

# *Wedding Guidelines*



Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Parish  
[www.holytrinityrobinson.org](http://www.holytrinityrobinson.org)

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May your joys be as bright as the morning,  
your years of happiness as numerous as the stars in the heavens,  
and your troubles but shadows that fade in the sunlight of love.

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## **I. Introduction**

Marriage is the intimate union and equal partnership of a man and a woman. Marriage is both a natural institution and a sacred union because it is rooted in the divine plan of creation. In the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, the priest or deacon, the two official witnesses, and the congregation all witness the exchange of consent by the couple who themselves are considered to be the ministers of the sacrament. Sacramental marriage is a liturgical act. It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church.

When planning the Wedding Liturgy, exercise sensitivity and care in the selection of text and music. Be open to the assistance of the Pastor, Director of Music and Wedding Coordinator. These staff members are very experienced and seasoned professionals. The following guidelines in this booklet have been assembled for your convenience. Please review them as you plan your special day. God bless you in your planning process!

## **II. Contact Information**

Rev. Kenneth R. Keene, *Pastor*

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Mrs. Bernie Homovic, *Wedding Coordinator*

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### **III. Scheduling Your Wedding**

Before scheduling your wedding date, you must first meet with the Pastor. This meeting should take place at least six months prior to the date you wish to have the wedding. This appointment will include a Marriage Assessment Interview. The wedding date and time will be confirmed during this interview.

#### **Marriage Instructions**

Married life can never be taken lightly. Couples intending to marry should work to develop a better understanding of all aspects of marriage. This includes communication, societal pressures, physiology, family planning, sexuality, spirituality, money management, and fidelity. The Diocese of Pittsburgh requires formal marriage instruction for all couples who wish to attempt marriage. Catholics and non-Catholics are both obligated to participate.

The following are the programs available for Marriage Instruction:

1. Diocesan Pre-Marriage Program: A series of four evening sessions held in downtown Pittsburgh at the Diocesan Chancery Building at 111 Boulevard of the Allies. Pre-registration at Holy Trinity is necessary before attending this program.
2. Engaged Encounter Weekend: An excellent program which all couples should consider. This experience will not be forgotten.
3. Parish Marriage Classes.

## **Documents**

Baptismal Certificates must be presented to the Priest, unless the person has been baptized at Holy Trinity Church, Robinson Township. Catholics who were not baptized at Holy Trinity need to obtain an authenticated copy, with raised seal, of their Baptismal certificate from the church at which they were baptized, dated within the last six months. For non-Catholics, the original certificate will suffice.

Parents or close relatives may be required to complete Witness Documents for either the bride or groom when:

- A. One is under the age of eighteen.
- B. One is non-Catholic.
- C. One has lived outside the Diocese of Pittsburgh for more than six months after their fourteenth birthday.

## **Mixed Marriage**

When one of the parties is not a Catholic, the couple should see to it that they discuss how they will handle their religious affiliations and particularly, how their children will be raised. Although the non-Catholic party is not required to sign a promise to raise the children Catholic, the Catholic Party must sign a Declaration promising to do all they can to have their children Baptized and reared as Catholics. The non-Catholic party is informed of this intention. This is a very important issue and should be resolved before marriage plans are made. If left until after the wedding, it can become a source of conflict.

## **Civil License**

The Marriage License from the county should be obtained in due time and given to the priest at the **wedding rehearsal or sooner**. The law prohibits marriage without a license. The license must be used within sixty days of

the issue date and it must be procured in any county within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## **Wedding Rehearsal**

The Wedding Rehearsal is usually held the day before the ceremony. The time is to be agreed upon with the Priest officiating at your ceremony and the Wedding Coordinator. The rehearsal is conducted by the assigned Parish Wedding Coordinator. If your wedding date falls on the first Saturday of the month, your wedding rehearsal would have to be scheduled no later than 5:30 PM on the day before, which is First Friday, as we have a regularly scheduled 7 PM Mass. Or, you may wish to consider moving your rehearsal to the Thursday evening before your wedding.



## **IV. Wedding Ceremony**

Each couple will receive the book "Together for Life" which includes a liturgy planning sheet. The book offers selections for Scripture readings, prayers, vows, etc. The planning sheet should be completed and given to the Priest **at least one week** prior to the wedding.

When two Catholics marry, the Mass (Eucharistic Liturgy) must be celebrated. To receive the Sacrament of Marriage and Holy Eucharist, it is necessary for the parties be in the state of grace. **Be sure to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) before or on the day of the wedding rehearsal.** Reconciliation will be available to you following the wedding rehearsal. Please inform your parents, family, and wedding party of their responsibility to also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All Roman Catholics attending the Wedding Mass are encouraged to receive Holy Communion as long as they are in good standing with the Church.

For inter-faith and ecumenical harmony, it is always recommended that a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic be celebrated outside of the Mass. Liturgical planning will still be necessary.

### **Lectors/Readers**

You may have up to three readers at your ceremony; two to proclaim the sacred Scripture readings during the Liturgy of the Word, and one to lead the congregation in the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions). The reader should be someone with experience in reading the passages from the Lectionary. They must have the readings prepared and practiced and not be sight-reading. The readings within the Mass must be proclaimed by one who is Catholic, however, in Marriages celebrated outside Mass Catholics and non-Catholics may proclaim the readings.

Readings will be available at the Ambo on the day of the Wedding Mass or Ceremony. Therefore, no readings need to be brought forward during the Mass or Ceremony.

### **Gift Bearers/Offertory Procession**

When the Rite of Marriage takes place in the context of the Mass, the gifts of bread and wine are brought forth to the altar. Two Catholics are needed to bring the gifts to the altar.

### **Eucharistic Ministers**

If you are having the Mass and know of a family member or friend who is a commissioned Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in their parish, they may assist the Priest in the distribution of the Holy Eucharist. Please let your Priest know of your wishes to have this person assist in the distribution of Holy Communion at your Mass.

### **Altar Servers**

The Church will make the provision for Altar Servers. You may request servers who are relatives or friends as long as they have been trained as an Altar Server at their Parish. Let your Wedding Coordinator know if you will be providing your own Altar Servers.

## **V. Wedding Music**

You will need to schedule a music planning meeting with the Director of Music approximately six weeks prior to your wedding date. At this meeting you will:

1. Select music for your ceremony
2. Determine if you desire additional vocal or instrumental music
3. Determine a Cantor to sing for your ceremony
4. Determine if future meetings or rehearsals are necessary

You may contact the Director of Music by phone, 412-787-2140 ext. 112, or email, [bbarker@holytrinityrobinson.org](mailto:bbarker@holytrinityrobinson.org).

After you contact the Director of Music, you will be provided with a musical planning sheet for your wedding.

### **Cantors/Soloists not from Holy Trinity**

The staff of Cantors at Holy Trinity are talented and competent singers who are prepared to offer beautiful music at your wedding. Should you request a soloist other than one of ours, that person must be well-prepared, professional, and experienced with the Roman Liturgy. If he/she is not experienced with the Roman Liturgy, he/she may still sing, but a Cantor from Holy Trinity must be used to lead the Psalm and Mass parts for a fee of \$50. Rehearsals with outside soloists are offered one hour before the wedding on the wedding day. Should additional rehearsals be necessary for your soloist there is an additional rehearsal fee for the Director of Music of \$50.

## **Organists not from Holy Trinity**

On occasion, Organists from outside the Parish have been permitted to play for weddings. However, all music selections must be pre-approved by the Director of Music. Because the Director of Music is guaranteed Right of First Refusal for weddings, is still coordinating music, and assisting the guest organist when needed, the Director of Music requires a fee of \$50. The organ at Holy Trinity is a very large instrument and not easily handled by everyone. It is recommended that the guest organist make an appointment to see and play the organ.

## VI. Wedding Coordinator

A Wedding Coordinator will be assigned by the Parish Office and will contact you approximately six weeks before your wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will assist you in planning the logistics of the entire wedding ceremony. She will also work with you to schedule the rehearsal time with the Parish Office. Feel free to contact your coordinator with any questions you may have.

## VII. Photography

All photos shall be taken in a manner which will not cause distractions, specifically:

1. The photographer will not stop the wedding procession in the center aisle.
2. No flash pictures will be taken while anyone is reading or speaking from the pulpit or while the Priest delivers the Homily.
3. The photographer is not permitted in the carpeted sanctuary area (around or near the altar). Video cameras may be set up on the organ side of the altar at the end of the brick wall.
4. Flood lights of any kind are not permitted.
5. The rear vesting loft is available for picture taking.
6. Photographers are not permitted to move about the church during the Mass or Ceremony.

The church **must** be vacated 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours after the beginning of the ceremony. For example, if the wedding begins at 3pm, everyone must be out of the church by 4:30pm. The church must be prepared and quiet for the 5pm Saturday Evening Mass.

## **VIII. Altar Flowers**

Altar Flowers are always welcome at the Wedding Liturgy. There should be a minimum of two flower arrangements placed on the pedestals along the sanctuary wall and/or one large arrangement placed in front of the Altar. No flowers are permitted directly on the Altar. During certain seasons of the liturgical year, the sanctuary might already be decorated. Please check with the Parish Office before purchasing flowers for the Wedding Liturgy. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, there are to be no flowers present in the church for the parish liturgies. Therefore, if your wedding falls during one of these seasons and you wish to purchase flowers, you must arrange to have someone remove the flowers from the church immediately following the ceremony.

Flowers may also be placed on the pews in the center aisle, but use of tape or any other sticky substance is prohibited. Rubber bands, string, and ribbon are permitted.

## IX. Church Etiquette

A wedding is an exciting time. The enthusiasm of planning and the nervousness of rehearsal are understood by all. There is though, a need to remember the reverence deserved at the rehearsal and ceremony.

Reverence for God and his church is of highest importance. Please tell your ushers to remind guests to respect the silence of the church once they are seated in the sanctuary. Also, **appropriate attire is necessary for both the rehearsal and the wedding**. Please inform the wedding party that shorts, halter tops, and flip flops are inappropriate when coming to the church. Also, strapless dresses and gowns that are revealing should be avoided. Remember, we are in God's house to celebrate a Sacrament and should not be drawing attention away from God and the Sacrament.

There is to be **no smoking, drinking, gum-chewing, or food** in the church especially when using the "Bride's Room" prior to the wedding. There is absolutely no drinking of alcoholic beverages permitted anywhere on the church property.

Dressing at the Church for the ceremony is permitted but limited to the "Bride's Room" only. The confessionals are not to be used for storage or for dressing.

It is important that the Bride, Groom and attendants for the rehearsal and ceremony be on time.

Because of the 5 PM Mass on Saturday, a decision must be made to either take photographs or to have a receiving line following the wedding liturgy. Having both after the wedding is not possible. For obvious reasons, rice or bird seed is not to be thrown. Balloon releases are permitted. Whoever passes out balloons for your balloon release must pass out the balloons outside of the church building. Balloon launches should be cleared with the officials at the Pittsburgh International Airport.

We at Holy Trinity Parish appreciate your respect for our preferences and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## **X. Summary of Wedding Fees**

Church Stipend (Parishioner).....	\$150
Church Stipend (Non-Parishioner) .....	\$250
Pastor/Priest (Your discretion ~ \$50 – \$200 suggested)	
Wedding Coordinator.....	\$75
Organist with Cantor.....	\$175
Organist without Cantor .....	\$225
Additional Rehearsal, if applicable .....	\$50/hr
Cantor .....	\$100
Servers (2) .....	\$20 per server

**THESE STIPENDS MUST BE PAID IN CASH AND GIVEN TO YOUR WEDDING COORDINATOR IN SEPERATELY MARKED ENVELOPES NO LATER THAN THE WEDDING REHEARSAL. THANK YOU.**