturgically appropriate music may be used. The music should complement the liturgy and not compete with it. The liturgy is a living prayer of the church; pre-recorded and/or secular music is NOT appropriate. This general policy applies to both Prelude and the Liturgy proper. When considering music, the most important thing to consider is appropriateness for worship.

Liturgical Ministers

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

Organist: Xenia Yelovich is the primary musician for your wedding and has the right of first refusal. If a visiting musician or guest soloist is asked to participate, he or she should be of high quality and have experience with Catholic liturgy. Approval of music rests with the Xenia, in consultation with the pastor.

Cantor: The ministry of cantor is a proper liturgical function and is required for all wedding liturgies. If you have a preference for a particular partner parish cantor please let Xenia know; otherwise one of our regular cantors will be assigned.

If you request an outside musician or soloist, please inform the parish organist at the time of your initial conversation. There is no musical accompaniment at the time of rehearsal; if there is a need for rehearsal with guest musician (s), prior arrangements are recommended and an additional fee may be required.

Stipends for all musicians will be the exclusive responsibility of the bride and groom. The parish accepts no responsibility for payment. In order to avoid any confusion, you are requested to please have all stipends ready before the ceremony begins.

Stipends - Fees - Offerings

Fees are requested to be paid in full one week prior to the celebration of the wedding, or otherwise brought to the wedding rehearsal. They are to be paid in cash or otherwise personal check made payable to the recipient (officiant, organist, cantor).

Use of the Church ----- \$200 *Waived for members of the St. Mary's or St. John's or close relatives of members of these parishes.*

Stole Fee-----\$250 *As suggested by the Greensburg Diocese; includes consideration of pre-nuptial preparation and meetings, homily prep time and the service itself.*

Wedding Sacristan/Coordinator ---- \$50

Organist----- \$200 *includes consultations, rehearsal with musician and service itself*

Cantor/soloist-----\$100 (If a wedding Mass)

Altar Servers-----\$20 each (Two servers are generally used for a Wedding Mass and also for Weddings outside of Mass.)

Notes

**A Catholic wedding is a celebration of life and love
in which a man and woman come together
to celebrate a sacrament, and offer thanks and
praise together with their families and friends
and the parish community.**



**The Partner Parishes of St. Mary and St. John
celebrates with you and asks God's blessings**