

St. Callistus Wedding Policy

Congratulations! We share your happiness and we pray that God will bless you abundantly during your engagement and throughout your married life.

Your faith in the Lord and in His Church has led you to invite the Catholic Christian Community to share your joy in each other through the public sacramental exchange of your vows of love.

These pages will aid you in your preparations for the Sacrament of Marriage as it is celebrated here at St. Callistus Parish. This is an opportunity for everyone, your family, your friends and yourselves, to offer thanks and praise for God's love, which is always manifested in our lives and is now, in a special way, incarnate in the love and promise you two share.

A priest, by the virtue of his Sacrament of Holy Orders, has a vested interest, a stake in your marriage. It is a good, honest intention of helping you celebrate the belief that Christ is a central, vital part of our lives.

In this spirit, the Parish of St. Callistus provides the following guidelines. Our parish staff stands ready to be of any assistance as you make your plans during the coming months.

Before Your Wedding

Initial Contact

You should make arrangements with the priest at least six months before your proposed wedding day. This will allow plenty of time for you to prepare not just for your wedding celebration, which will last only a few hours, but for your marriage, which will last a lifetime.

Please do not make any arrangements until you have talked to the priest, and read over the guidelines in this booklet. It may not be possible to set a firm date for your wedding until a quantity of time after your preparations for marriage have begun.

Options for Wedding Day and Time

Weddings are scheduled with respect for the couples' wishes and the availability of the church building and the parish priest.

Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays at 11AM or 2:00PM in order to allow for sufficient time for Saturday confessions and evening Mass. The Church and parking lot need to be cleared before 4:00PM on Saturday. On occasion, a wedding may be celebrated on a Friday evening. This is by way of exception.

There are some times in the church year when the liturgical calendar discourages or prohibits the celebration of weddings, for example, Holy Days, or during the Season of Lent, which is a time of penance in the life of the church.

Documents Required

The Catholic Church requires a baptismal certificate for each baptized person entering into marriage. If you were baptized at St. Callistus, we have the record on file. If you were baptized in the Catholic Church at another parish, we will need a copy of your

baptismal record. Please write or call the church where you were baptized and ask them to send you a baptismal certificate. The baptismal certificate your family may have at home will not do. The certificate needs to be issued within the last six months.

If you have been previously married in the church, and are now entering a second marriage, we need either a death certificate for your first spouse or an annulment decree granted by the church.

If you are not Catholic, we will need to see your baptismal certificate so that we may copy the information from it. This certificate will be returned to you.

A pre-marriage inventory will be filled out in the rectory office with the priest. Depending upon circumstances, one or both parents of the bride or groom may be asked to complete witness forms.

You are responsible for obtaining a civil license from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for your marriage. This is required by state law. This license must be in the hands of the priest marrying you no later than the time of rehearsal.

The priest preparing you will give you further details about the preparation process.

Preparing for the Wedding Liturgy

Flowers

You should plan to make your own arrangements for flowers with the florist of your choice. If more than one wedding is scheduled for your date, you may arrange with the other couple to purchase flowers together.

Real flowers are always appropriate and preferred, especially for the altar arrangements. There is no need to over decorate. Please plan on leaving the flowers in church for the entire weekend. If plants, etc. are rented they should be removed as soon as possible after the wedding. There are some items available for decorating that the church owns that you may use.

Pictures – Videotaping

You are welcome to have a photographer take pictures or make a videotape during your wedding, as long as no distractions are caused during the liturgy. Pictures may be taken before the service begins and afterward no later than 4:00PM on Saturday.

To avoid distraction during the liturgy, professional videotaping must be stationary and only in the choir loft. Professional photographers may not use flash during the service and the sanctuary is off limits. Amateur picture taking is discouraged during the service.

Rice – Birdseed – Flower Petals – Confetti

Insurance regulations prohibit throwing of anything outside the church as you leave. Please ask those attending your wedding NOT to throw rice, birdseed, confetti, or anything in the church or anywhere on the church property. This custom originated with a superstition not befitting the celebration of Christian marriage.

Food and Drink

Please remember that your wedding is taking place in a Church. Proper dignity and respect would say that NO alcohol is permitted in the church, or outside before and after the wedding. No food is permitted in the church building either.

Order of Worship (Bulletins)

The priest has sample bulletins to help you with the proper preparation of a bulletin for your wedding day. The use of a bulletin is not necessary. The parish does not provide this service but can put you in contact with people who can assist you.

Aisle Runner

The church does not provide aisle runners. In considering your entrance procession, you will need to consult with the presiding priest. The aisle length at St. Callistus is 75 feet.

Unity Candle

Although the Unity Candle is not an official part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage, some couples request its use. If you choose to request the use of a Unity Candle, you will need to provide two 12" dinner tapers, white and holders. It is also best you provide the large center candle, however the church does have one available for use at the ceremony.

Rehearsal

The purpose of the rehearsal is to acquaint your wedding party with their duties and responsibilities during your wedding. It is a reasonable expectation that those involved in the rehearsal will be attentive and respectful of the nature on the moment. All directly involved with the ceremony should be present and on time. The time of the rehearsal will be arranged with the presiding priest. At the time of the rehearsal, please bring all fees: altar servers, musicians, etc. and your license. Because of other ministerial duties, the priest may be available for the rehearsal dinner or reception, but only by previous invitation.

Receiving Line

If you choose to have a receiving line at church you need to be aware of the time limits on your use of the church building that is for picture taking, and other church services.

Dressing of the Bridal Party

The Church Hall and restrooms are generally available for the female members of your Bridal party. No food, drink, or smoking is permitted in these areas. Please clean up all boxes, hangers, etc after the wedding before you leave for your reception. The church recommends you do NOT leave any of your valuables in these areas. Your consideration is expected.

Altar Servers

The church can provide altar servers for your wedding. If you have a relative who is an altar server at another parish, please tell the presiding priest. This server ought to be at the rehearsal.

Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers

The couple may have friends or family members who are lectors or Eucharistic ministers at their home parishes. They may be invited to serve at your wedding, provided they attend the wedding rehearsal so that they are familiar with the worship space and its demands.

Music, Musicians and Cantors

Because the wedding ceremony is a service of worship, each and every part of the ceremony should reflect an attitude of prayer. This includes the music that is chosen for the ceremony itself, as well as for the period while the congregation is waiting for the ceremony to begin. The Catholic Bishops of the United States have offered the suggestion that each decision about the choice or placement of a particular piece of music flow out of the following three judgements:

1. *The Liturgical judgement:* are the text and music suitable for the liturgy, and will it fit in this particular place in the service?
2. *The Musical Judgement:* whatever the musical idiom, traditional or contemporary selections, is it good music?
3. *The Pastoral Judgement:* will it help this congregation to pray?

If the answer to all three questions above is yes, then it should serve the purposes of worship well. Some music, although attractive, is not appropriate in a religious setting.

Good worship and liturgy also includes participation by the assembly. The cantor will ask the assembly to join in singing the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation. At a Mass, we will also sing the three acclamations during the Eucharistic Prayer, just as at Sunday Mass, as well as the Communion Song.

Please note that under no circumstances may taped or mechanically reproduced music be used.

Before making any choices of music or musicians the priest will place you in contact with persons who will assist you in making appropriate decisions regarding music and musicians.

Sometimes the Bride and Groom have a friend or relative who is a singer whom they desire to sing a solo at their wedding. This can add a personal touch to the ceremony and we will do our best to accommodate them.

Because full participation is our goal and expected, an experienced church cantor is necessary. You will be given information as to who these people are.

If you choose a soloist who is unfamiliar with the Catholic Liturgy, you will also need to choose a church cantor to lead in the other Liturgical parts.

Offering and Fees

There is no specified fee or stipend for the priest. If a free will offering is made, a token of appreciation would reflect the hours of time in preparation shared with you in anticipation for this day.

When altar servers are used, token fees not exceeding \$10.00 are suitable.

A musician fee; that is instrumentalists, cantor, soloist fees, is at least \$75.00 All fees can be distributed at the time of rehearsal.

Sacraments

A Catholic should be properly disposed to the Sacrament of Marriage by celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the wedding day, take time to do this at the regularly scheduled times at St Callistus or other area churches. If necessary, the priest will be willing and available for this purpose after the rehearsal.

As you begin your married life, it is important to identify and register at a parish where you will be regularly worshipping.