

Sacrament of Marriage Guidelines



Saint Aloysius Parish

223 Beech Street

Pottstown, PA 19464

610-326-5877

www.saintaloyusius.net

*There in the end three things that last:
faith, hope and love, and
the greatest of these is love..
1 Corinthians 13:13*

Wedding Guidelines

The faith family of Saint Aloysius Parish congratulates you and wishes you many blessings as you prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is with a deep awareness of the richness of a happy marriage that we encourage you to prepare yourselves as fully as possible for the celebration of this Sacrament.

With this goal in mind we present to you the guidelines for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony at Saint Aloysius Church. We hope that the information in this booklet will be useful to you as you prepare for this important step in your lives.

Contact Information:

*Parish Office
610-326-5877*

***Rev. Joseph L. Maloney, Pastor
Rev. Wesly Taveras, Parochial Vicar
Deacon George Harmansky***

***Cathy Remick, Administrative Assistant
Remick@saintaloyusius.net***

Marriage as a Sacrament

A sacrament is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Every sacrament brings us into contact with the saving activity of the Lord. In every sacrament, we encounter the dying and rising of Jesus.

The ministers of the sacrament of marriage are the bride and groom. When two baptized persons exchange wedding vows, they share in the life of Christ that they have received in baptism. The ministers of marriage extend the Lord's presence to each other and become a sign of the Lord's presence to others.

Faith Commitment

Since Christ is the center of Christian marriage, the bride and groom should seriously review their relationship with the Lord. They should show signs of a positive commitment to Christ and should regularly participate in the parish celebration of Sunday Eucharist.



Preliminary Process

The policy of the *Archdiocese of Philadelphia* requires that engaged couples give their parish at **least six month notice** of their intent to marry. This is to avoid problems of times and dates and to provide adequate time for preparation. Wedding dates are often scheduled more than a year in advance.

Once you have met with Father Maloney or Deacon George Harmansky and your date ***has been confirmed*** you may begin planning.

Wedding Coordinator

The parish assigns a ***wedding coordinator*** to assist you with all your wedding liturgy plans. They will assist you along the way in planning your wedding liturgy. They will be present at both your rehearsal and on your wedding day to assist in making this a wonderful day for both the bride and the groom.

Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire

At this point you may have already met with either Father Maloney, Father Wesly or Deacon George Harmansky. You may have already set and confirmed your wedding date with them.

If not be sure to set your wedding date and confirm it soon. Most likely you have already completed the Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire.

If you have not taken this step please call [Cathy Remick](tel:610-326-5877) at 610-326-5877, Ext. 427 to schedule an appointment now. Father Maloney, Father Wesly or Deacon George will explain everything that you will need to do during your initial appointment.

Scheduling Your Marriage

While your marriage is one of the most important decisions of your life, we respectfully remind you that it is only *one part* of the life of our parish, so it is necessary for us to consider the parish schedule in approving a time and date for your wedding. With this in mind the following guidelines govern the celebration of marriage at Saint Aloysius Parish:

Wedding times

Friday evenings

Saturdays

10:00 AM, 12 Noon and 2:00 PM

****all wedding parties and guests must exit the church by 3:30 PM when Confessions begin.***

- Weddings are *not scheduled on Sunday.*

Visiting Clergy

Visiting Priests are welcome. If you are considering asking a visiting priest to preside at your wedding please inform the Parish Office and be certain to confirm your wedding date with the visiting Priest. The visiting Priest is to contact Father Maloney as a courtesy. Non-Catholic Christian Clergy may be permitted to participate in the ceremony if requested.

Rehearsals

Please do not make rehearsal dinner plans until you have secured your rehearsal time with your coordinator which they will secure on your behalf with the Parish Office.

Wedding Fees

The Church fee –

\$500.00 (*Parish Members*)

\$750.00 (*Someone who has no affiliation with St. Aloysius*)

A **non-refundable deposit** of \$250.00 to hold your wedding date is due two weeks from your appointment with the priest or deacon. This \$250.00 will be credited towards your church fee provided the wedding is not cancelled.

Wedding Day Late Start fee - \$100.00

A **\$100.00 fee** for being more than 5 minutes late on the day of the wedding is also due at the same time as the \$250.00 non-refundable deposit. If the wedding begins on time the \$100.00 fee will be refunded within the 2 weeks following the wedding date.

Wedding Coordinator fee - \$150.00

Organist fee - \$150.00

Cantor/Soloist fee - \$125.00

Altar Server stipend - \$10.00 / each (*cash*)

(*2 servers – Mass / 1 server – Ceremony*)

Church fee checks are to be made payable to Saint Aloysius Church. \$350 is due right within the first 2 weeks of scheduling. All other remaining fees are due 2 weeks prior to the wedding date. The Organist, Cantor and Wedding Coordinator checks should be made payable directly to them.

A gratuity for the Presider may be given directly to him.

Flowers

Flowers are optional but certainly appropriate. We request that you leave your Altar Flowers in church after your wedding Mass/Ceremony for Sunday's liturgy. If there are other weddings on the same day, the couples are encouraged to confer with each other and share the cost for common flowers.

Flowers or other items are never placed directly on the Altar.

Flower petals, rice, birdseed, etc is never permitted to be thrown inside or outside of the church before, during or after the wedding.

Releasing of balloons, doves, butterflies, etc. is not permitted.

Aisle runners are not permitted.

All of these things have proven to be a danger.

We ask that you inform your bridal party of these rules.

Pew Bows

Pew Bows/ Ribbons are permitted. Adhesive tape is strictly forbidden as it damages the pews. We ask that you use ***only 3M hooks*** to secure your bows.

Candles or Candelabras may never be attached to the pews or placed in the Sanctuary.

Candles

According to the directives from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia received from Rome, the Unity or Wedding Candle has been discontinued as part of the Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony therefore the Unity or Wedding Candle is no longer permitted here at Saint Aloysius Church. It would be appropriate to include the Unity or Wedding Candle as part of the rituals celebrated at the Reception.



Photographs/ Videos

We understand that photographs and videos are important to the wedding couple and their family. We ask that the church and ceremony be treated with respect. Capturing these memories should not be done at the expense of altering the solemnity of the ceremony.

The ceremony, including the procession, is not to be interrupted or delayed in any way. Photographs / Videos are permitted during the celebration within reason. Photographers / Videographers must be discreet in filming. They may never enter the Sanctuary or the Sacristy.

The use of a video camera is permitted. However, video cameras must be stationary and remain in the side aisle or in the choir loft.

Please do not block the view of the guest if at all possible, especially during the exchange of vows.

In a respectful, quiet manner photographs may be taken following the Ceremony. We ask that you be sure to **[be completed with pictures before 3:30 PM](#)** when confessions begin.

Please ask your photographer/ Videographer to consult with your wedding coordinator before the Ceremony begins.



Required Documents *for Marriage*

Baptismal Certificate

A Baptismal Certificate must be obtained from your baptizing church issued within six (6) months prior to the wedding for anyone not baptized at Saint Aloysius Church. Original certificates issued at the time of baptism cannot be accepted for marriage preparation. Non-Catholic Christians must also provide proof of their Baptism.

Affidavits of Freedom to Marry (Pre-Marriage Witness Testimony)

Couples will be required to submit two (2) affidavits testifying to their freedom to marry. These forms will be given and explained to the couple when they meet with Father Maloney, Father Francesco or Deacon George Harmansky to begin planning their wedding.

Previous Marriages

If a person has been married before it is necessary to provide the following: **Death certificate of former spouse* or * *Declaration of Nullity*.

Letter of Permission

If the bride / groom is not a registered member of Saint Aloysius Parish, they should request a letter of permission from their home parish to be married at Saint Aloysius Parish.

Pre-Nuptial Inquiry

This is an official record of statistical information and other pertinent material. This inquiry form is filled out with either Father Maloney or Deacon George Harmansky.

Civil Requirements

The Civil requirements to be married in the State of Pennsylvania are as follows:

Obtain a marriage license

A Marriage license may be obtained at any Court House in the State of Pennsylvania. The license is valid for only a sixty (60) day period after it has been issued.

Apply for your marriage license approximately one (1) month prior to your wedding date.

Montgomery County Courthouse

One Montgomery Plaza, 4th Flr., Norristown, PA 19404
610-278-3414

Berks County Courthouse

633 Court Street, 2nd Flr., Reading, PA 19601
610-478-6600

Chester County Courthouse

313 W. Market Street, West Chester, PA 19380
610-344-6000

Pre-Marital Instructions

Before a couple is married, it is required by the Archdiocese that they attend Pre-Marital Instructions. This is intended to assist couples in developing a solid foundation for growth and faithfulness in living out their sacrament. Since Catholics believe Christian marriage to be a very serious relationship of faithfulness, permanence and life-giving generosity; a decision to make this commitment requires sufficient reflection, discussion and responsible preparation.

Marriage & Family Life Preparation Programs

PRE-CANA

- The **Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia** offers Pre-Cana classes. This course offers, in addition to a theological approach to human sexuality, a virtue-based instruction in communication, conflict resolution and financial decision-making. There is a fee. These classes are held at regional centers in Philadelphia and surrounding areas. To learn more information and to register please visit :

www.archphila.org/evangelization/famlife/famlife.htm .

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

This program includes insightful presentations on married life, time for private reflection, and conversations in which the partners share ideas and feelings. The Engaged Encounter is also sponsored by the Archdiocese. Visit www.wwme-philly.org for more information and to register.



Planning the Liturgy

Please keep in mind that the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is first and foremost a liturgical celebration of the Catholic Church community.

All of the guidelines established for the Liturgy of the Church, as well as the Liturgical seasons, must be respected.

You will receive a book entitled, ***Together for Life***, to help you in making selections for your wedding liturgy.

You will choose the readings, Universal Prayer, etc. You will choose family members / friends to do the Scripture readings. These people must be old enough and capable of reading clearly. The readers should be given the readings in advance to practice. Readers should attend the rehearsal, *not to practice the readings*, but to know when to read and what to do.

The readers and others who will minister at/or during the Liturgy should be Catholic.

The liturgy preparation book ***includes*** a **worksheet** on which you will record your selections.

This sheet ***must*** be presented to the Wedding coordinator and to the Parish office prior to the time of rehearsal.



Preparing a Worship Aid

If you choose to prepare a booklet/program for your guests, please keep in mind the following:

- Certain spoken texts belong to particular ministers of the Liturgy.

There are prayers spoken only by the Presider, readings proclaimed by the reader, prayer petitions lead by another minister.

Therefore, it is not in the interests of good Liturgy to print these in a booklet / program.

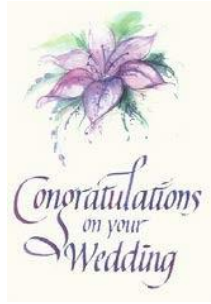
More importantly, these texts are also protected by copyright laws, and may not be reprinted without the permission of the owners.

- It is helpful for the guests to have the musical settings for the hymns and acclamations of the Liturgy.

Please note, however, that these are also protected by copyright laws and may not be reprinted without permission.

Permission may be obtained from the composer or the owner of a particular piece of music.

Please note that booklets/ programs with illegally reprinted music, texts, etc (i.e. without permission may never be distributed to the guests.)



Liturgical Music

The purpose of music at the Liturgy is to involve those present in the nature of the celebration and to enhance certain liturgical actions. All music for liturgical celebrations must follow the guidelines established by the Church.

Popular music and show tunes are never permitted in Church, before or during the Liturgy. Our parish music ministers are available to assist you in selecting music for your wedding.

- After your wedding is scheduled – you will need to contact the Church Coordinator of Music, Joan Frederick at 610-689-0957 (H), 610-301-6116 (C) or email joanienotes@gmail.com.
- Joan can provide you with the Sunday schedule of the Church Cantors (Soloist) from which you may choose one for your wedding. We recommend that you attend a Sunday Liturgy and listen to each before choosing.
- Included in your folder is a Music guideline sheet which includes contact information for the Cantors.
- Joan will also help you in choosing an Organist for your wedding day.
- Those who prefer to employ their own Organist / Soloist may do so after they have spoken with Joan Frederick. ***All music must be approved beforehand.***
- Please consult the music guideline sheet for further information.



Parish Registration

If you will be living in Saint Aloysius Parish, please come in as soon as possible to register as a married couple. Registration forms are located on our parish website at www.saintaloyusius.net or you may stop by the Parish Office to register.

Sound Mind and Body

Please note that if you are not of sound mind and body Father does have the ***right to refuse marriage***. Please arrive at the church in your best form and enjoy your day.

Wedding Prayer

For both of you at this joyous time
a warm and heartfelt prayer,
'God grant you many blessings
through the years that you will share.
And as He guides your footsteps
may He bless you from above
with joy and peace and happiness
through a marriage rich in love.

