

And the Two Shall Become One Flesh...



Guidelines for Wedding Liturgies at

St. Bernard Parish

Revised March 6, 2019

Dear friends in Christ,

Congratulations on your engagement! My brother priests, our deacons and I are delighted that you have chosen to be married at Saint Bernard Parish in the presence of Jesus Christ with the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church. We pledge to you our prayers and support as you prepare to become one in marriage.

Marriage in our Christian, Catholic tradition is a solemn celebration that demands instruction and prayerful preparation. In that spirit, I am happy to present to you the official Wedding Policy for Saint Bernard Parish.

While there are many hands that will assist in your wedding at Saint Bernard Parish, none are perhaps more significant than your hands and how you embrace this holy and sacred ritual. I encourage you, along with my brother priests, to make Christ the center of your lives. At the same time I ask that you keep a proper perspective relative to what you are about to do. As the saying goes, "A wedding is a day. A marriage is a lifetime."

Jesus said, "At the beginning of creation God made them male and female; for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and the two shall become as one. They are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore let no man separate what God has joined."

As you prepare to become one in marriage, my brother priests, our deacon, and I, along with our wedding coordinators, organist and coordinator of liturgy, pray that you may be one and no one will separate what God has joined.

If you have any questions about the enclosed information, please feel free to contact any one of us. Please be assured of a remembrance in my prayers. I hope you will do the same for me.

Sincerely in Christ, Rev. David J. Bonnar

Administrator/Pastor

Roman Catholic Tradition

Marriage is a gift of God by which men and women are established in community with one another for their own nourishment, and for the nourishment of their families. It is God's will that the relationship of marriage reflect the depth of love which Christ has for the Church. Therefore, God promises to bless, comfort and sustain those who seek him in their marriage.

The Church announces God's promise in the liturgy which begins marriage, in which a man and a woman commit themselves to one another with life-long promises by which they form a covenant with each other as husband and wife. And in this liturgy, the church prays that God will be present to bless the marriages of Christian people, and promises its love, prayer and support.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the Rite of Marriage is a service of worship of the Church. It belongs to the whole church, not to the bride and the groom. The Church is bound by certain guidelines for the conduct of worship which have been formulated through centuries of Christian tradition and teaching. These are not arbitrary rulings, but are a matter of the collective teaching of the Church on the matter of the true meaning of worship.

Planning the Rite of Marriage

The celebration of the Rite of Marriage is a very joyous and sacred celebration! The parish community of St. Bernard celebrates this sacrament with you. The parish priest or deacon is a representative of the entire Church community. He will assist the bride and groom. The priest or deacon is also the person who determines what is appropriate during the liturgy. In order to respect the desires of the bride and groom and to keep all communication as clear as possible, the priest or deacon will consult only with the bride and groom in planning the wedding liturgy.

All communication is to be done by the bride and groom.

All decisions, planning, requests, etc. will be discussed with the bride and groom only. Anyone other than the bride or groom contacting the parish in an attempt to make plans regarding the wedding will be instructed to have the bride or groom contact us.

A parish wedding coordinator, as well as members of the parish Wedding Committee, will be present at your wedding to ensure that pre-liturgical needs of the bridal party are met. We ask that all members of the bridal party follow and respect the directions given by these volunteers.

This booklet, along with [Together for Life](#) by Joseph M. Champlin, will assist you in planning your wedding liturgy. If you have any questions, please contact a parish priest.

Date, Time, and Presider

At least six months prior to the wedding, those who plan to be married must first contact the parish office to make an appointment with one of the parish priests. No wedding can be scheduled over the phone or with the parish secretary. Only a parish priest can arrange a date and time for the wedding with the couple. A visiting priest or deacon is permitted to celebrate your wedding with all of the proper permissions of the Church. If a visiting priest or deacon is asked, it is understood that he will be responsible for the preliminary paper work. They must also follow our wedding guidelines. Although every effort will be made to celebrate your marriage on the date that you select, unavoidable conflicts can and do occur. It is wise to make sure of the availability of the church prior to making other arrangements. Weddings cannot be scheduled on a Friday or Saturday if it is a Holy Day. Marriages are typically not celebrated during Lent and Holy Week because of the solemn character of that time.

Wedding liturgies are scheduled for Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m. The time for a Friday liturgy is 4:00 p.m.

Due to the large size of our parish, only parishioners are permitted to be married at St. Bernard. To be considered a parishioner, you must be an active member of St. Bernard Parish for at least one year. The only exception is if the bride's or groom's parents or grandparents are members of the parish.

For the sake of clarity and definition, an "active registered member of St. Bernard Parish" is understood to be a practicing Catholic who has been registered, involved and contributing member of the parish for at least one year prior to the reservation of a date for a wedding.

On the day of the wedding, the wedding party, guests, and anyone else involved with the celebration may enter the church no sooner than one hour before the liturgy begins. If another wedding is taking place, please be respectful and observe a prayerful silence.

Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is scheduled for the evening before the wedding and is to last no longer than one hour. The rehearsal times are as follows:

For a Friday, 4:00 p.m. wedding, the rehearsal is Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

For a Saturday, 1:00 p.m. wedding, the rehearsal is Friday at 5:30 p.m.

For a Saturday, 3:00 p.m. wedding, the rehearsal is at 6:30 p.m.

If there is no 1:00 p.m. wedding, you may schedule your rehearsal for 5:30 p.m. Please check with your priest.

Please have all members of the wedding party meet in the church thirty minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin. We ask that everyone in the wedding party arrive on time.

Marriage Preparation

Church law requires that every couple participate in an approved pre-marriage preparation program. This includes Engaged Encounter, Diocesan Lectures Series, or any parish Pre-Cana Program. St. Bernard has a Pre-Cana program that occurs twice a year. Please call the rectory for details.

As part of your wedding preparation, the priests, deacons, coordinator of liturgy, wedding coordinators and music minister will host a meeting in the Spring. This meeting will give you the opportunity to become familiar with those who will be working with you, as well as St. Bernard's wedding procedures. You will also have the opportunity to have your questions answered.

The Bridal Party and Other Participants

Although there is no limit on the number of persons in the bridal party, there is to be only one best man and one maid/matron of honor. They are to be of adult age.

We strongly recommend that children in the bridal party be **at least five years of age**. Our experience has shown that children under 5 may be too young for the responsibility of being in the bridal party.

If you choose to have a ring bearer, we ask that the real rings be kept with the best man and fake rings on the pillow.

You may ask friends or relatives to serve as lectors. Lectors proclaim the Word of God. They should be comfortable with and proficient in public speaking. Lectors must be respectfully dressed. Low-cut shirts and dresses as well as short skirts and dresses are inappropriate for church.

Altar Servers

If you wish to request specific altar servers or if you are bringing your own please notify the rectory office at least one month before your wedding date. It is important to notify the office before servers are already chosen to serve on your wedding day.

If the Rite of Marriage occurs within the celebration of Mass, you may ask family or friends to bring up the bread and wine during the Preparation of the Gifts. Only two people are needed.

The bride and groom may wish to bring a basket of non-perishable goods for the poor. The food will go to our St. Martin de Porres ministry.

Flowers and Decorations

The following decorations are permitted in the church:

Pew bows are the only items permitted to be tied to the pews in the church. They are not to be attached with thumb tacks, wires, or tape. Candles and/or arches are not to be attached to the pews.

One large spray of flowers behind the altar is provided by St. Bernard Church. Additional flowers are not to be placed in the church except for use with pew bows.

No other items are to be brought into the church for decoration including candelabras or anything artificial. Please remember that at the time of the wedding liturgy, the church may already be decorated for the liturgical season or upcoming liturgical feast (i.e. Advent, Christmas, Easter etc.). Therefore, these decorations are not to be moved or taken down for the wedding liturgy. Please note that these liturgical seasons have specific colors that are used (i.e. purple for Lent and Advent, red for Pentecost and Passion Sunday, and white or gold for Christmas and Easter). Please consult the parish priest if you have any questions.

Aisle Runners

Due to safety issues, aisle runners are no longer permitted in the church.

Presentation of Flowers

The presentation of flowers to parents during the Sign of Peace is no longer permitted. Taking flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. **This is permitted only if both the bride and the groom have a strong and deep devotion to Our Lady.** Both the bride and groom must present the flowers to the image.

Unity Candle

The history of the unity candle is unclear but it appears that it was invented in the

1970s. Although some churches and clergy may allow its use, it **is not** permitted at St. Bernard because of the candle's secular origins and lack of Christian symbolism. While non-Judeo-Christian rituals are not necessarily without merit (and, indeed, some have made their way into Christian worship over the centuries), the appropriate place for the unity candle is outside the Christian liturgy, such as at the wedding reception. There are several powerful signs of unity that the liturgy offers us. Among them are the exchange of vows and rings between the bride and groom. The most powerful symbol of unity is the gift of the Eucharist, given to us by Christ. When the bride and groom partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, they are professing a oneness with Christ and his Church.

No other candles are to be used in the wedding liturgy other than the candles that are always present in the church and in the Sanctuary.

We encourage you to use the unity candle at your wedding reception as part of the prayer before the meal.

Rice, Confetti, Birdseed, Rose Petals, Balloons, Bagpipes, and Wagons

Please inform the bridal party and your guests that the throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, or any substance that will fall and scatter on the ground is not permitted inside or outside of the church. Balloons are not permitted to be released inside or outside of the church. Bubbles are permitted outside the church. Sparklers or fireworks are not permitted to be used on church property.

Bagpipes are only permitted outside of the church. Wagons are not permitted inside the church. No children or pets may be pulled down the aisle in a wagon.

Marriage License

You must secure a marriage license from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before your wedding day. A marriage license is typically valid for sixty days. To obtain a license, please visit your local county marriage license center. A license from any county will suffice. The license should be given to the priest-celebrant on the evening of the rehearsal. Please make sure all information on the license is correct. You cannot be married if the information on the license is incorrect.

Alcohol

Absolutely no alcohol is permitted in the church or on church grounds during the rehearsal or the wedding. Through the exchange of vows, the bride and groom administer the Sacrament of Marriage to each other. Therefore, they must both be sober and of sound mind and judgment in order for the marriage to be valid. As witnesses, everyone in the bridal party must also be sober.

Florists, Photographers, and Videographers

Please see the attached guidelines. It is the responsibility of the couple to give a copy of the guidelines to the florist, photographer and/or videographer. It is very important that your photographer and/or videographer read the guidelines. It is disrespectful as well as a distraction to the presider and assembly if the photographer or videographer does not follow our restrictions. **All signed agreements must be returned to the parish with the parish stipends and donations.**

Wedding Stipends and Donations

The following stipend should be sent directly to the rectory office to the attention of the Office Manager **one month** prior to the wedding:

\$500 suggested stipend for St. Bernard Church parishioners

\$600 suggested stipend for non-parishioners whose parents/grandparents are parishioners

Please refer to the music section for information on musicians' fees.

The following donations should be brought to the church at your wedding rehearsal

\$15 donation to each of the two altar servers.

Suggested monetary stipend to the priest celebrating the Wedding Liturgy is \$175. Please note that this is given directly to the priest and not to St. Bernard Church.

Music

All arrangement for music for your wedding must be completed **at least three months in advance** of the wedding.

Please complete the music selection process online at www.stbernardmusic.org/weddings. The username is **visitor** and the password is **music311**. Email questions to Chaz Bowers, Director of Music, at weddingmusic@stbpgh.org.

Readings and Prayers

The book Together for Life by Joseph M. Champlin contains an insert that is to be completed by the bride and groom. The book will assist you with choosing readings (the celebrant will choose the Gospel and the prayers). If you have any questions, please contact the parish priest.

Prayer for Reception

A prayer before meals for your reception is available upon request. This would also be an appropriate time to use the unity candle.

Guidelines for a Successful Wedding Day



The Wedding Coordinators are a volunteer group that represents the hospitality of the people of St. Bernard Parish. They will serve as your hosts on your wedding day. In anticipation of your special day, a member of the committee will contact you two weeks prior to the date of your wedding to discuss it with you and answer any questions. The Committee asks that the following guidelines be followed to ensure a smooth wedding day.

Rehearsals

Please be prompt for your rehearsal. Rehearsals will begin promptly at the assigned time.

Bride and Attendants

Please arrive forty-five minutes prior to the liturgy. Come one hour early if dressing at the church. Enter the church through the main entrance on Washington Road. Proceed to the bridal rooms by turning left at the back of the church, through the doors marked "Ladies Restroom", and going down the stairs. A bridal consultant will be present to tend to your needs and offer instructions. **Please do not remain in the limo until the wedding hour and remember that no alcohol may be consumed on parish property.**

Groom, Best Man, and Groomsmen

The groom, best man and groomsmen should arrive at the church forty-five minutes prior to the wedding. This allows time for boutonnieres to be pinned, wedding instructions to be reviewed, and rings to be checked. The groom and best man will then proceed to the sacristy on the right.

At five minutes to the hour, the bells will ring signaling that the procession is ready to begin. The groom and best man should then proceed to their places in the procession.

Please decide at the rehearsal which groomsmen will escort the grandmothers and mothers.

Parking

We ask that any vehicles used to transport the bridal party remain parked on Washington Road. No vehicles are permitted to park on the square in front of the church.

Wedding Planners

While you may employ a wedding planner or coordinator, we ask that while at St. Bernard Church, the bridal party please follow the directions of our Wedding Coordinators, who are trained to assist you before and after the liturgy.

Flowers

The florist or consultant will pin flowers. If there are a large number of people receiving flowers, please have a family member available to identify these individuals to the flower consultant. If, for some reason, someone does not receive their flowers, we will try, upon completion of the liturgy, and before picture taking, to provide the person with their flowers.

Seating

If you desire a special seating arrangement, please inform the consultant upon arriving and she will try to have everyone seated according to your wishes. If you are not sure about seating certain members of your family or extended family, please inform the bridal coordinators when you arrive. We are experienced in helping families with these situations. If you would like to discuss seating arrangements ahead of time, please contact a Wedding Committee member.

Worship Aids (programs) and Favors

Worship aids may be distributed by family members or friends. If guests are to receive favors (such as bells, bubbles, etc.), these should be distributed as guests leave the church. Please inform the consultant as to how many programs should be given out (one per person, one per couple). For a sample worship aid, please visit our website at www.stbernardchurchpgh.org under "Weddings." The link is near the bottom of the page. This program is a sample only (not a template). St. Bernard does not produce or supply wedding programs.

Wedding Etiquette

Cellular phones, pagers, etc. are to be turned off upon entering the church.

Water bottles are not to be displayed while ushering guests. You may keep water bottles, if necessary, at the top of the steps where the wedding coordinator will be standing. We suggest you bring these items only if it is an extremely warm day.

Please remember that **liquor is not permitted anywhere** on the premises.

Taking Pictures Outside After the Wedding

You are welcome to take pictures outside on church grounds after the wedding. However, due to the 5:00 p.m. Saturday evening Mass, we ask that any vehicles be moved from the front of the church to the back parking lot by 4:30 p.m. Also, please be mindful of the volume of conversation being held outside during Mass.

Change of Name, Address, Phone Number, etc.

Please be sure that the parish has your updated contact information. Your information is not automatically updated. It is the responsibility of the newly married couple to inform the parish that they wish to change the information on file. If you should move following your marriage liturgy, please be sure to register at the parish where you reside.

We hope that your wedding at St. Bernard will be very special and memorable. To help preserve your special memories, we do allow photography and videography both during and after the wedding liturgy. In order to protect the dignity of the Sacrament and to maintain a prayerful focus on the liturgy, we do place limits on what a photographer/videographer may do in our church. Also, due to time constraints caused by the busy schedule of our church, we limit the time permitted after the wedding liturgy to no more than twenty minutes. Please share these guidelines with your photographer/videographer. After they have reviewed our guidelines and signed them, please return a signed copy to us.

Please share these above guidelines with your florist also. After they have reviewed our guidelines and signed them, please return a copy to us

Wedding Guidelines for Photographer /Videographer/Florist in St. Bernard Church, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania

You have been asked to serve *as a photographer or videographer for a wedding at St. Bernard Church*. We trust that, as a professional, you will be able to complete your job within our guidelines and restrictions for photography and videography in our church. We also trust that, as a professional, you will respect that our requirements intend to protect the dignity and prayerfulness of our wedding liturgies.

If, during or after the wedding for which you have been contracted, you choose not to abide by our guidelines, we may find it necessary to prohibit you from any future professional work as a photographer or videographer at St. Bernard Church.

Please review our guidelines carefully. Complete all information, sign where indicated, and have the engaged couple return your signed original to us. You should keep a copy for your records. **NO DRONES ARE PERMITTED ON THE PREMESIS AT ANY TIME!**

1. During the wedding, all photography, still or moving, is to be done only from the side aisles or in the rear half of the center aisle (behind the break) in the church. Do not move across the front of the church. Only the priest and the wedding party may enter the sanctuary (the area inside the communion rail) during the wedding. No photographer or videographer is permitted in the balcony.
2. During the wedding, tripods may only be stationed in front of the seating areas to the extreme right and left in the front of the church. In no way are tripods permitted to block access to the center or side aisles nor across the break of the church.
3. After the wedding, pictures may be taken in the sanctuary but none of the sanctuary furniture may be moved.
4. After the wedding, twenty minutes is permitted for photography in the church.

Regardless of the length of the wedding liturgy, all photography must be finished thirty minutes before the next liturgy is scheduled in the church.

5. The priest will not wear any additional microphones, nor may they be added to the altar, ambo, etc.
6. Should any equipment from a videographer cause audio interference with the church's sound system, it will need to be turned off.

Wedding Couple: _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____ Officiating Priest: _____

Photographer/Videographer acknowledgement (Please read entire guidelines and items 1-6):

I have reviewed and will abide by these guidelines (Please Sign): _____

Printed name of photographer/videographer:

Name, address and phone number of studio: _____

Florist acknowledgement (Please read entire guidelines):

I have reviewed and will abide by these guidelines (Please Sign): _____

Printed name of florist:

Name, address and phone number of florist: _____