

# SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH

## WEDDING INFORMATION

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Priest's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**St. Patrick's Phone Number: 301-924-2284**

**Website: [http://stpatricks\\_md.tripod.com](http://stpatricks_md.tripod.com)**

Please make an appointment with our organist as soon as possible to choose your music.

**Organist:** Alberta Sugg

**Telephone:** 301-871-7065

**Flowers:** We recommend *"Flowers by Phyllis"* – see page 7

We offer you this information in order to help you to plan your wedding ceremony. We ask you to read it carefully. If there are any questions, please contact the priest or deacon at St. Patrick's Church with whom you have talked concerning your wedding.

**The following documents must be returned to the priest or deacon before the wedding service can be performed:**

- (1) **Baptismal certificates for Catholic parties** – A new certificate must be obtained that has been issued within the last six months, by the church of Baptism.
- (2) **Civil Marriage License** – The license, which is valid for six months, must be issued by Montgomery County, and may be obtained at the

- (1) Expectations about Marriage
- (2) Values and Conflicts in Marriage
- (3) Marital Sexuality and Intimacy
- (4) A Celebration of Life and Love

Some couples choose the Engaged Encounter Weekend as an alternative to the above program. This is acceptable, but discuss this decision with the priest making the arrangements.

**THE CHURCH TOWER BELLS**

At the conclusion of the organ recessional, the tower bells are rung.

**DONATIONS AND FEES**

The suggested donation to the Church is \$250. This money goes to the Church itself, and not to the clergy. Checks should be made to "St. Patrick's Church."

Gifts to the priest or deacon are not required. By tradition altar servers are customarily tipped a minimum of \$20 each.

The organist, vocalists, instrumentalists, etc. have their own schedule of fees, and may charge for extra rehearsals and other activities beyond what is normally involved in weddings. Florists, of course, charge their own fees.



**We hope that this little pamphlet, with all its directives and suggestions will serve to enhance the beauty and joy of your wedding day. Should you have further questions, remember we are happy to assist in any way we can.**

Montgomery County Judicial Center, 50 Court House Square, in Rockville. The telephone number is 301-217-7075 and the fee is \$55.00

- (3) **Letters of Freedom** – The priest or deacon will provide these forms, which are brief statements from parents, guardians, or friends stating that each party is free to marry.
- (4) **Other documents** – \_\_\_\_\_

All documents may be presented to the priest or deacon no later than one month prior to the wedding.

It is expected that the couple will participate in the marriage preparation program at St. Patrick's Church, or attend a marriage preparation program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington. Couples being married by non-Catholic ministers must still be educated in the Catholic theology of marriage.

**GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING CEREMONIES**

**INTRODUCTION**

A wedding booklet will be provided by the priest and with it you can plan details of the wedding ceremony, and choose your Scripture readings and prayers. This guide will answer many questions that will be of great interest to you, and has been prepared to help make your wedding day a most happy celebration for you and your families. Some items are regulations, some are recommendations, some are suggestions, and some are options from which you may choose. If your questions are not answered here, simply ask the priest or deacon making your arrangements. He will be anxious to help. Please remember that the basic wedding ceremony is determined by both the Church Ritual and local parish customs.

## **GOOD LITURGY**

Marriage is not just a civil contract but a vocation; a call from God to enter into a relationship that reflects His own relationship with His Bride, the Church. A wedding is not just a celebration of the beginning of a marriage but also (when both parties are baptized) a sacrament of the Church. A marriage ceremony in a Catholic Church must reflect sound theology and employ the principals of good liturgy, whether celebrated within or apart from the Mass. These principles include the authentic worship of God, participation of the congregation in both spoken and sung texts, and the distinction and distribution of roles. The norms of the Church and the principles of good liturgy have priority over all other procedures, opinions, and preferences.

## **PLACE OF THE MARRIAGE RITE**

Regulations of the Archdiocese of Washington restrict the celebration of marriage to the parish church, the ordinary place of worship.

Marriages in university and college chapels and the Newman Centers and in private and semi-private places of worship may occur only when one of the parties is currently a student in that institution.

Marriages may take place in a private home only with the permission of the Archbishop of Washington and only when there is a serious illness in the family. In all cases, outdoor weddings are not permitted.

## **SETTING A TIME**

Weddings on Saturdays are scheduled at the hours of 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. A wedding celebrated within a Mass lasts about 50 minutes, while a wedding ceremony alone last about 30 minutes.

Because of the schedule for confessions (Saturday, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.) and the Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:30 p.m., no weddings are celebrated on Saturdays after 3:00 p.m. After a 3:00 p.m. wedding, reverence and courtesy require proper decorum and consideration for penitents preparing for confession. There are no weddings Saturday nights or on Sundays.

Out of consideration for an arriving wedding party or the 4:00 p.m. confessions, whichever the situation may be, we ask you to be sensitive to time, allowing no more than 20 minutes for photos in the Church, and depart the Church quietly.

A reception line at the Church after the wedding is not permitted.

The same rules of propriety apply in Church to video taking with the following addition: once the members of the wedding party are in their places, the video camera is to remain set up in one place and no additional lights are permitted. Please note that our public address system is compatible with standard video systems and can be utilized for a direct audio input. Ask the priest for more information about the audio system.

It should be noted that when pictures are taken outside, refreshments of any kind are not allowed.

## **RICE**

**The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, etc., in the Church or on the Church grounds is prohibited.** This debris is quite difficult and time consuming to clean up, and some of it presents a danger to the many handicapped people who attend our church.

## **ALTAR SERVERS**

Altar servers are recommended, and will be supplied by the Church unless other arrangements are made.

## **THE SPONSOR COUPLE PROGRAM**

The Couple to Couple Marriage Preparation Program at St. Patrick's Church is a way for those planning to be married to move further along their journey from "I" to "We." It is an opportunity to know, to share, and to grow in love.

After your initial meeting with the priest, you will be contacted by one of our sponsor couples, who will arrange to meet with you for four two-hour meetings. The topics to be covered in the meetings are:

## **DECORATIONS**

Contact the florist of your choice, keeping in mind that the decorations in the Church should be simple and in good taste so as not to detract from the dignity and sacredness of the wedding itself. Flowers can enhance the atmosphere of celebration, but it should be remembered that flowers may never be placed on the altar itself. The most popular choice is to place vases or baskets of flowers on each side of the altar, but they should not impede movement around the altar. Two wall-mounts for flowers are available and are located 8 feet off the floor on the reredos behind the altar.

Of critical importance to the beauty of your wedding ceremony is the organization of the procession. You may wish to engage a florist who not only prepares lovely floral arrangements, but also performs this extra service quite beautifully and efficiently. Call ***"Flowers by Phyllis"*** 301-871-7405.

If there will be more than one wedding ceremony in the Church on a given day, brides may wish to share the costs of flowers among themselves.

The use of a white aisle runner is not allowed, as it is a dangerous trip hazard. For your information, if you wish to place flowers, bows, etc. on the pew ends, there are 17 pews on either side of the main aisle.

The placing of a small dedication bouquet at the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "Ave Maria" or some other appropriate Marian hymn is sung, is an old and beautiful custom that is encouraged at St. Patrick's Church. The use of the "unity candle," while acceptable, is not encouraged, since the primary symbols of marriage in the ceremony are the wedding rings, not candles.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Church regulations state that care should be taken lest the Mass and other liturgical celebrations be disturbed or interrupted by the taking of photographs. Therefore, it is imperative that the photographer contacts the priest before the wedding to discuss the rules and customs of the parish. The Church is available for photography after the ceremony. Weather permitting, we strongly recommend instead, the outdoor wedding arbor and trellis setting located in a shady grove of trees on the west lawn of the Church or other areas around the Church.

Naturally, a bride wishes to avoid being seen by her guests before the wedding ceremony, so we provide the complete privacy of a bride's room so she can arrive 30 minutes early rather than 10 minutes late, which is always stressful.

Marriages are now permitted during Advent and Lent, but the special nature of these seasons should be taken into account in planning a wedding. It should be kept in mind that during the Lenten Season the church is draped in massive purple and it is not the custom to ring church wedding bells during this season.

## **MARRIAGE APART FROM MASS**

When Catholics are married apart from Mass, the ceremony consists of the Liturgy of the Word (Scripture readings), the Homily, the Rite of Marriage, and the Nuptial Blessing.

In general, a Nuptial Mass is not celebrated when one of the parties is not Catholic, so as not to make Holy Communion a sign of division. You may wish to discuss this with your priest.

If the couple requests to be married in a non-Catholic church, permission will be required from the Archbishop of Washington. If the permission is given, the presence of a Catholic priest or deacon at the non-Catholic service is not required for validity, and if the couple chooses not to follow the Catholic form of Marriage, the presence of Catholic clergy is ordinarily not called for.

## **REHEARSAL**

The wedding rehearsal is normally held the night before the wedding at a time convenient to all; other options are open. The priest or deacon presiding at the wedding ceremony conducts the rehearsal, not family members or "wedding consultants," although the participation of a wedding consultant is desirable.

Lectors should attend the rehearsal to practice the readings in their true setting, while becoming acquainted with the public address system and the church's acoustics. Copies of the readings should be furnished to the lectors for use in the wedding ceremony. Guest readers are encouraged but not everyone is accustomed to reading in a public forum, and therefore, the inexperienced and nervous reader is very often inaudible and unexpressive. Practice is absolutely essential.

A guest may also be designated to read the general intercessions (prayers of the faithful). At a nuptial Mass it is customary to designate two to four gift bearers.

The inclusion of children in the wedding party should be treated realistically, taking their ages into consideration. Children can often draw attention away from the principals, who are the bride and groom.

Musicians customarily do not attend the rehearsal.

## WEDDING MUSIC DIRECTIVES

Please make an appointment with our organist as soon as possible to choose your music.

**Organist's Name:** Alberta Sugg

**Telephone:** 301-871-7065

For your own reassurance that the music for your wedding will be of the highest quality, **we require the use of St. Patrick's parish organists and vocalists.** Male and female vocalists are available, as are instrumentalists. "Outside" musicians and vocalists are not permitted. There are no exceptions to this policy.

As in any celebration, music in a wedding Mass or ceremony is a very important element. It is a most powerful communicator. Great care should, therefore, be taken to choose music that is highly fitting and proper to this holy and sacred occasion.

The following guidelines are provided to help you along the road toward achieving the most prayerful and meaningful celebration possible. Questions not answered here may receive further clarification during your wedding music consultation with the St. Patrick's Church organist.

- (1) **Certain music is clearly inappropriate for Church use.** Music with no religious significance is not allowed before or during a wedding Mass or ceremony. Though a song or piece of music may be popular on the secular scene, may genuinely speak to you, and be replete with references to love, it nevertheless has no place at divine worship. Examples of this

type of song are "We've Only Just Begun," "Evergreen," "Perhaps Love," "Wedding Song," "Sunrise, Sunset," and "One Hand, One Heart." Songs from musicals are never permitted. Follow the general rule that just as religious songs are inappropriate at your reception, so popular romantic songs are inappropriate at a religious wedding ceremony.

- (2) **Church regulations**—adherence to sound liturgical principles—**require that the "Our Father" be sung or recited by the entire congregation**, therefore, it can not be a solo piece during the ceremony.

## CONFESSIONS

It is highly recommended that Catholics being married should celebrate the Sacrament of Penance some time immediately prior to their receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony. Confessions are held every Saturday from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Upon request, the priest will be happy to offer the Sacrament of Penance immediately after the rehearsal for the convenience of Catholics in the wedding party.

## COMMUNION

Catholics attending a wedding Mass are encouraged to receive communion, as long as they are properly prepared (e.g., have previously gone to confession if necessary). Non-Catholics do not receive communion in the Catholic Church, but are encouraged to pray during the Communion Rite.

**A Guide for**  
**Planning a Wedding at**  
**St. Patrick's Church**  
**Rockville, Maryland**