

YOUR WEDDING AT ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, ERIE, PA

This booklet outlines St. Patrick Parish Policy as of January 1, 2010. Please direct any questions to the parish pastor.

CONGRATULATIONS on your intention to become husband and wife in the Sacrament of Marriage. The celebrant you choose to witness your wedding will help you to prepare for your new life together.

If you choose a priest or deacon from outside St. Patrick Parish to be the celebrant of your wedding, he will be the person who prepares you for marriage. Any priest or deacon from the Diocese of Erie is more than welcome here. If the priest or deacon you choose is from outside the Diocese of Erie, he must present a “Celebret” or letter of good standing from his bishop or superior to celebrate any sacrament in the Diocese of Erie.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

In the Diocese of Erie, the ordinary program for marriage preparation takes place over a period of six to nine months. This includes an initial meeting with the celebrant. A wedding date cannot be reserved until you meet with the celebrant and it has been determined that there is nothing in church or civil law to prevent the wedding from taking place. All couples being married in the Catholic Church are required to participate in a marriage preparation program, ie., Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, etc. Your celebrant will explain these to you.

WHO CAN BE MARRIED AT ST. PATRICK’S?

Active, participating and contributing registered members of the parish are eligible to be married here. See page 6 for details concerning non-parishioners being married here.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

When the parties are of different faith backgrounds, the wedding service can be celebrated by a Catholic priest or both the priest and a minister. A dispensation can be granted by the diocesan bishop for an interfaith marriage to take place in the church of the non-Catholic person. Please discuss these options with the pastor.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

A marriage license is valid for only 60 days from the date of issue. What is required to secure a marriage license?

- 1) A marriage license can be obtained from any county within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Licenses from outside of Pennsylvania are not valid.
- 2) Both parties must go to the Courthouse on the day you apply.
- 3) Blood tests and physicals are not required.
- 4) If either party was married before, you must have the decree of divorce, a copy of the decree or the exact date of the death of your former spouse. Also, if after a divorce, you legally resumed your maiden name, proof of that fact and the exact date must be presented.
- 5) You will be required to provide your Social Security number.
- 6) If either party is less than eighteen years of age, a birth certificate is required and a custodial parent must accompany you.
- 7) You must provide the following information on both of your parents: first, middle and last name; current address; occupations; state of birth, mother's maiden name.
- 8) Your license will be available three days after you apply. Both parties need not be present to pick up the license. Your marriage license and another form must be at St. Patrick Rectory no later than 48 hours before your wedding.
- 9) The fee for the license is \$45, payable in cash only.
- 10) The Marriage Bureau for Erie County is located at the Erie County Court House, Room 123, West Wing. Office hours are 8:30 AM – 4 PM Monday through Friday. For additional information, call 814-451-6264
- 11) If the bride is going to change her name after the wedding pick up a Social Security Form at the Marriage Bureau.

CHURCH PAPERS

The following documents are required for each party. These must be in the parish file no later than four months prior to your wedding.

1. Catholics must bring a current Baptismal Certificate issued within six months.
2. Non-Catholics will need a baptismal certificate if they were baptized.
3. Catholics will also need a copy of their First Communion and Confirmation certificates if they were received at a church other than the church of baptism.
4. If either party was married before, documentation of a church annulment or a death certificate must be provided.
5. Once the Engaged Encounter, Pre-Cana, etc. is completed, documentation must be provided for the file.
6. Additional items may be required and, if so, the celebrant will bring them to your attention.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The Wedding Ceremony is, above all, a prayer. Your celebrant will review various options with you and ask you both to discuss them and decide what exactly you want to do. All marriages performed here must adhere to the diocesan guidelines. The ceremony begins with the procession of the bridal party and the bride, who can be accompanied by her father or both parents.

If you are using children under the age of 5 as flower girl or ring bearer, an adult must be present in the vestibule to direct the child. Flower girls are NOT to scatter flower petals in the aisle, and ring bearers should not carry the real rings. The best man should have both rings.

You should select appropriate readings for your Mass/Service and the celebrant will provide you with these options. Readers may be selected if you wish.

The actual Rite of Marriage takes place immediately following the Gospel. Your celebrant will again give you various options to choose from.

The General Intercessions can follow the Rite of Marriage. The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows and the celebrant imparts the special Nuptial Blessing on the couple after the Lord's Prayer. The Sign of Peace follows. Couples often wish to take flowers to their mothers at this time, and that is permitted. Because of time constraints you should not offer the Sign of Peace to anyone else. A word of caution is that moving about, up and down stairs, etc. can be dangerous if the bride is wearing a large or flowing wedding gown. At Communion, we ask that only baptized Catholics receive Communion.

After the Final Blessing, the couple process to the back of the church.

FLOWERS TO A SHRINE OF MARY AND LIGHTING OF A UNITY CANDLE

Both of these are not part of the Rite of Marriage and do not take place in the context of a wedding Mass. If a couple wish to bring flowers to a shrine of Mary, they should do so at the rehearsal. If you desire a Unity Candle, that should be done at the wedding reception.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

Most couples choose not to have a formal receiving line as this can add 30 to 40 minutes to the ceremony. Because of the large number of weddings and Masses here, each couple is allotted 90 minutes from the time that their wedding begins. By asking to be married here, you are agreeing that there will be no throwing of rice, birdseed or confetti. No balloons, butterflies, etc. will be released.

TIME AND PLACE OF WEDDINGS

Weddings normally cannot take place during the season of Advent or Lent. The diocesan bishop can dispense from this for serious reason. Weddings may be celebrated on any day of the week except from the time when the Saturday evening Vigil Mass begins until sunset on Sunday.

The normal time for weddings here is on Friday evening at 4, 5 or 6 PM and on Saturday at either 10 AM, 12 PM or 2 PM.

Wedding parties can access the dressing room one hour prior to the ceremony. We ask that there be no food, drink and particularly alcohol in the dressing room.

MUSIC AT YOUR WEDDING

Before making any Wedding Music plans please consult the Parish Wedding Coordinator, Jan Gervasi, to schedule a music planning session.

The wedding coordinator and the parish music director will meet with each couple to plan your music. They are generally available on Monday or Wednesday evenings and will adjust their schedule to accommodate out-of-town couples. If you have a special

vocalist in mind, please discuss this with the Music Director and see the requirements for stipends on page . Please remember that the Church requires that only sacred music is to be used at a wedding ceremony.

GUEST VOCALISTS AND INSTRUMENTALISTS

You may have a guest or family member play music or sing on your wedding day. They normally perform before the wedding. Please note that all music, vocal or instrumental, must be liturgical and meet the approval of the parish music director.

WEDDING REHEARSAL/ MUSIC REHEARSAL

The parish organist and cantor do not attend the wedding rehearsal. This rehearsal is for you and your wedding party and must be scheduled with the parish office. Music for your wedding is rehearsed separately. If you have a guest or family member singing or playing an instrument, they must schedule a rehearsal with the church Music Director no less than two weeks prior to the ceremony. There will be additional fees if extra rehearsals are needed.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Decorations in the sanctuary should be simple and in good taste. The parish has several floral arrangements which are available for you to use at no charge. Please contact Tom Golab, our sacristan, to view these. No arrangements can be placed directly on the altar.

Decorations are limited to the sanctuary. Aisle candles, trellises or arches, etc. are not permitted.

St. Patrick's has pew bows available for your use at no charge. If you wish to use other pew bows, please contact Tom Golab for assistance.

The parish has a large number of candelabra ranging in a wide variety of sizes. These are available for your use at no charge. The sacristan will help you with these.

Aisle runners are not permitted because of insurance restrictions.

Finally, the church will be open for two full hours prior to your ceremony for any decorating not done by our sacristan. If another wedding is preceding yours by two hours, you will only have 30 minutes to decorate.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Your professional photographers and or videographer may take pictures during the ceremony. These professionals know how to record your wedding without being intrusive or interfering. Please ask them to check with the celebrant prior to the ceremony, particularly if using wireless microphones which may interfere with the church sound system. No photographers are permitted in the sanctuary during the wedding ceremony.

Formal poses may be taken before the ceremony if no other wedding precedes yours. Photos may also be taken after the wedding but please remember that all photos, etc. must be completed within 90 minutes after the scheduled start of your ceremony.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding. The rehearsal must begin at the appointed time and will last 30 minutes. The bride and groom, parents, readers, gift bearers and all who have a part in the wedding need to attend. The bridal couple must schedule their rehearsal time with the parish office AND the celebrant.

CONDUCT

No one is permitted in the choir loft. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church or on the church grounds. No food nor beverages should be brought into the church proper. Water, etc. may be brought into the room where the groom and best man wait as well as the dressing room for the bride.

FEES FOR THE USE OF THE CHURCH

For registered, attending and contributing parishioners there is no fee for the use of the church. For non-parishioners and non-attending or non-contributing parishioners there is a charge of \$700 to cover the cost of heat, a/c, set up and clean up. A \$100 down payment is required when the date for your wedding is requested. The parish should receive full payment no later than four months prior to your wedding.

PARISH MUSIC FEES

\$175.00 for Music Director/Organist

\$125.00 for Cantor

Music fees must be paid at the time of your meeting with the Wedding Coordinator and Music Director. If you choose to use other or additional musicians or vocalists at an additional cost to yourself, please know that the Parish Music Director/Organist fee remains regardless of your decision. If a parish cantor is not used, you do not pay that fee.

SACRISTAN, SERVERS AND CELEBRANT FEES

The sacristan receives \$50 payable in advance of your wedding. If you opt to use an altar server (which is not required), you should pay him or her \$25. There is no set fee for the celebrant, but please take into consideration the amount of time and work he has invested in your wedding.

WEDDING TIMES

The normal times for weddings is Friday at 4, 5 or 6 PM and on Saturday at 10 AM, 12 PM or 2 PM. Because of confession and Vigil Mass schedules, we cannot schedule weddings later than 2 PM.

CONTACT INFORMATION

RECTORY OFFICE814-454-8085
FAX814-459-8685
E-MAILstpats@neo.rr.com
MUSIC DIRECTOR – Mark Alloway814-323-2196
SACRISTAN – Tom Golab814-454-0748
WEDDING COORDINATOR – Jan Gervasi814-453-6824

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