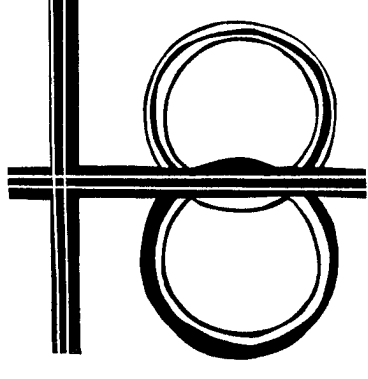


# Wedding Guidelines

*Saint Paul Parish  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania  
(724) 834-6880*



*A Christian wedding is a celebration of love  
in which a man and a woman  
come together to celebrate a sacrament,  
offer thanks and praise together with their families,  
friends and the parish community,  
and to ask God's blessing on their life together.*

*Our parish family celebrates with you  
as you begin the preparations  
for your marriage.*

*Weddings are special and joyful times for brides and grooms, for their families and friends, and for the parish community. The new beginning, the love, the promise and hope that weddings are for us, make of the celebration a special and grace-filled time in our lives. The Church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their wedding in the context of prayer as Christians. Indeed, marriage is so important in Christian life that it is one of the seven sacraments.*

*Our celebration of the sacraments is always rooted in listening to the Scripture so that we are nourished and strengthened by God's Word. We celebrate the sacraments as a community of faith as we gather with our sisters and brothers and ask their prayerful support. These celebrations are incomplete unless they are filled with music and song as one of the ways in which we celebrate our faith.*

*In this spirit, Saint Paul Parish provides the following guidelines for celebrating weddings in our parish church.*

## **SETTING THE WEDDING DATE**

Couples are asked to contact the parish office at least six months in advance of the date on which they hope to celebrate their wedding. A wedding date may only be confirmed after the pastor has met with the engaged couple to take care of the necessary paper work and to arrange for their participation in a marriage instruction program. It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the date with the pastor before making any commitment relative to the wedding.

Weddings are normally scheduled on Saturday afternoons. The time of the wedding is determined after discussion with the pastor. By diocesan policy, weddings are not scheduled on Sundays. They may be celebrated on a Friday evening or another week night. Weddings are not scheduled during Lent or on Holy Days. Weddings are not usually scheduled during Advent.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

1. It is a diocesan policy that every couple planning to celebrate marriage attend some form of instruction for the sacrament. This requirement may be fulfilled by attending the Engaged Encounter Weekend or the Sponsor Couple Program.
2. In the event of a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, the couple, in addition to the Diocesan Marriage Preparation Course, is required to participate in a specified number of instructional classes with the pastor. The number of instructional classes will be determined by the pastor.

## **N. Leaving the Church**

Please ask your wedding party to refrain from blowing car horns and from drinking alcoholic beverages until after you have left the church property. Please inform limousine drivers that serving champagne on church property is forbidden.

Following the ceremony, please remove all personal items. Saint Paul Parish assumes no liability for items left on the property.

## **O. Parish Affiliation**

You are reminded that, once located in your new home, you should register at the nearest Catholic Church. If you continue to live in our area and intend to remain a parishioner, you should inform Father during your pre-wedding meeting and then complete a parish census form with all pertinent information. You need to establish yourself in a parish and share actively in the faith life of that parish. Your parish status helps in determining eligibility if you are asked to be a sponsor for Baptism or Confirmation.

## **P. Miscellaneous**

1. Theme weddings (e.g., “Renaissance”, “Western”, etc.) are not permitted.
2. All members of the wedding party should refrain from gum-chewing at the rehearsal and the wedding.
3. Modest & appropriate attire should be considered in wedding planning.
4. Saint Paul Parish is a smoke-free environment. Please observe this no-smoking policy.
5. No food or drink are to be brought into the church.
6. Alcoholic beverages, drugs or firearms are prohibited on church property.
7. Confessions are heard in the church at 3:30 PM on Saturdays. In order to respect the privacy of those going to confession, guests and wedding party should not congregate or socialize near the confessionals at the back of the church following the ceremony.

*The Church is a house of worship. While absolute silence is not required, a respect for the house of God is. This means that the church and grounds are not to be used as a social hall, a photography studio, a restaurant or bar. During rehearsal, in particular, and before, during and after the ceremony, some semblance of quiet, respect and order are expected. It is your responsibility to share this information with your family, wedding party, and photographer.*

## **J. Reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist**

1. Following the wedding rehearsal, there will be an opportunity for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance. Those in the wedding party who are members of the Catholic Church should, if necessary, receive this sacrament in anticipation of the reception of the Holy Eucharist during the wedding liturgy.
2. All members of the wedding party, **who are Catholic**, as well as **Catholic** family members and friends, are strongly urged to share the Eucharist which brings our liturgical celebration to fulfillment.
3. Catholics who do not practice their faith should not go to Communion.
4. Since we who are members of the Catholic faith share the firm belief in the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, we are unable to invite members of different faith expressions to approach this sacrament with us. It will, therefore, be the responsibility of the couple to inform non-Catholic family members and friends of this important guideline.

## **K. License**

A marriage license is required by state law and must be secured before the wedding date. It should be brought to the church office the week before the wedding so that it can be signed and returned on the wedding day.

## **L. Offerings**

**These offerings should be brought to the church office the week before the wedding along with the marriage license:**

- a) Church offering - \$400.00  
(this includes stipend for clergy, organist and cantor fees, and server stipends)
- b) Church offering when neither of the couple is a parishioner - \$570.00  
*\$300.00 is due when the wedding is scheduled. If the wedding is cancelled up to six months prior to the scheduled date, \$150.00 will be refunded.*

## **M. The Bridal Party**

Ring bearers and flower girls are not ministers, nor are their services required for the celebration of marriage. Couples should consider the age of children involved in these roles and whether their presence will add to or detract from the joyful solemnity of the celebration. Usually children five years old and younger do not function well in a wedding ceremony.

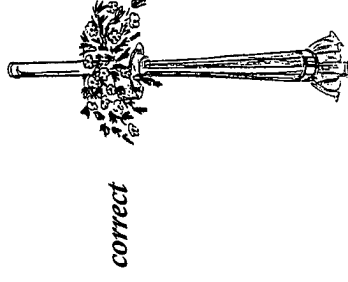
## **PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY**

### **A. Environment**

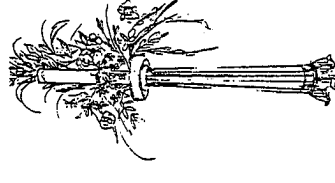
Before making arrangements with a florist, please contact our floral consultant, Alice Rhine at 724-832-8857.

Flowers are permitted on the altar platform in two ways:

- a) in candle rings around the altar candles (*Please see picture below for the correct arrangement for flowers.*)
- b) in small arrangements that may be placed in front of the candlesticks



correct



incorrect

2. Only fresh cut flowers and greens are permitted in floral arrangements.
3. No candles may be used in church other than what is provided by the church.
4. If pew bows are desired, they are to be secured in place by elastic or string. No tape is to be used on the pews or furnishings in the church.
5. The throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed, etc, is not permitted.
6. A crash is not needed. Couples deciding to use a crash are to provide it themselves. A 75 foot long crash will accommodate the aisle from the bride's kneeler to the back door. Please refrain from renting altar or church decorations without consulting the pastor.

### **B. Wedding Rehearsal**

Rehearsals are normally held the evening immediately prior to the actual wedding day. The purpose of a wedding rehearsal is to insure a beautiful ceremony, one that will provide the bride and groom with many fond and cherished memories. It is therefore a matter of necessity to impress upon the entire wedding party the need for proper behavior and complete cooperation during the rehearsal. Ideally people who are not part of the wedding party should not attend rehearsal.

### C. Entrance Procession

1. The order of the Entrance Procession is determined at the rehearsal.
2. The throwing of flowers or petals on the aisle floor as the bride comes down the aisle is not allowed.

### D. Music

1. All music for the wedding must be sacred in nature.
2. The parish organist and a parish cantor will provide music for all wedding liturgies.
3. The couple should contact the parish music director, Marie Konopka, at least three months before the wedding (724-834-6880, ext. 12).

### E. Lectors

1. The couple may choose two people to proclaim the Scripture readings.
2. Lectors should be strong readers and comfortable using a microphone.
3. It is necessary for the lectors to be present at rehearsal.

### F. Unity Candle

The lighting of the Unity Candle is not a part of the Catholic Wedding Liturgy.

### G. Receiving Line

Since the reception is planned for purposes of receiving guests, it is not proper to receive guests in the church. Guests are asked to go directly to the reception hall where the bride and groom will join them.

### H. Programs

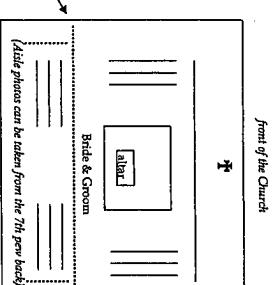
If a program is desired for the congregation's use during the wedding ceremony, it is the responsibility of the couple to provide one. Proper copyright permission must be secured to reprint music and/or texts.

### I. Photographers and Videographers

*(please give enclosed guidelines to your photographer)*

The liturgy during which you celebrate your marriage is a sacred moment of rejoicing in prayer, song and gesture. Those taking pictures or videotaping are asked to remember that the wedding liturgy is, first and foremost, prayer and worship. The church is not a photography studio. We ask you to observe the following so that the sacred joy of this day will not be marred by photo and taping equipment and those who operate it:

1. In order to avoid any misunderstandings, the official photographer and/or videographer chosen by the couple is to check with the priest at least **30 minutes before the ceremony begins**. It will be expected that they will follow the priest's directions exactly.
2. No pictures are to be taken in the sacristy. The Parish Center Foyer and outside on the porch are available for photos.
3. Formal pictures before the ceremony in the Church or in the Parish Center are not permitted.
4. During the ceremony, **only one photographer and one videographer are permitted to take pictures**. Others may take pictures or videotape, **but only from their seats**.
5. Video lights are not permitted during the ceremony.
6. Wireless microphone systems used by photographers and video photographers are permitted, but they need to know the church has a wireless system which will be used at the wedding. If they interfere with our frequency, they will be not be able to use their units.
7. The published diagram of our church indicates restrictions which we place on video or other photographers. *(see diagram below)*
8. Couples are responsible for giving a copy of the diagram to their photographer before the wedding.
8. **Pictures may be taken for 30 minutes only following the conclusion of the ceremony**. When pictures are taken in the church, photographers and the wedding party are reminded of the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle. Respectful behavior is expected. This means no loud talking, yelling or extraneous noise.



front of the Church

Bride & Groom

Altar photos can be taken from the 7th pew back

Photographers/videographers are not permitted in the worship space beyond the dotted lines

back of the Church