

Wedding Guidelines for St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Church

2114 E. Jefferson Boulevard · South Bend, IN 44417 · 574-282-2308

Best wishes and congratulations! You are soon to be united as husband and wife in the Sacrament of Matrimony. With joy and thanksgiving, the Roman Catholic Church welcomes you to celebrate and solemnize your wedding through your devout participation in worship and prayer. Your union will be an intimate partnership of life and love.

Your commitment expressed in marriage vows and lived with lifelong generosity, will make God's love visible and present within our faith community. A Catholic marriage is therefore much more than merely a beautiful ceremony. A wedding in our religious tradition is a public act of worship, a public confession of faith, and a Holy Sacrament, instituted by Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Planning Procedures and Guidelines

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

Normally, either the bride or the groom must be a member of St. Anthony de Padua Parish. Other situations can be evaluated. No one should feel turned away from the opportunity to celebrate their wedding in the Catholic Church.

MASS or NOT?

The greatest symbol for unity in the Church is the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, weddings celebrated between two Catholics are almost always celebrated in the context of a nuptial Mass. Weddings which take place between a Catholic and a non-Catholic are often not celebrated within the context of the Mass. The Sacrament of Marriage outside of Mass usually consist of the Liturgy of the Word, the exchange of vows, and then the blessing and dismissal. In order not to draw attention to the disunity that still exist among Christians, it is perhaps preferable not to celebrate a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic with the Eucharist. This is best determined, however, in consultation with the priest witnessing your marriage. In all cases and at any Mass, however, only Catholics in the state of grace may receive Holy Communion.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The couple being married and all Catholics participating in the wedding liturgy are strongly urged to go to confession prior to receiving the Sacraments. Normally, confession will be offered immediately following the wedding rehearsal.

CLERGY

The priests or deacon of St. Anthony de Padua are the ordinary celebrants for parish weddings. A Roman Catholic priest or deacon in good standing who is a relative or friend of the couple may also be delegated by the pastor. However, additional paperwork might be required. Concelebrants are always welcome, but notice must be given ahead of the wedding.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

The parish has several wedding coordinators who will assist with our wedding. A coordinator from the parish will be assigned for each wedding. The priest celebrant will give you the wedding coordinator's contact information.

MUSIC

Please contact the Director of Sacred Music after your first meeting with the priest. Our own organist and cantors normally assist all weddings celebrated at St. Anthony de Padua. Other qualified musicians may also participate with the approval and under the guidance of the Director of Sacred Music. No contract with vocalist or instrumentalists may be made without the prior approval of the Music Director. All Diocesan regulations for music at weddings must be observed.

A NOTE CONCERNING THE UNITY CANDLE

In recent years, many couples use a "Unity Candle" during the celebration of their wedding. This is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. The central act within the celebration of marriage is the exchange of vows between the husband and wife, and this exchange should be the focus of prayer and attention during the rite. The "Unity Candle" can distract from this important moment. Therefore, the "Unity Candle" may not be used during the wedding rite in our parish. If couples wish to make use of it, they might consider incorporating it into the wedding rehearsal dinner or reception, perhaps following the grace before the meal or before cutting the wedding cake.

WEDDING TIMES

The normal times for weddings at St. Anthony de Padua are on Saturdays at 11:00 or 2:00. The 11:00 wedding may have from 9:30 until 12:30 and the 2:00 wedding may have from 12:30 until 3:30, and these hours must include everything from set-up to photographs. Times must be adhered to and no exceptions will be made. There can be no receiving lines in the church.

Weddings celebrated during Advent and Lent must be in keeping with the solemn nature of those penitential seasons. This means that while weddings are permitted during these seasons, the wedding celebration will be normally a bit more sedate and solemn in keeping with the penitential nature of the season. This will affect the decorations of the Church as well as the liturgical music.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal times are ordinarily at 5:00 pm Friday evening, or 6:00 pm if there are more than one wedding being celebrated on a particular weekend. At the rehearsal, we will walk through the wedding ceremony. If readers are present, they will practice the readings with our sound system. Bring your marriage license to the rehearsal so that it will be ready for your wedding day.

BRIDE'S ROOM

The bride and her attendants may dress in the spacious restrooms found in the Church's family room. Please be respectful of the Church and its property. We ask you to leave everything clean and orderly.

CHURCH DECORATIONS

Seasonal sanctuary appointments such as sacred images, candle sticks, altar cloths, Advent Wreaths, the Paschal Candle, and other items used in the liturgy may never be removed or rearranged. Flower arrangements are allowed in the church. If you share a wedding day with another couple, you may also care to share flowers as well. You are welcome to leave the flowers in the church following the wedding. Pew bows or flower sprays are allowed if they are not taped or tacked on the pews. Pew candles are not allowed. The throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed, flower petals, or balloons, are never allowed either inside or outside the church or anywhere on parish property.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Photographers are welcome at the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. We ask that photographers try to keep a minimally invasive role. Entrance into the sanctuary is not permitted during the wedding ceremony. Photographers are asked to speak with the wedding coordinator. There is an additional handout for photographers.

RESPECT

St. Anthony de Padua is a parish church dedicated to the worship, glory, and honor of Almighty God. So, we ask you to respect the sacred nature of the space, as well as the ceremony. While this is normally not an issue, it is important to state the following. Consumption of alcohol, smoking, eating, drinking, gum chewing, or any other inappropriate behavior is not allowed within the precincts of this sacred space.

The wedding liturgy is the prayer of the Church, and as such is a formal event. Clothing should be modest and appropriate. Also, gags and jokes will not be permitted. Flash mobs will not be permitted. Refusal to cooperate with these rules could cause the cancelation of your wedding. Respectful dress and decorum should be observed by all in attendance at the wedding ceremony. Children are most welcome at St. Anthony de Padua. If you plan on having children in the wedding party as ring bearers or flower girls, please be sure to pick children with sufficient maturity to undertake such an important role in this solemn event.

FEES AND OFFERINGS

St. Anthony de Padua Parish request the following: However, various ministers at your wedding do not receive a stipend from the church. Offerings for the organist, cantor, priest-celebrant and altar servers are gratefully accepted. Below are the suggest amounts:

<i>Church Fee:</i>	<i>No cost to parishioners or children of parishioners. \$250 to non-parishioners</i>
<i>Wedding Coordinating Team:</i>	<i>\$100</i>
<i>Music Planning:</i>	<i>\$50 given at the time of the planning session. The fee is applicable to the performance fee if Bryan Finkelstein is a musician.</i>
<i>Musicians/Organist:</i>	<i>Fees vary but range from \$75 to \$150 per musician</i>
<i>Priest:</i>	<i>Your discretion. Suggested amount is \$150.</i>
<i>Servers</i>	<i>\$10 each</i>

ROLES IN THE WEDDING

There are several opportunities to involve your family and friends in the wedding ceremony. There could be three readers or maybe a cantor. Be sure to ask persons who would be capable and comfortable at reading or singing in front of crowds. At wedding Masses, it is required that the readers and cantors at the Mass be practicing Catholics. If you would like a non-Catholic to read during the Mass we need to get the permission of the bishop. At weddings during the celebration of the Word the pastor can give the permission for a non-Catholic to be the reader. Please check with the priest celebrant for your wedding.

If you have altar servers in your family, they are welcome to participate. If you are celebrating a nuptial Mass, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be required. If they are from St. Anthony de Padua Parish, nothing is required. If they are from another parish, we need a letter from the pastor stating that they are trained and instituted Extraordinary Ministers. Other persons could be designated to bring up the gifts. It is often helpful to have ushers and other persons to assist your guest on the day of the wedding.

Marriage Preparation Process

PRE-NUPITAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This document determines your “freedom to marry”, by asking if there are any legal impediments (according to Church and civil law) to your proposed marriage.

AFFIDAVITS

These also acknowledge that both parties are free to marry. **Two reliable witnesses** are asked to fill out these forms **in the presence of a priest or a parish representative**. Parents most often serve as these witnesses.

DOCUMENTS

Each party is responsible for obtaining a recent **Baptismal Certificate** (issued within six months of the wedding date) from the church of Baptism.

FOCCUS

“Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study” This tool for communication provides an opportunity to appraise objectively the strengths and challenges of your relationship. **Completed early in the preparation process**, it helps you as a couple to build upon your strengths and work on the areas where you find yourselves challenged. The couple will meet with a married couple from the parish to evaluate the results.

DIOCESAN PROGRAM FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Each couple is required to attend a workshop day sponsored by the diocese. The couples will receive from the parish a pamphlet outlining the dates and requirements of this program. During this day-long-retreat, couples will hear presentations from various speakers on a range of topics pertinent to their upcoming marriage. This retreat is not optional! Couples are responsible for registering and attending this retreat in a timely fashion.

TOGETHER FOR LIFE

This booklet explains the various options for Scripture readings and prayers in your celebration of the Sacrament.

TENTATIVE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

1. Introductory interview with the priest and paperwork
2. Theology of Marriage with the priest
3. Discussion of the FOCCUS with parish sponsor couple
4. Diocesan Marriage preparation seminar
5. Meeting with the priest to discuss the liturgical Rite of Marriage
6. Meeting with the director of liturgical music
7. Meeting with the wedding coordinator

We appreciate your full commitment to the marriage process. Please remember that this is your life. We require these meetings because we feel it is in your best interest. The more you put into the marriage preparation, the more you will receive from the process. We are here to help you as you begin to enter into this most holy Sacrament of Matrimony.

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS AND DEADLINES CHECKLIST

- The Marriage Questionnaire
- Affidavits
- Baptismal Certificates (from the parish where you were baptized and issued no more than six months before the wedding)
- Certificate of Participation in a Natural Family Planning program, are required as preparation for celebration of the sacrament.
- A marriage license issued by St. Joseph County must be given to the wedding coordinator prior to the rehearsal. Applications for a license must be made at least 24 hours before the wedding.

ESSENTIAL NAMES AND NUMBERS

St. Anthony de Padua Parish Office
574-282-2308

Director of Sacred Music
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