

St. Anthony of Padua Parish

Wedding Policies & Guidelines

The Pastoral Staff and Community of St. Anthony of Padua Parish extend their congratulations on your recent engagement. We pray that God's blessing will guide you.

Two people approaching the Church with the request to be married often come with conflicting ideas. For example, some people are afraid of the church and its regulations regarding the Sacrament of Matrimony. Others are resentful that the Church would dare to say anything about "MY" wedding. Some see their wedding as a sign of the covenant between Christ and the Church, a sign of his love and a sharing of the ministry of that love.

Still others feel that all they want is "A NICE CHURCH" for the ceremony. The special event marking the beginning of your married life is your wedding. You have found each other; and now you are ready to marry each other. Therefore, this wedding ceremony should be marked with words, gestures, and music that are meaningful to you.

However, your marriage also belongs to Christ and the Church. When you come to the Church to be married, you are asking the Church (the community of the faithful) to accept you and allow you to share in its vocation and the Sacrament of Marriage. The Church welcomes you and rejoices that another couple wants to mature in faith by living the Sacrament of Marriage.

The Christian community will support you with their prayers for the rest of your life! It is this combination, you and the community, that makes Marriage in the Church so different and so holy.

The Sacrament of Marriage presumes that a couple believes in the message of Jesus Christ, and that this belief shapes their values, influences their attitudes, and motivates their behavior.

Wedding Policies

In light of the many requests we receive for marriages to be performed in our church, and the Diocesan Policies along with our commitment to protect the sacredness of the Sacrament of Marriage, the following are the policies that have been established at St. Anthony of Padua Parish.

Our first priority must be given to our own parishioners to assure we can accommodate their request as best possible:

1. **Parishioners** – members of St. Anthony of Padua Parish who are presently registered (for six months or more) and a participating member of the worshipping community.
2. **Extended Parishioners** – If one of the engaged party's parents are registered (for six months or more) and participating members of the worshipping community. In this situation the engaged couple is required to request from their local parish a letter stating that they are members of the church and have permission to marry in the church of their parents.
3. **Non-Parishioners** – Request by couples to have their marriage performed at St. Anthony of Padua Parish who themselves and parents are not members of the parish are addressed on an individual basis. We recognize there are "pastoral situations" that bring you to our church. A

priest will meet personally with you to determine whether your request can be honored. The engaged couple must have a letter stating their membership in a specific parish and permission granted to be married elsewhere in order to schedule their marriage with our church.

Please Note: The beauty of our church and its location to hotels and reception halls will not be considered as sound reasons for having your wedding conducted at St. Anthony of Padua Parish.

Weddings are generally conducted on Friday evening, Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoons. Couples should contact the church office as early as possible but no later than one year prior to the desired date. Marriage Preparation is required of all couples.

All couple should contact one of the parish priests to schedule a meeting and request a reservation for your wedding. The parish secretary cannot hold a date, you **must** first speak to one of the priest. If you wish to have a guest priest preside at the ceremony, you must first contact the pastor of this church. If you do not request a particular priest one will be assigned for your wedding. (The ordinary ministers of a wedding ceremony are priests and deacons. No other individuals may officiate at Catholic weddings. Clergy from other denominations, however, may be present.)

Guidelines

A wedding is an important day filled with many details and customs. It is safe to assume that couples preparing for marriage are working hard at getting all the details ironed out. Similarly, St. Anthony of Padua Parish endeavors to make your wedding ceremony a most joyous and problem free occasion. The guidelines contained in this handout are designed to help you prepare for and plan your wedding ceremony according to the Rite of Christian Marriage and the particular customs of St. Anthony of Padua Parish.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

All couples planning to be wed in a Catholic ceremony are required, by the Diocese of Paterson, to attend a Marriage Preparation Program. St. Anthony offers a one day Marriage Preparation Program for couples twice a year. The day consists of presentations given by a team of married couples from our parish. Topics include coping with stress, communication skills, decision-making, and prayer.

Those with pre-existing conflicts should consult the presiding priest for options. Those who live outside the Diocese of Paterson and cannot attend this program are urged to attend a similar program in the diocese in which they live.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

Church Fee

Registered parishioners -	\$350.00
Non-parishioners -	\$450.00

Church fees are given to the presiding priest three weeks prior to the wedding date. Please make the checks out individually for each musician. Couples are still responsible for fulfilling the basic fees outlined above. (Those with financial difficulty are asked to speak with the priest who will preside at the wedding or the pastor.)

Musicians

Outside organists are generally not permitted. If an exception is made, a bench fee would apply.

The following is a list of fees:

Music Director/Organist/Pianist	\$300.00
Song Leader/Soloist	\$200.00
Additional Vocalists	\$150.00 each
Rehearsal for Guest Soloists or Musicians	\$ 95.00
Contracting Fee (if necessary)	\$ 25.00
Instrumentalists	\$150.00-\$350.00
Bench Fee	\$300.00

Please note that all fees are to be paid no later than 2 weeks in advance of the wedding date directly to Mr. La Gala. Late payments must be made in cash.

In the rare event that Mr. La Gala is not available to attend a wedding, a competent substitute will be provided at no additional charge.

Ninety minutes is considered a reasonable period of time for the services of musicians at the rate given in the schedule of fees above. Beyond ninety minutes, musicians may need to leave due to preexisting commitments.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

A marriage license from the town hall in which the bride is legally resident is required under the state law of New Jersey for a priest to officiate at a wedding in this state. If the bride should be from out-of-state, then the license is obtained from the NJ town hall where the groom is legally resident. (In the rare case in which both parties are out-of-state residents this license is obtained at the Borough offices here in Butler.) This license must be obtained beforehand and presented to the priest at the rehearsal. Otherwise he cannot legally marry you. The couple must apply a minimum of three business days before the wedding to obtain this. Please do not cut this too close! Couples can usually obtain it up to two weeks before the planned wedding date.

THE WEDDING LITURGY

The wedding liturgy is to be prepared in consultation with the presiding priest and the Music Director. A good guide to this preparation is found in Together for Life, a booklet available in the church office.

MUSIC

St. Anthony of Padua Parish is committed to supplying music for all of its liturgies & celebrations that is truly worthy of the glory & praise of God. Music during the Sacrament of Matrimony should reflect a sense of joy and reverence and enhance the solemnity of the vows you will soon exchange. It should reflect the sanctity of the sacrament in the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving.

Mr. Philip La Gala, our Director of Music Ministry and Organist, will be happy to meet with you and assist you through the music selection process. He will guide you through that process keeping within the policies and guidelines of St. Anthony of Padua Parish. If you are planning on having a wedding booklet for the church, he will also assist you in the preparation of that booklet, if you wish. Please make arrangements to meet with Mr. La Gala at least 10 weeks before the date of your wedding.

In addition the Music Director will arrange to have one of our highly trained vocalist/song-leaders provide sung prayer for the occasion. These services include singing songs pertaining to the Sacrament of Matrimony while your guests arrive, leading the congregation in the sung responses, hymns and solo pieces at the appropriate times during the liturgy. Additional vocalists are also available.

Additional instruments, (trumpet, flute, strings, harp, etc.) can enhance the beauty of any celebration. Instrumentalists can be arranged for by Mr. La Gala. Fees vary depending on the instrument selected and the qualifications of the musician. A contracting fee may apply.

If you wish to provide an additional guest vocalist or musician of your own (family relative, friend, etc.), Mr. La Gala must meet with them well in advance of the wedding date. Approval of any guest musicians is at the discretion of the church Music Director. Guest singers are limited to a maximum of 2 solo songs. Any rehearsals required with outside singers or musicians are available at an additional fee.

The church Music Director reserves the right of final approval on all wedding music selections.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

There are a variety of appropriate scripture readings contained in the Together for Life booklet. You may choose from these or you may choose other appropriate biblical texts. Readings from other sources, sacred or secular, may not be used during the Liturgy of the Word.

UNITY CANDLE

In recent years the Unity Candle has become a popular wedding additive. While its origins are uncertain, the continued use of the Unity Candle is largely market-driven. There is no provision for such a candle and its accompanying lighting ceremony in the Rite of Catholic Marriage. If couples opt to use a Unity Candle they must be responsible for its removal from the church immediately after the wedding.

AISLE RUNNERS

Aisle runners, although a time-honored part of weddings, are troublesome in several ways, particularly in regard to the safety of the wedding party and church maintenance. Therefore, the Diocese of Paterson does not allow us to have runners in the church due to liability concerns.

CHURCH DECOR

The time of your wedding may coincide with certain liturgical seasons that require special decorating by church staff. If this is the case, no liturgical decor will be removed for the purpose of a wedding.

You may wish to donate your wedding flower arrangement for the altar and/or pulpit to the church for use the entire weekend. You may also wish to coordinate flowers with other couples who are being married the same day and share the expense. Please see the presiding priest for more information. Otherwise, please arrange to have your flowers removed immediately or they will be discarded by day's end.

There is to be no tape, tacks, or nails used on any surface in the church.

The exterior of the church may not be decorated in any way.

There is to be no throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, etc. inside the church or on the exterior grounds.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Photographers and videographers are asked to consult the presiding priest for guidelines. They will be shown several acceptable positions from which to photograph your wedding. Use of the exterior church grounds for wedding photography is generally acceptable and is at the discretion of the resident Franciscan community. Consult the presiding priest for permission.

THE TIME OF YEAR

Weddings may be held outside the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent. Exceptions will be made only for serious pastoral reasons at the discretion of the presiding priest or the pastor.

THE DAY AND TIME

A basic time slot for a wedding is 1 ½ hours, including any post wedding activities, except where

noted, as follows:

Friday evening (time negotiable)

Saturday 1:00 and 3:00 PM

Sunday 2:30 or 3:00 PM

TARDINESS

If a wedding party is late arriving at the church, the following consequences may result at the discretion of the presiding priest:

No greeting line at the conclusion of the liturgy.

No post-wedding picture taken in the church.

Altered content of wedding liturgy. e.g. fewer solos or instrumental pieces.

Any wedding party that is more than 20 minutes late forfeits the wedding mass. A simple nuptial ceremony is done instead.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

The rehearsal for the wedding ceremony is usually held the night before the wedding, however, special circumstances may necessitate other arrangements.

Your rehearsal may be scheduled back-to-back with another rehearsal so it is important for all to be on time. The rehearsal will be conducted by the presiding priest. Please be sure all arrangements are finalized with the presiding priest before the rehearsal.