

THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE
in
Resurrection Parish
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

INTRODUCTION

Your interest in celebrating a wedding in Resurrection Parish is a source of happiness for our entire parish because it is a sign of life and growth in our midst. We pray that God will bless you abundantly during your engagement and as you prepare for your wedding.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you in planning your wedding by presenting as clearly as possible the wedding policies and procedures observed at Resurrection Parish.

Resurrection Parish is concerned that your wedding be a joyful celebration and source of pride for you and your families. It is also our concern that it be an expression of faith with a ceremony appropriate for a church setting.

Finally, it is our hope that your preparations for the wedding which lasts a day not overshadow your commitment to marriage which lasts a lifetime.

PART ONE

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Days and Times for Weddings:

Weddings may take place on any day of the week except Sundays. Weddings in this area of the country are usually held on Friday evenings or Saturdays. Weddings celebrated on Saturday are scheduled at 1:30 p.m. at Saint Thomas More Church and at 2:00 p.m. at Saint John Capistran Church. Only one wedding is celebrated on a given day at each church. One hour is set aside for your wedding ceremony; one half hour for pictures after the ceremony.

2. Inquires

Only after a priest or deacon has conducted the required pre-marriage assessment will a date and time be confirmed in the parish schedule book. Before that, any questions answered or information obtained about availability of our church does not insure permission for the wedding to take place in the Catholic Church.

PART TWO

PREPARATION FOR A WEDDING IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. Introduction

Since the Catholic Church believes that marriage is a commitment made for life, the preparation for marriage must clearly recognize the significance of that commitment. Preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church is provided to insure that both parties are capable of making such a commitment.

2. Pre-Marriage Assessment

At least six months before your wedding, you should contact one of the parish priests to discuss your intention to marry in the Catholic Church. Please remember, no date or time for a wedding may be confirmed until this takes place.

At that time, the priest will conduct the required assessment to confirm your freedom and ability to enter marriage within the Catholic Church. His questions will deal with such matters as previous marriages, age, maturity, knowledge about marriage, intentions, etc.

In order for the priest to conduct an accurate assessment, please be prepared to discuss fully any previous marriages. This includes those which took place before a Justice of the Peace or other civil official. Please note, generally the marriages of non-Catholics before civil officials (*including Justices of the Peace*) are considered valid by the Catholic Church. Thus,

these parties are not free to enter marriage again in the Catholic Church without some disposition of that previous marriage (e.g. through a formal process of annulment. A civil divorce is need from the prior marriage but is not sufficient for the sacrament to take place).

During the assessment process, the priest may also ask you to complete some pre-marriage inventories or instruments to assist in determining a couple's readiness for marriage within the Church. The assessment process may require more than one meeting.

3. **Special Circumstances**

In the course of the pre-marriage assessment, it may become apparent that a particular couple find themselves in special circumstances. One of these circumstances is a pre-marital pregnancy. Formerly, it was assumed that a pregnancy was ample justification for marriage. Today, however, the divorce rate for such couples is so high that a pregnancy is an indicator of a need for special pastoral sensitivity. In these instances, the priest may want to meet with the parents of the couple or seek the assistance of an independent evaluation. Once again, the goal is to aid the couple in arriving at a mature decision based upon all the factors involved.

There are several other circumstances which may become apparent during the course of the initial interview. These 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 the faith; cohabitation (*living together*); the decision to permanently exclude children in a marriage; refusal to take part in counseling. When one or more of these circumstances is encountered, the issues must be resolved satisfactorily before the wedding can be scheduled.

4. **Required Documents and Pre-Nuptial Forms**

Since marriage is a step recognized both by the Church and the state, it necessarily involves the gathering of information. This normally involves the completion of a standard set of forms by the priest/deacon who will be the official witness of your wedding.

If you are a baptized Catholic, we must have a recent baptism and confirmation certificate (*dated no more than six months before the wedding is to take place*). This can be obtained by phoning or writing the parish where you were baptized. If you were baptized at Saint John Capistran or Saint Thomas More you must contact the Archives Office of the Diocese of Pittsburgh for a copy of your sacramental records. These recent certificates will verify that you are baptized, confirmed and free to marry within the Catholic Church. All the documents submitted will remain on file in the Parish Office as a permanent record.

If you were baptized in a faith community other than Catholic, you too will need a copy of your baptismal certificate. A certificate of whatever age will suffice.

Often couples 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 any children who might be born in their marriage. Among the forms to be completed before marriage in the Catholic Church, is one 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."

5. Marriage Instructions

The specific preparation for Marriage in the Catholic Church involves a program of listening and discussion. The stated policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh requires that engaged couples participate in a pre-marriage program best suited to their needs. The content of these programs centers on the areas of sacramentality, spirituality, communication, financial responsibility, family life, responsible parenthood, sexuality and continuing formation within marriage. There are a variety of ways in which this can be accomplished. Among these are the following:

Parish programs for the engaged: A local program sponsored by parishes whereby married couples treat various topics dealing with married life. Included with the presentations is the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Engaged Encounter Weekends: A program whereby married couples along with a priest/deacon present various topics dealing with married life. This program consists of an entire weekend, from Friday evening at 8:00 p.m. until Sunday afternoon at 5:00 p.m. conducted at various sites in the area. Engaged Encounter weekends are held several times throughout the year.

Online Marriage Preparation: Due to people's schedules and situations, some find it helpful to receive their instructions remotely via the internet. Some of these programs are listed at the end of this booklet in the Contact Information section.

In addition, any other recognized program sponsored by the Diocese of Pittsburgh, another diocese, parish, or campus ministry will suffice.

Please present to the priest or deacon preparing your paperwork a copy of the certificate of participation for the program you attended.

PART THREE

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Sacraments are always celebrations of the entire Body of Christ. Therefore, your wedding liturgy has special meaning for the entire parish community and should be celebrated with the joyful dignity that this implies. It is a time of prayer, promise, joy and hope. This special celebration should be carefully planned with the mutual cooperation of the priest/deacon and the couple, for it is meant to deepen your love while praising God in the midst of a parish community of faith.

The Liturgy of the Word Readings from the Scriptures (*one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament*) may be chosen by the couple in consultation with the priest/deacon who will witness the marriage. Readers may be chosen from family or friends to proclaim the Scripture and the Prayers of the Faithful. Any person who is proclaiming a reading in

church should be a good speaker, familiar with Catholic liturgy and feel comfortable in a church setting. Remember, this is the proclamation of the Word of God.

The Rite of Matrimony The actual celebration of the Sacrament occurs after the Scripture readings and homily. The priest or deacon who is working with you will go over the options involving the prayers and texts that are available.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist Every wedding in the Catholic Church is celebrated with the Liturgy of the Word and the rite of marriage. Two Catholics who marry must be married within the context of the Eucharist (Mass). If one of those to be married is not a Catholic, the couple may request that the Mass be celebrated at the wedding, but it is an option. It is important for these couples to seriously consider this matter. There are compelling reasons why an interfaith couple may not choose to request Mass. Among these are: so that non-Catholic family and friends may fully follow and participate in the celebration of marriage.

Other Considerations:

The Entrance Procession In recent years, several options have emerged for this aspect of the wedding. There can be an entrance procession similar to that observed at Sunday Mass whereby the congregation is asked to stand and sing an entrance song while the wedding party and ministers enter, usually in pairs (*including the parents and bride and groom*). Some brides are escorted down the aisle by their mother and father. At some weddings, the attendants are escorted down the entire aisle, at others only part way, meeting the groomsmen at the center. In any case, the matter of an entrance is left to the discretion of the couple after consultation with the priest/deacon.

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

A Symbolic Offering For the Poor A praiseworthy custom at weddings is for the bride and groom to present some symbolic gift for the poor. Since Resurrection Parish participates in the St. Winifred Food Pantry, this custom usually takes the form of a basket of canned goods or non-perishable items being carried with the bread and wine at the offertory procession (*if Mass is celebrated*) or other appropriate time within the ceremony. This custom is optional, but encouraged as a sign that the bride and groom recognize that their wedding is taking place within a wider community about whose needs they are rightly concerned.

Flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary An ancient Catholic wedding custom is the presentation of flowers at a statue of the Virgin Mary. This optional custom is observed following Communion. If Mass is not part of the ceremony, it may be included shortly before the conclusion of the ceremony. The bride usually performs this gesture accompanied by her new husband.

Guest Celebrants Some couples ask a priest/deacon (*relative or special friend*) other than ones assigned to the parish to be the official witness at their wedding. When initial contact is made with the parish, please indicate your intention to do so. That priest/deacon should then contact Resurrection Parish. The guest priest/deacon, then, is expected to handle all the details of the wedding including obtaining the required documents, completing the required forms, insuring that the couple is properly instructed, conducting the rehearsal and the wedding and submitting the papers to the parish following the wedding. The priest or deacon must be in good standing with the Church and if not from the Diocese of Pittsburgh must present proper documentation.

Photography You are welcome to have a photographer take pictures and/or make a videotape of the wedding provided that there are no distractions during the liturgy. The operative principle is that the church is first and foremost a house of prayer and not a photography studio. Please ask that the photographer introduce him/herself to the priest before the wedding and become familiar with any local restrictions that may apply. Please note that flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony, photographers are not permitted in the sanctuary, nor are they permitted to make a “station” in the center aisle. Taking pictures in the sanctuary following the wedding is permitted provided that the church is able to be prepared for the parish Mass. No extra lighting is permitted in the church and the furniture, microphones, etc. may not be moved.

Music at the Wedding Ceremony Music is an important part of the celebration of marriage. It should not, however, overshadow the essential element of the commitment of the bride and groom to each other. The Director of the Music ministry here at Resurrection Parish is Mr. Daniel Kovacic. Mr. Kovacic should be contacted after scheduling your wedding to arrange for his participation in the ceremony. Mr. Kovacic is fully aware of the music selections appropriate for liturgical usage and expression of the Christian vision of marriage.

The Director of Music and Cantor do not regularly attend the wedding rehearsal. If a soloist or instrumentalist is involved, arrangements must be made with Mr. Kovacic no later than one month before your wedding for proper rehearsal. Every effort will be made within the boundaries of good liturgy to make the musical part of your wedding both beautiful and memorable.

For more information about music for your wedding Mass, please download the: [Wedding Music guidelines](#) document. You will also need the [Wedding Music Selection list](#).

Flowers Flowers have traditionally been a part of the wedding ceremony. If you choose to have flowers purchased for use at your wedding, arrangements should be made with the florist of your choice. Two large floral arrangements are permitted in the sanctuary. Please inform the florist that no arrangements may be placed on the altar of sacrifice. It is customary to leave the flowers in the church following the wedding as a gift to the people of the parish. The church will be available for florist preparations one hour prior to the time of the wedding. Because of other parish activities, this time frame needs to be maintained.

Cresh Wedding cresh can often be a tripping hazard, especially for the elderly. Wedding cresh are **not** permitted at Resurrection Parish.

Wedding Programs Couples may wish to encourage their guests to participate in the liturgy. Wedding programs indicating the order of the ceremony may be prepared. It is the couple's responsibility to provide the programs to ensure that they are collected from the pews after the ceremony.

Post-Wedding Customs The throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed or rose petals as well as balloons and bubbles in the church or anywhere on church property is not permitted.

Receiving Lines Due to time constraints, receiving lines should be held at the location of the reception rather than at the back of church. Nonetheless, if you choose to have a receiving line at the church, please note that this limits your time for pictures if a parish Mass is scheduled following your wedding and you must leave the church in time for preparations for this celebration.

Additional Aspects If you would like to include any other features in your wedding, they must be discussed with the priest/deacon beforehand.

Fees and Suggested Offerings The following should be used as guidelines for use of the church and the staff:

Donation to Church	1% of your gross expense
Donation to Priest	1% of your gross expense
Altar Servers	\$20.00 each
Wedding Coordinator	\$75.00
Director of Music	\$250.00
Parish Cantor	\$150.00

• If you are not a registered active member of the parish an additional fee of \$500 is requested for the upkeep and care of the parish facilities.

• Rehearsal fee for non-parish cantor is \$50.00 for each session.

No one will be refused the sacraments because of financial situations.

Altar Servers Altar servers will be provided by the church unless the couple has a family member or family friend who can fulfill this ministry.

Parish Wedding Coordinator The Parish will provide a wedding coordinator to assist you with the details of the church and ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator will contact you well in advance of the rehearsal to go over the details of the wedding ceremony. The Coordinators represent the parish. Please follow their direction as they help to maintain the dignity of the sacrament.

Rehearsal Usually a rehearsal is conducted the evening before the wedding. The time is normally 5:00 p.m. and is set after consultation with the priest who is to be the official witness for the ceremony, and after considering the parish schedule for that evening. It is the couple's responsibility to insure that the wedding party is on time for the rehearsal. The marriage license should be brought to the rehearsal and given to the priest/deacon .

Confessions It is a Catholic tradition that the Sacrament of Reconciliation precedes major steps taken in one's life. During the time of preparation for the wedding, the bride and groom, the wedding party and family, should arrange to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (*confession*). Consult the parish bulletin for the times when this sacrament is celebrated.

Reception of the Eucharist It is the directive of the Catholic Church that only Catholics may approach the table of the Lord to receive Holy Communion. If Mass is being celebrated as part of your wedding ceremony, please make this directive known to non-Catholics who may be attending. We look forward to the day when all Christians will unite around one table.

Wedding Party The attendants should arrive at the church no later than one half hour before the scheduled time of the wedding. The groom and best man should go directly to the sacristy at St. Thomas More and to the library at St. John Capistran. Please do not bring any food or beverages into the church. The consumption of alcohol is prohibited on church property.

Brides and their bridal party can prepare themselves in the Reardon Room at Saint John Capistran and the Bridal Room (under the Narthex area) at Saint Thomas More. Those serving as Ushers should be in church.

Seating of Guests Ushers should promptly escort guests to their seats. Because the church is a house of prayer, please be respectful in the vestibule. The mothers of the groom and then the bride should be seated a few minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin. This should not be delayed to seat those who arrive late. In fairness to others who are to use the church after you, weddings must begin on time.

Marriage License A Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Marriage License is required for any marriage taking place at Resurrection Parish. This license can be obtained from any county license bureau within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Pew Bows & Accessories Pew bows are permitted. They must be secured with ribbon or rubber bands only. No thumb tacks, tape or clip on holders are permitted. Please inform the wedding coordinator if any pew bows, flowers or other accessories are to be kept as “keepsakes” and designate someone to collect them immediately following the ceremony. Items cannot be secured or stored for a future pick-up.

PART FOUR

LIFE AFTER THE WEDDING

It is indeed true that the marriage only begins after the wedding ceremony. The Catholic Church, in fact, is most concerned about the marriage.

Catholics relate to Christ's universal Church as members of a Catholic parish. Resurrection Parish strives to be of support to its newly married parishioners in various ways.

If you will be living within Resurrection Parish area after your wedding, please complete a census form and return it to the Rectory or place it in the collection basket on Sunday.

You are valuable to the life of Resurrection Parish. Please become a part of all that occurs here. If the parish priests or parish staff can be of assistance to you in any way after your wedding, please do not hesitate to contact us at the Rectory at: 412-833-0031.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Resurrection Parish: 412-833-0031
parishoffice@resurrectionpgh.org

Address: Resurrection Parish
Saint John Capistran Church
1610 McMillan Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

Resurrection Parish
Saint Thomas More Church
126 Fort Couch Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

Daniel Kovacic 412-833-0031 ext. 242

Diocesan Archives Office 412-456-3158
<https://diopitt.org/archives>

Parish-Based Marriage Classes: www.diopitt.org
(search for marriage instructions)

Engaged Encounter

<https://engagedencounter.com>

Online Marriage Prep Classes:

<https://catholicmarriageprep.com>

www.livingourfaithinlove.com

Allegheny County

Marriage License:

www.alleghenycounty.us

Washington County

Marriage License:

www.washingtoncourts.us

WEDDING GUIDE CHECKLIST

Marriage Preparation:

- Class or Engaged Encounter Weekend or online class
- A copy of the certificate needed by the priest/deacon

Paperwork:

- Baptismal certificates, other forms to priest/deacon

Marriage License:

- Couple's responsibility to obtain from the State of PA
- Must be brought to the wedding rehearsal

Liturgy Planning:

- Choices from the "Together For Life" booklet returned two weeks before wedding.
- Readings: Two. One person may read each reading.
- Prayers of the Faithful: One person may read the prayers.
- Provide readings to the readers prior to the wedding.
- Two—four people may bring up the offertory gifts.

Music:

- Sacred music only.
- Contact Director of Music (following scheduling your wedding)
- Other instrumentalists or Choral Ensembles optional

Photographers:

- No flash photography during the ceremony.
- Photographers/Videographers not permitted in sanctuary
- No extra lighting equipment.
- No furniture or equipment is to be moved for photographs.

Wedding Coordinator(s):

- One or two wedding coordinators will be present.

Altar Servers:

- Two altar servers will be assigned to the wedding.

Rehearsal:

- Starts on time.
- Bring marriage license
- Know the order of the opening procession and who is paired with whom.

Other:

- Nothing (e.g. rose petals, rice, birdseed, bubbles, balloons, etc.) is to be strewn in the aisle during the procession or outside after the ceremony.
- A "wedding runner" ("cresh") is not permitted in the aisle.
- For Saturday weddings, please the premises by 3:15 p.m. at St. Thomas More and 4:15 p.m. at St. John Capistran.
- If small children (e.g. flower girl, ring bearers) are in the wedding party, adult supervision may be needed.
- Written signs are not be carried at any time during the ceremony.