

St. Patrick Church

Wedding Liturgy General Guidelines

Congratulations! A wedding date has been set and all the preparations are in the process of being completed, the most important being your premarital instruction and conferences with the priest. To assist you in planning a beautiful, sacramental liturgy, the following guidelines for the use of the church have been established.

Use of the Church: The church building is available for identifiable members of St. Patrick Parish/St. Joseph Parish free of charge. Please see the church secretary for a copy of the rental policies and fee structures for other buildings.

The bride and groom need to reserve the use of the church and/or the Family Life Center/Parish Center as soon as possible. Please contact the church secretary to do this. Some dates are more popular than others are.

Weddings are normally held on Saturdays. Keep in mind that there is a 5:00 PM mass each Saturday and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available from 4:00 to 4:30 PM prior to mass. **Photography sessions should be completed prior to 4:00 PM.**

Wedding Director: It is advisable to have a wedding director to assist couples in planning their wedding. We encourage the use of one of our wedding directors as they are familiar with the Catholic Wedding Service and the logistics of our buildings. The main responsibilities of the wedding director are to answer questions regarding the church, aid the couple in planning their liturgy within the guidelines for the sacrament of matrimony, conduct the rehearsal, and be present at the ceremony to coordinate the liturgy. The wedding director is not a wedding planner. She/he does not make arrangements with photographers, florists, etc. The wedding director is a source for information regarding the general rules of etiquette at a wedding. A list of wedding directors is available from the priest. The bride and groom should arrange a planning session as soon as the church is reserved.

Music: When selecting music to be sung or played at St. Patrick Church, the general rule of thumb regarding appropriateness is that the music be religious in nature and according to liturgical norms. The music, scripture readings, and prayers should blend together to form a beautiful ceremony. Secular music is usually not of a religious nature and must be approved by the priest. Music suggestions are attached.

The use of St. Patrick's organist is advised since she/he is the one most familiar with Catholic services and can help the service to run smoothly. The church organist is normally available for weddings for a nominal fee, to be discussed with the organist. If desired, additional musicians are welcome to perform music within the above guidelines. The musicians set their own fees. The organist can advise on available musicians. Should a couple desire an organist who is not Catholic, the couple should provide the organist with a copy of the liturgy for a wedding either with a Nuptial Mass or without a Mass. A key is available for the organ from the church secretary and should be returned by the Monday after the wedding. Payment for all the musicians should be given prior to the ceremony.

Soloists are welcome, provided the music is within the above guidelines. Please discuss the use of solo music with the wedding director. A cantor should be used when responses are sung, such as the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, or within a Nuptial Mass for the normally sung responses. The soloists or cantor should allow time to practice with the organist before the wedding. The wedding director can assist the couple in finding soloists and cantors. Payment for soloists should be given prior to the wedding ceremony.

Flowers and Candles: Please keep in mind the intrinsic beauty of the interior of St. Patrick Church. It is a beautiful church and excessive use of flowers, greenery, and candles is not necessary. The church windows are especially beautiful and should not be blocked by large flower arrangements.

Flower arrangements can be put on the floor in front of the altar, on either side of the priest's chair in the rear of the sanctuary, or behind the chair under the crucifix. The arrangement here should not interfere with the priest sitting in the chair and should not be higher than the end of the crucifix. Small arrangements can be placed in front of the side altars. The

main altar is not an appropriate place for flowers. Remember that the Eucharist is celebrated on the altar. Placement of flower arrangements should be discussed with the wedding director before you order them from the florists and should be approved by the priest.

Placement of floral arrangements for evening weddings should not interfere with the liturgy of the 5:00 PM mass. Please discuss this with the priest or the wedding director. Storage space for flowers is scarce in the church.

The florist can request a key for the church from the church secretary. The florist is responsible for removing the flowers before the 11:00 AM Sunday mass except for the ones donated to the church. Please be aware that during certain times during the liturgical year, such as Christmas, Lent, and Easter, the type of floral arrangements should compliment and not replace those decorations already in place. This can be discussed with the wedding director and priest. Flowers and other decorations on the iron railing leading to the church will be removed by the custodian unless directed otherwise. Please remember that the railings are there to assist people in coming into the church. Decorations should be placed so as not to impede those who need to use the railings.

Aisle decorations should be affixed with plastic clips, wires, or ribbons and not with tape, tacks, nails, or glue on the pews.

As stated in the policy on flowers, the use of candles should not be excessive nor detract from the beauty of the church sanctuary. Candles, other than those in the sanctuary already, must have a plastic floor covering (provided by the florist or decorator) in place. Flowers and candles should not interfere with the Liturgy of the 5 PM mass.

The Unity Candle is not part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. In the Catholic tradition, candles represent Christ, the Light of the World. Using the Unity Candle as a symbol of the two becoming one is confusing. When a couple becomes one in marriage, they do not extinguish their own personalities as might be interpreted by the blowing out of the individual candles. For this reason, the Unity Candle is discouraged; however, if the couple emphasizes that the candle also represents the joining of the families to form a new family, replace the name with the Family Candle of Unity.

Rice or birdseed should not be thrown outside of the church for safety reasons.

Photography: Photographs taken during the ceremony should enhance the reverence, dignity, and sacredness of the sacrament of marriage. Flash pictures may be taken before or after the wedding and during the processional and recessional.

If pictures are taken before the wedding, they should be completed at least 30 minutes before the ceremony begins for daytime weddings. Evening weddings need to plan for the Sacrament of Penance from 4:00 - 4:30 PM, and the 5 PM mass, when an environment of quiet and reverence is observed.

Video recording is allowed. The video operator may film from the sacristy, the rear of the choir area, the rear of the church, the balcony or side aisles; however, the operator is asked not to walk in the altar area or up and down the aisles.

Dressing Areas: Rooms for dressing are available in the Parish Center and Family Life building for the wedding party. These rooms must be reserved through the church secretary to avoid conflict with other church functions. Please do not assume these rooms will be available without reservations. A key to both the Parish Center and Family Life building must be signed out through the church secretary.

For your protection, please be sure to lock all valuables in the trunk of your car. Do not leave them unattended at any time prior to or during the ceremony. St. Patrick Church will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.

Light refreshments may be served in the dressing areas. All trash should be removed after the wedding ceremony and the dressing areas cleaned. Remember that church members use these rooms the next day. If you want these areas cleaned by the janitorial staff, you must make arrangements with the custodian for this. Do not assume he will clean these rooms automatically.

No alcohol may be served before the wedding.

Cleaning of the Church: The bride and groom or their families must make arrangements for cleaning of the church. Arrangements can be made with the church custodian for the cleaning of the church before and after the wedding. Please see the "Guidelines for the Custodian." The families are responsible for cleaning the dressing areas immediately after the wedding. Any services beyond cleaning, such as returning flowers, plants, etc. to the sanctuary or putting out extra chairs in the church or Family Life Center must be arranged with the custodian.

St. Patrick Church Custodian Responsibilities for Wedding/Reception

The bride and groom or their families are responsible for making arrangements with the church custodian for cleaning the church before and after the wedding. The custodian performs these services on his free time, and he determines his fee depending upon the time and extra duties involved.

Normal duties usually performed by the custodian:

Before the wedding:

- Vacuuming the church after the florists have finished placing the flowers to make sure all fallen floral pieces have been removed
- Cleaning the vestibule; removing posters, tables, etc.
- Checking the pews for unwanted papers, etc.

After the wedding:

- Vacuuming the church
- Picking up programs left in the pews
- Resets the vestibule
- Resets the choir chairs if they have been moved
- Removes pew markers unless instructed that family will do so
- Removes ribbons, balloons, flowers on church railing
- Puts out the trash/garbage
- Locks the church

Dressing Rooms:

Unless arrangements are made with the custodian, the families involved are responsible for cleaning the dressing rooms and all areas used by the bridal party. Please remember that church members use these rooms the next day.

Duties of Custodian - Reception at Family Life Center

If the Family Life Center is used for the reception, the bride and groom or their families must make arrangements with the custodian for these additional duties. The custodian will set his fee for the Family Life Center depending upon the extra time and duties involved.

Normal duties usually include:

Before the Reception:

- Cleans and restocks the bathroom
- Removes the tables and chairs from the storage room, so that the parties can place them as they desire
- Cleans the floor of any trash

After the Reception:

- Returns the tables and chairs to the storage room
- Sweeps the floor
- Makes sure the trash and garbage are removed (note: the caterers usually put out the garbage from the kitchen)
- Locks the Family Life Center

Note - the Custodian will not remove any decorations from the Family Life Center unless specifically instructed to do so.