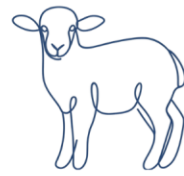




The Parish of



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA AND ST. AGNES

Marriage Planning Procedures

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! The people of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Agnes Parish and I share your joy, and we wish to help you prepare, not only for the wedding day, but for your lifetime together.

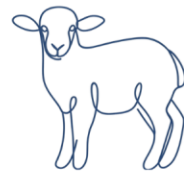
These months of preparation should be a time of spiritual growth through your prayers, deeds and weekly participation in the Mass. This will open you to the Lord's action in your lives, and your wedding ceremony will become an expression of what you believe and how you live.

Because marriage is so sacred and so special, certain requirements are asked of the couple beforehand. This packet is designed to present an overview of the process you and the priest with whom you're working will follow. We hope that you will not only have a memorable wedding day, but also long and full lives together, richly blessed by God.

Father Michael L. Dunn,
Pastor of St. Catherine/St. Agnes Parish



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Marriage Planning Procedures

Section I: Initial Contact

Engaged couples desiring to be married in the Catholic Church should contact their parish priest at least six months prior to the anticipated wedding date. For a priest to witness a marriage in the Catholic Church, at least one of the parties must be an active, practicing Roman Catholic. Couples are encouraged to marry in the parish community to which they belong; therefore, one of the parties should be a member of the Saint Catherine/ Saint Agnes Church, or the son or daughter of a parishioner, making regular contributions to the Church for at least one year. **In any of these circumstances, the fee for use of the church is \$400 and the suggested donation for the Priest Celebrant is \$200.**

In special circumstances, with the pastor's permission, non-parishioners may request to have their wedding celebrated at Saint Catherine/ Saint Agnes Church. **The fee for usage of the church by non-parishioners will be \$500 along with the \$200 suggested donation for the Priest Celebrant.**

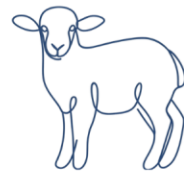
Arrangements for marriage begin with a pre-marital interview of the couple by a priest of the parish. This is a time for gathering information about your unique relationship, discussing the Christian understanding of marriage, and what it means to be married in the Catholic Church. During this meeting, the priest will also explain the process that we will follow for your wedding. This session usually takes under one hour.

The engaged couple will receive a copy of the wedding booklet "Together For Life", or a similar wedding ceremony planning booklet, which includes options for prayers, vows, and Scripture readings, to personalize your wedding ceremony. The date for a rehearsal will also be scheduled at this meeting.

The pastor's permission is required for a priest from outside the parish to officiate at your wedding. If you wish to have that priest involved in the second meeting, be sure to discuss this with the pastor at Saint Catherine/ Saint Agnes Parish when making your appointment. (See "Special Circumstances").



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Section II: Required Documents

For Catholics, a new Baptismal certificate, issued from the church of baptism is required. The original Baptismal certificate, copies or faxes cannot be accepted. Photocopies of First Communion and Confirmation certificates are also required. These can be obtained by contacting the parishes where the sacraments took place and requesting that the records be mailed to the attention of the priest who is assisting you with your marriage plans.

For non-Catholic baptized Christians, a copy of the original baptismal certificate or a letter from the church in which they were baptized is required. The priest will complete the Pre-Marital Questionnaire, which determines the couple's freedom to marry and appropriate intentions in preparation for marriage.

If neither the bride nor the groom is from St. Catherine/St. Agnes Parish, permission letters to marry at our church must be obtained from their pastors.

If one or both parties are under 18 years of age, written parental permission to marry is required.

All the above forms are to be given to the priest no later than at the second scheduled meeting with the priest.

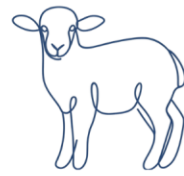
Some couples may also need to obtain a dispensation to marry in the church. The most common dispensation is required for a mixed marriage (A Catholic and a Christian Non-Catholic). This dispensation will be granted through the officiating priest or the parish priest.

A valid marriage license from the State of Connecticut should be given to the priest shortly after it is issued, and in any event prior to the date of the wedding rehearsal. This can be obtained at the Town Clerk's Office at Greenwich Town Hall; it is valid for 60 days from date of issuance. After the wedding, the priest will complete his section of the license and forward it to the city/town hall where it was obtained so that the wedding can be recorded. If the license is not in the possession of the celebrant prior to the wedding, the ceremony cannot legally take place.

Each couple must present the pre-Cana workshop certificate, issued upon completion of the required marriage preparation programs. (See Section III).



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Section III: Required Marriage Preparation Programs

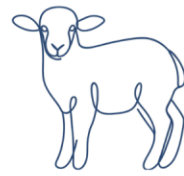
Prospective brides and grooms are required to complete a diocesan-approved marriage preparation program no later than two months before the wedding date. This can be done online through the Diocesan website (bridgeportdiocese.org).

A marriage preparation program is also regularly offered at St. Mary Parish in Greenwich CT, and we encourage the couple to contact them directly. There is a fee of \$200 to be paid by the couple. This program provides an opportunity to gather with other engaged and married couples to consider important issues concerning married life, reflect, and discuss your concerns and ideas.

After completion of the Marriage Preparation Program, you should contact the priest again to arrange a meeting. Bring any of the required paperwork you've already obtained, including the certificate you'll receive upon completion of the pre-nuptial program.



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Section IV: Special Circumstances

The bride and groom are to share with the priest information about any of the following circumstances:

- Previous marriages, whether religious or civil
- Death of a former spouse
- An annulment previously granted; a copy of the annulment must be given to the priest
- A civil divorce
- Relationship of the bride and groom through blood or marriage
- Whether one or both of the parties is under age 18
- Whether the bride is pregnant
- If either party is not Catholic
- If the couple is presently living together
- If the couple is now civilly married and wish to have their marriage validated in the Catholic Church
- Plans for an ecumenical ceremony, i.e. with a Catholic priest and a rabbi

Priests or deacons who are relatives or friends of the bride and groom are welcome to officiate, with permission of the pastor of St. Catherine/St. Agnes Church.

Dispensations are needed for those marrying a non-Catholic. Your recent baptismal certificate will be required, along with the request for a dispensation. The priest will provide you with the necessary paperwork to request this dispensation.

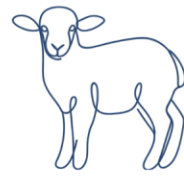
Catholics who have been previously married in the Catholic Church must first obtain an annulment through the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal before beginning preparations for marriage. The priest will help you with this process.

A Catholic who has been previously married civilly will have to provide an official divorce decree.

If you should decide to postpone or cancel your wedding, it is necessary that you inform the priest who assisted you with the arrangements in writing as soon as possible.



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Section V: Wedding Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an important gathering of all the principal participants in the wedding to go over the details of your personalized wedding ceremony with the wedding coordinator and the wedding party. The rehearsal should include all the wedding party, the parents of the bride and groom, and anyone who will take an active role in your ceremony, such as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and gift bearers.

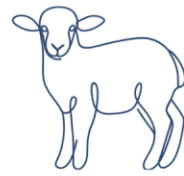
It is helpful if you have already identified the people who will be responsible for removing any pew decorations you may be using, as well as someone to check the church benches, the sacristy, rear of the church and the rest rooms for any articles left behind.

Rehearsals are scheduled for the week of the wedding, usually on Thursday or Friday before the ceremony.

Confession is encouraged within a week or two prior to your rehearsal and wedding ceremony. St. Catherine/St. Agnes offers Confession every Saturday from 3:30 to 4:30 PM or at another time by appointment. You may find it more convenient to receive the sacrament of Confession at another church near your place of work or another parish of your choice.



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Section VI: The Ceremony

The wedding ceremony may be conducted within the Mass or outside of Mass. Couples are encouraged to have a nuptial mass but not required. In either case, the form of the wedding itself must be liturgically correct within the Roman Catholic Rite.

The two main parts of a wedding Mass are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. If you decide to be married outside of the Mass, then your ceremony would still include a Liturgy of the Word, which would be proclaimed according to liturgical guidelines. You are encouraged to include adult family and friends who are comfortable reading in public to proclaim these readings.

The priest will give you a copy of a booklet "Together for Life," or a similar wedding ceremony planning booklet which contains suggestions for various readings and musical selections. We encourage you to read the booklet carefully and take your time planning the ceremony and choosing the readings. Readings and liturgical music other than what appear in "Together for Life" may be selected with the priest's approval. When selecting readings, you should keep in mind the people you wish to invite to proclaim the Word - people who read well and are going to be comfortable reading in front of your gathered family and friends.

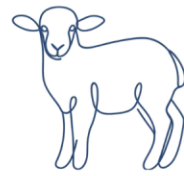
If you wish to invite family or friends who are Eucharistic Ministers to assist in distributing Communion, or have an altar server in the family, they would be most welcome. Please inform the priest of the names of family or friends who will participate in your wedding in any of these roles.

If you decide to print a wedding program for your guests, be sure to review this with the priest for help in providing an appropriate worship aid with necessary copyright permission.

Catholic brides and grooms should receive the sacraments of Confession and Holy Eucharist shortly before their wedding. Encourage your attendants to go to confession and communion too, so that they may share with you the graces of this special occasion. Confessions here at St. Catherine/St. Agnes Church are every Saturday from 3:30 to 4:30 pm, or by appointment.



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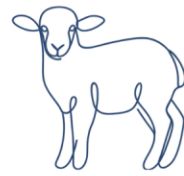
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Weddings may take place on Fridays between 3 and 5 pm, on Saturdays between 1 pm and 3 pm, or Sundays between 1 and 2 pm.

As a courtesy to the priest and to others scheduled to use the church later in the day, it is important that the wedding start on time as scheduled. It is customary, though not required, that the celebrant receives a stipend for his services. A gift of any size is appreciated.



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Section VII: Wedding Music

A "church wedding" is more than a ceremony in a specially dedicated building. It is also an act of worship and the celebration of a sacrament of the church; therefore, the music selected for a wedding is of utmost importance and must be chosen carefully.

The Church keeps no official list of "approved" wedding music, but it does offer some helpful guidelines that can be applied to your choice of wedding music. The music selected must be religious in nature, so that the faith and prayer of the community be expressed. Popular songs are unacceptable before, during, or after the wedding liturgy. Secular music, such as love songs, popular ballads, and Broadway tunes are best left to the reception.

Our Music Director, Dr. Liya Petrides, D. M. A., is a skilled organist who plays and coordinates the music at all weddings in the parish. You should contact her as soon as your wedding date is firmly established with the parish. You can reach her at (203) 637-3661, ext. 322 or Music.Director@stc-sta.org. Dr. Petrides will send you information about musical choices and hiring additional musicians as needed.

The Music Director's fee is \$400 and should be paid directly to her. This fee includes her playing the organ for the ceremony, as well as helping to plan and coordinate. A parish cantor is required for all wedding ceremonies with a Mass for an additional fee of \$200. Fees for the organist, musicians, and cantors are arranged directly with these individuals, and payment should be given directly to them.

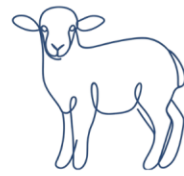
Both the Music Director and the Cantor shall have the right of first refusal to serve and shall receive their regular fees, provided they are available for the service. If you choose to include outside musicians, our parish music director and cantor are still entitled to their regular fees.

If you would like to hire musicians from outside the parish or include family members or friends as musicians for the wedding, you will need the approval of the music director. You will also need to review the music they would like to play/sing with the music director and/or pastor.

Outside organists and cantors must be experienced Roman Catholic church musicians. All musicians are required to follow the parish guidelines to celebrate the liturgy. Any



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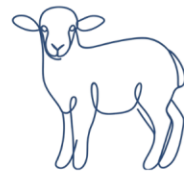
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visiting musician responsible for leading the wedding music (usually an organist or pianist) should be familiar with the parts of the liturgy that are sung by the assembly.

If for any reason the music director is not involved in planning the music for your wedding, your choices should be reviewed with the priest at the meeting approximately one month prior to your wedding.



The Parish of



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA AND ST. AGNES

Section VIII: Flowers/ Church Environment

The church environment reflects the various liturgical seasons: Advent (purple), Christmas (white or gold), Lent (purple), Easter (white or gold), Pentecost (red), and Ordinary Time (green). If you are getting married during the Christmas or Easter season, you should be aware of the flowers that will already be in the church. **Seasonal décor cannot be removed for your ceremony.**

The main church has a capacity of 600 people; the chapel has a capacity of 60 people.

For Friday or Sunday afternoon weddings, the church will be available to the florist and photographer/ videographer 1 hour ahead of the ceremony. On Saturdays, the church will be available beginning at 9:00 AM. To avoid any conflicts or disappointments, it is advisable to see if other events are planned in the church on your wedding day.

It is the florist's responsibility to see that any floral arrangements are in place. If the florist is not going to be setting up the church for your wedding, it is your responsibility to make arrangements for this to be done by others. If you wish, floral arrangements may be placed in front of the lectern, centered in front of the altar, or on either side in front of the altar. **Nothing should be placed on the altar itself.**

No candle arrangements are permitted in the church aisles or on the altar.

Aisle runners can cause accidents; therefore, their use is discouraged. If one is used, it is the responsibility of the florist or a member of the bridal party to remove it immediately after the ceremony.

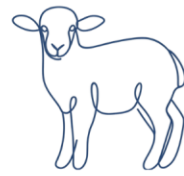
Bows, ribbons, or flowers may be attached to the pews using plastic clips, ribbons, or elastics. No wire, tacks, staples, nails, or tape may be used to attach them to the pews. At the end of the ceremony, the wedding party is responsible for the removal of all pew decorations from the church, and any other personal items used during the wedding.

Usually, floral arrangements are left in the church as a gift to be used at the weekend liturgies, and we do appreciate this generous gesture. If, however, you wish to remove them after the ceremony, kindly inform the pastor so that other flowers can be obtained for Saturday and Sunday Masses.

No rice, birdseed, pasta, confetti or rose petals may be thrown inside or outside the church. These present a hazard and a legal liability for the parish and for you. Please



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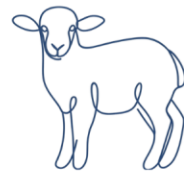
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notify your family and friends of this ahead of time. Bubbles are permitted outside the church.

Eating and drinking are not permitted in the church building or on church grounds. Please be sure your limo company and guests are aware of and abide by this rule.



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Section IX: Photography, Videography, Audio Equipment

For Friday or Sunday afternoon weddings, the church will be available to the photographer/videographer 1 hour ahead of the ceremony. On Saturdays, the church will be available beginning at 9:00 AM. To avoid any conflicts or disappointments, it is advisable to see if other events are planned in the church on your wedding day.

The photographer and/or videographer should seek out and speak to the priest before the ceremony begins to review Church guidelines.

Photographers and video operators may not interrupt any part of the processional, ceremony or recessional. They are asked to be as obscure as possible and take pictures from the general area of the church or the doorway from the Sacristy door which overlooks the Sanctuary. **Photographers may not approach the altar during the ceremony. At no time should they be in the sanctuary.**

Video cameras mounted on a tripod can be placed in appropriate areas prior to the commencement of the ceremony. It **MUST** remain stationary throughout the ceremony. Video cameras may not be placed in the Sanctuary.

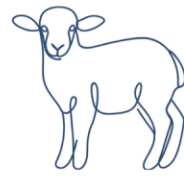
Pictures may be taken in the church or on the grounds in front of the church immediately following the ceremony. If requested, the celebrant will be happy to join the bride and groom for a picture. On Saturdays, we ask that the bridal party conclude the post-ceremony photos by 4:00 pm, so that preparations for the 5:00 pm Mass can begin.

These guidelines are the same for anyone setting up audio equipment. Please communicate these instructions to your photographer or video operator.

A livestream of the ceremony is available upon request, for a fee of \$100. Please contact the parish office to arrange this.



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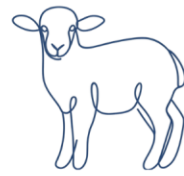
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Checklist for the Bride and Groom

- ___ Date of Initial Interview set with priest: Date _____ Time _____
- ___ Wedding date/time firm with the parish: Date _____ Time _____
- ___ Rehearsal date/time firm with the parish: Date _____ Time _____
- ___ Second meeting set with the priest: Date _____ Time _____
- ___ Get copy of "Together for Life" from the priest
- ___ Celebrant will be _____
- ___ For Catholics: obtain newly issued Baptismal certificates
- ___ For non-Catholic Christians, obtain copies of original Baptismal certificates
- ___ For Catholics, obtain copies of First Communion and Confirmation certificates
- ___ For non-parishioner bride and groom, obtain written permission to marry in St. Catherine/ St. Agnes from respective pastors
- ___ Register for Diocese of Bridgeport Marriage Preparation Program (Pre -Cana).
- ___ Obtain State of CT marriage license dated no sooner than 65 days prior to wedding date
- ___ Make an appointment to meet with the priest when you have completed the Marriage Preparation Program: Date _____ Time _____
- ___ Bring the certificate you received at the conclusion of the program to this meeting, along with any other required papers you've gathered thus far.
- ___ Choose prayers, readings and music for your ceremony. Fill out the reading selection form.
- ___ Select lectors, Eucharistic Ministers and altar servers from among your friends and relatives, if desired. Advise the priest of your choices.
- ___ Give the lectors copies of the readings well ahead of the ceremony, so they can practice.



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___ Arrange for musicians and soloists to play/sing at your wedding. Advise the priest of your choices.

___ Give the sheet music to the musician(s) as soon as possible to allow them to rehearse together or separately, well in advance of the ceremony.

___ Review a draft of any wedding program with the priest prior to printing

___ Go to Confession and Holy Communion a week or two before the ceremony

___ Decide on the stipend amount for the priest before the rehearsal (this is different from the Church fee)

___ Advise the florist and photographers when the church will be available to them, where to place flowers and equipment.

___ Appoint someone, perhaps an usher, to be responsible for removing pew decorations and runner.

___ Appoint someone to check for personal items left by guests or the bridal party in the sacristy, rest rooms or pews.

___ Advise the priest in advance if you prefer to remove flower arrangements after the ceremony

___ Advise photographer/videographer of church guidelines

___ Ask someone, perhaps an usher, to remind the guests that no confetti, rice, pasta, birdseed or rose petals should be thrown as the bride and groom leave the church - but bubbles are okay.

___ Relax and enjoy this very special day! The priest is familiar with the specifics of a Catholic wedding ceremony and will guide you and your attendants through it all.