



## MARRIAGE PLANNING PROCEDURES

Congratulations and best wishes on your upcoming wedding. We hope to help you make your day most memorable and joyous. In order to assist you in your planning, we offer the following information:

**DATE AND TIME** – Please contact the Parish Office at **(203) 637-3661 ext. 310** to arrange a date and time for your wedding and to start your preparation.

Please note:

- If either party is a REGISTERED parishioner of our parish (must be a registered parishioner for at least six months prior to your wedding), there is no charge for your wedding.
- If neither party is a REGISTERED member of the parish, there is a charge of \$400 which will be paid to the church one month prior to your wedding.

**DOCUMENTS** - You will need to obtain the following documents:

- a. A copy of your Baptismal Certificate. For Catholics it must be issued by the Church in which it was celebrated and dated within the last six months. For other Christians, a photocopy is sufficient.
- b. If you are Catholic, certificates of First Communion and Confirmation.
- c. If you are not a registered member of our parish and do not live within the confines of the parish, a letter of permission and "freedom to marry" from your pastor.
- d. The names of your witnesses (best man, maid/matron of honor). They may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION** - A reservation should be made for the Marriage Preparation Program (Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter Weekend). This is done directly through the *Diocese of Bridgeport*. For information on marriage preparation, and to register for one of the options offered, please visit the *Diocese of Bridgeport* website at <https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/marriage-preparation/home/>

**MEETING WITH PRIEST/DEACON** - Once you have obtained all your documents, an appointment will be set.

**MUSIC** - Once you have a confirmed date for your wedding from the parish office, contact our *Music Director, Dr. Liya Petrides, D.M.A., at 203-637-3661 ext. 322* to begin planning the music for the service.

Normally, the Music Director is organist/pianist for all weddings at the parish. She will also assist you in selecting music to ensure that the liturgical guidelines for the Church are properly respected.

To help ensure that your wedding reflects your personal tastes and is consistent with liturgical guidelines, you are required to follow the parish *Wedding Music Policy*:

- a. You must contact the Music Director before hiring any musicians for the wedding liturgy. Couples considering use of another organist must still consult with the Music Director and pay her normal fee. The Music Director will schedule an individual appointment with you to select music and be able to give you practical advice on the selection of other guest musicians you may be considering and can assist you in the hiring process.

- b. The parts of the Catholic Liturgy normally sung by the congregation must be sung at all wedding liturgies with music. Songs from the theater and entertainment/"pop" music are not permitted in Church, even before the liturgy begins. This music belongs at your reception, and is best performed there.
- c. If you are having a wedding in the Church, you must hire a parish **Cantor**. We have two Cantors at our parish: Soprano, **Elisabeth Franklin**, who regularly sings at the Saturday 5:00 PM and Sunday 10:30 AM Masses and Mezzo Soprano, **Andrea Howland**, who normally sings at the Saturday 7:30 AM and Sunday 5:00 PM Masses. You are encouraged to hear both and make a decision. If you desire a friend or relative sing at your wedding, that person may sing during certain parts of the service, in which case the parish Cantor would lead the rest of the music. Because the Catholic Liturgy involves sung responses and congregational hymns during various points in the service, it is particularly necessary that the Cantor be familiar with the Catholic Liturgy and be able to lead the assembly in sung prayer. Our trained professional parish Cantors can fulfill this liturgical function, which is of primary importance, as well as perform vocal solos appropriate to the celebration of the Liturgy.
- d. The Music Director will be paid a fee of \$400 to assist you in planning and performing the music at your wedding. The Cantor is paid a fee of \$200. These fees should be paid at the time of the initial meeting with the Music Director.
- e. **Please note:** An outside "Wedding Planner" has no place within a wedding liturgy at The Parish of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes.

**SERVICE** - You have an opportunity as a couple to design the religious celebration of your marriage by choosing the prayers, the readings, the readers, etc.. To help you with this, you will be given a copy of "TOGETHER FOR LIFE." You will be guided through the process. Your selections should be turned in at least 1 week in advance.

**LICENSE** - A marriage license must be obtained. If you live in the State of Connecticut but not in Greenwich, you may obtain your license from your Town Hall, but tell them that the wedding will take place in Greenwich. If you do not live in the State of Connecticut, you must obtain your license from the Town Hall of Greenwich. It must be presented at the rehearsal so that the wedding can take place.  
**DO NOT COME FOR REHEARSAL WITHOUT THE LICENSE!**

**REHEARSAL** - **Claire DeLuca** is our *Wedding Coordinator* for the Parish of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes. Please contact her to make arrangements for your wedding rehearsal. She can be reached at **203-637-3661 ext. 310**. Her fee is \$150 and is to be given to her at the rehearsal. Proper comportment at the rehearsal will make everyone happier and ensure the beauty of the ceremony. Please be prompt.

**WEDDING DAY** - We ask that the bride and the wedding party arrive fifteen minutes before the wedding. The groom and best man should be in the Sacristy fifteen minutes before the wedding. Please be advised that if the wedding begins more than fifteen minutes late, the ceremony may have to be abbreviated and the receiving line moved away from the front of the Church. Ours is busy parish and there may be another event scheduled right after your wedding (e.g., 5:00 PM Mass). The policy of this Church is that rice, confetti, bird seed or rose petals cannot be thrown. Bubbles are okay. Alternatives require approval. Please inform your guests!

**FLOWERS** - Questions regarding floral arrangements can be answered by our *Wedding Coordinator*. It is the policy of this Church that flowers placed in the church for a wedding should remain after the ceremony. It is also suggested that couples getting married on the same day or weekend should speak with one another regarding flowers. It may be possible to coordinate the flowers for all the weddings and thereby help economize expenses. Arrangements for an aisle runner should also be made through your florist. At St. Catherine of Siena Church, **the center aisle is 110 feet long**.

Your wedding takes place, not only within our Church building, but also within the Church year. Use of flowers and bows must fit in with decorations appropriate to the liturgical season. For example, the decorations for a particular season (e.g., poinsettias at Christmas, lilies at Easter, reddish purple banners during Lent, deep purple banners during Advent, etc.) cannot be removed for your ceremony, nor can bows and flowers be added during Lent. Please keep this in mind when ordering flowers.

**NOT ALLOWED DURING COVID RESTRICTIONS** - For your information, **candle holders** for the pews are available and may be used upon request (\$10 per holder – there are 12 available). Requests for candle holders/candles on the pews should be made through your **Wedding Coordinator**. Please note that this does not include any floral arrangements or bows (these should be provided by your florist).

**PHOTOGRAPHS** - Photographs and videotaping of the wedding are permitted as long as they do not interfere with the integrity of the ceremony. This means photographers may not enter the Church Sanctuary or move about in front of the Church during the service. Extra lighting is not permitted. The Coordinator will be happy to explain to you at the rehearsal when and where photographs may be taken.

#### **Current list of Covid Modifications**

- Programs are allowed.
- Two flower arrangements are allowed in the sanctuary on the back altar.  
If you would like flowers to line the pews as well a cleaning fee of \$100 will be applied.
- An opening procession is allowed.
- There will be no offertory procession of bread and wine.
- Communal singing is now allowed.
- There may be a receiving line after the service.
- Photography is allowed for up to 30 minutes after the service concludes so long as wedding begins on time.
- Those in attendance who are not vaccinated are required to wear a mask.
- The church has a maximum capacity of 600 guests.
- The event can be livestreamed if requested at St. Catherine's Church for a fee of \$100.

We hope these instructions will help you plan a beautiful wedding ceremony.

Rev. William Fr. Platt, *Pastor*