

**GUIDELINES**  
**FOR THE WEDDING LITURGY**

**SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**400 EAST SIMPSON STREET**  
**MECHANICSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17055**  
**(717) 766-9433**

**Rev. Chester P. Snyder, Pastor**  
**Rev. David Hereshko, Parochial Vicar**  
**Rev. William Sullivan, Retired, in Residence**  
**Deacon Jack Paruso**  
**Mr. Michael Davis, Pastoral Musician**

*(REVISED: June 2011)*

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*To emphasize the sacred nature of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and in order to preserve proper decorum, guidelines have been established for all marriages at Saint Joseph Catholic Church. All couples are required to follow the provisions of the Common Policy for Marriage Preparation of the Diocese of Harrisburg. Couples are expected to contact the priest or deacon at least nine months prior to their wedding to allow time for proper preparation.*

**GUIDELINES**

1. Marriages may be scheduled on Saturdays at 10 a.m., 12 noon, or 2 p.m. Evening weddings are permitted Monday through Friday.
2. The scripture readings, prayers, etc., are to be chosen by the bride and groom in consultation with the priest or deacon who will witness the ceremony (“Together For Life” by Joseph Champlain).
3. The rehearsal must begin promptly at the scheduled time. The marriage license is to be brought to the rehearsal or given to the priest or deacon prior to the rehearsal. All stipends should be paid at this time or prior to the rehearsal.
4. THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES APPLY TO MUSIC:
  - a) The Pastoral Musician is responsible for music at all liturgical celebrations at Saint Joseph Catholic Church. The Pastoral Musician should be contacted at least three months prior to the wedding date at the parish office (766-9433).
  - b) Music for weddings must follow the guidelines established by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission. Couples should not plan or select music for the wedding ceremony or Nuptial Mass until they have contacted the Pastoral Musician. *All music, both before and during the Wedding Ceremony or Nuptial Mass, must be appropriate for the liturgy.*
  - b) The Pastoral Musician will play at all weddings unless the Pastor and the Pastoral Musician have approved other arrangements.

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- d) Qualified guest vocalists may be invited to participate in the wedding with the approval of the Pastoral Musician.
- e) A cantor aids the worshipping community with the singing of hymns and psalms. A cantor should be used in the wedding liturgy. The cantor, when at all possible, is not necessarily the soloist. A soloist performs songs for the congregation. The cantor helps the congregation pray through singing. A soloist is not necessary; a cantor is. (Liturgical Guidelines for the Marriage Ceremony, Diocese of Harrisburg) The Pastoral Musician and/or some soloists can also act as cantors.
- f) The fee for the Pastoral Musician is \$150.00 for a wedding liturgy and \$200.00 for a wedding liturgy with Mass. ***Please note that additional fees will be incurred for rehearsal times requested by a cantor/soloist or instrumentalist.*** If an approved substitute organist is used, he/she must be consulted about his/her fees.

#### 5. THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES APPLY TO FLOWERS:

- a) The bride and groom are responsible for making arrangements for the flowers for their wedding. Flowers are expected to remain on the altar for the weekend liturgies.
- b) Liners for the church vases must be used. They can be picked up at the parish office no earlier than two weeks prior to your wedding.
- c) Bows can be placed on the pews; however, be sure to assign someone to remove bows after the ceremony. Bows may be attached with the use of masking tape or specially prepared hangers. ***No cellophane tape or thumbtacks may be used.***
- d) Usually a bridal bouquet is placed on either side of the celebrant's chair. Additional bouquets can be placed in front of the altar and/or in front of the pulpit. ***ANY ADDITIONAL FLOWER REQUESTS MUST BE DISCUSSED WITH THE PRIEST OR DEACON.***
- e) ***NO*** garland, floral rope, ribbon, etc. can be used to block the pew entrance from the center aisle. ***All wedding guests must be able to enter the pew from the center aisle.***

# GUIDELINES FOR THE WEDDING LITRUGY

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### 1. THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES APPLY TO PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY:

- a) The couple is to instruct their photographer regarding our guidelines before the ceremony. Anything that will distract the couple or the congregation during the wedding is discouraged.
- b) Flash photographs may be used during the processional and recessional, but may *not be* used during the wedding liturgy.
- c) Photographs may be taken from the choir loft, the back of the church, the Baptismal Font or the Tabernacle area in the front of the church. *Photographs may not be taken from the steps of the sanctuary.*
- d) Photographs of the entrance procession may be taken from a pew in the center aisle near the back of the church. Photographers are not to stop the wedding party for pictures during the processional or recessional.
- e) Pictures after the wedding ceremony are restricted to formal photographs of the wedding party and/or family. All other novelty pictures (such as bridesmaids kissing the groom, garter shots, etc.) are prohibited. Pictures of this type are more appropriate at the wedding reception.
- f) If the wedding is to be videotaped, the bride or groom is responsible for consulting with the priest regarding the acceptable procedure. Videotaping is permissible from the choir loft or side aisles. Videographers must consult with the celebrant regarding the exact location of the video camera. No roving cameras or spotlights are permitted at any time during the ceremony.
- g) If the church is to be used as a studio by the photographer after the wedding ceremony, it is to be remembered that the church is a sacred place. Reverence and a minimum of conversation are to prevail. The following is a time frame for pictures after the ceremony:
  - 10 a.m. ceremony -- the church must be cleared by 11:20 a.m.
  - 12 noon ceremony -- the church must be cleared by 1:20 p.m.
  - 2 p.m. ceremony -- the church must be cleared by 3:20 p.m.

## **GUILDLINES FOR THE WEDDING LITURGY**

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#### THE FOLLOWING ITEMS APPLY TO OFFERINGS:

- a) If the wedding liturgy is with a Mass, the offering for two altar servers is \$10 each.
- b) The offering for use of the church is \$50.
- c) A personal gift given to the priest or deacon is given at the discretion of the couple.

#### ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- No balloons, bubbles, rice, birdseed, bird or butterfly releases are permitted.
- No rose petals are to be dropped in the church and no extra candelabra are to be used.
- We do not permit the use of a white runner because it presents a danger to the bridal party when walking down the aisle and to the guests as they leave the church.
- A receiving line is not allowed at the church. The celebrant will notify the congregation that the wedding party will be greeting their guests at the reception and that the wedding party will remain in the church for photographs.
- Alcohol is not permitted on church property at the time of the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony. Members of the wedding party are asked to refrain from drinking alcohol before the wedding rehearsal or the wedding. ***Should the bride or groom arrive at the rehearsal or wedding in an inebriated state, the wedding will be postponed. Should a member of the wedding party be inebriated, he or she may not participate.***
- The bridal party is not to arrive earlier than one hour before the ceremony. If a wedding is scheduled prior to your wedding, please check with the celebrant as to what is the appropriate time of arrival. We do not have facilities to accommodate the bride and bridal party dressing at the church. Our sacristy and infant chapel are available to the wedding party for last minute preparations.
- If a wedding program is desired, it is the responsibility of the bride and groom. The Pastoral Musician can provide samples and guidance.

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- The practice of lighting a “unity candle” is not permitted. The unity candle is not a part of the Catholic ceremony. If a couple wants to observe this practice, they may choose to use unity candles as part of their grace before meals at their reception. (A copy of a unity candle grace ceremony is attached.)
- Couples who have a special devotion to Mary and who seek her intercession on the day of their marriage sometimes choose to offer a floral tribute at the Blessed Virgin Mary Shrine. If this is appropriate and consistent with couples’ spirituality, this is performed at the end of the marriage ceremony after the final blessing.
- Since marriage is an important sacrament, it is recommended that Catholics who are getting married should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding.

## A GRACE BEFORE MEALS

TO BE USED AT THE WEDDING RECEPTION...

*The following prayers may be said as the individual candles are lighted by members of the family or friends of the bride and groom or by the bride and groom themselves.*

LET US PRAY...

*(As the first candle is lighted)*

Loving God, we offer to you thanksgiving and praise for **(bride)** and for the life and joy she brings to us. Today, may your fullest blessings come upon her that she may be a good wife and mother. Give to her the blessings of the women whose praises are sung in the Scriptures. May the light of her love and faith inspire her husband to a life of compassion, caring, and love.

*(As the second candle is lighted)*

Loving God, we offer to you thanksgiving and praise for **(groom)** and for the life and joy he brings to us. Today, bless him with your favor and grace that he may be a good husband and father. Give to him the blessing of wisdom and courage. May the light of his love and faith inspire his wife to a life of gentleness, compassion and love.

*(As the bride and groom light the unity candle, the following prayer may be said by their parents, maid of honor, and/or best man, or another friend or relative.)*

Loving God, today you join two hearts, two lives, and two families into one by uniting **(bride)** and **(groom)** in the sacrament of marriage. May the light of their love be an inspiration to all who share their lives. May they witness your love and faithfulness in all they say and do as husband and wife, as father and mother. Bless their parents and families and friends who are an encouragement and support to them in their love. Bless all of us who gather with them in joy today. May our celebration reflect the dignity of the sacrament we have witnessed today. And may our words and actions reflect your gentleness, compassion and love. Bless our gathering, the meal we share, and the friendship we know today. Be for **(bride)** and **(groom)**, joy and strength, love and happiness, today and everyday. Amen.

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SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH  
400 EAST SIMPSON STREET, MECHANICSBURG, PA  
PHONE: (717)-766-9433

(TO BE GIVEN TO PHOTOGRAPHER)

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