

# HOLY ANGELS CATHOLIC PARISH

WOODBURY, NJ

## MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

The staff and the people of Holy Angels Parish offer you their congratulations on your engagement and their best wishes for a joy-filled wedding day and a truly happy married life. Marriage is a gift of God instituted at creation and then elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament, giving special graces to the married couple to enable them to live their God-given vocation. Therefore, we are committed to doing everything possible for you so that you may fulfill your vocation in Christian joy and establish a family, a church of the home, where you can truly reflect Christ's love for His Church and the Church's love for Christ.

All of us who work with you during the marriage preparation process are eager to help you during the coming months. These guidelines have been prepared for you, the engaged couple, as you make arrangements for your wedding ceremony at St. Rose of Lima and prepare to express your love for each other in Christian marriage.

It is the belief of the Church that when two people who are Christian marry, something distinctive happens. The man and woman, who commit themselves to a life long covenant of love, celebrate a Sacrament. And, as the Scriptures tell us, "they are no longer two, but one flesh" The celebration of your marriage is "your day", but also something more. It is a day the Christian Community celebrates with you. Many people will gather to witness your exchange of vows and to express their support for you. Thus, your wedding is more than a private contract or a public exchange of promises. It is an act of worship in which you promise your love to each other and receive promises of support from God.

By choosing to have a Church wedding, you are acknowledging that your spiritual preparation for the marriage is particularly important. Your values, prayer life, belief in God and His commandments, and practice of your faith will be what support you throughout your marriage. Since you are asking the Church to witness your marriage, it is important that you are practicing your faith. The Church asks that those who marry here attend mass regularly (each Sunday), use the Sacrament of Penance (Confession), and prepare prayerfully for marriage. Many studies have been conducted on marriage preparation. These show that couples who have a truly Christian idea of marriage, are actively practicing their faith, are supporting their church, and pray together, have an extremely low divorce rate.

### DATE AND TIME OF YOUR WEDDING

Couples wishing to have their marriage celebrated at Holy Angels Parish must be registered and active in the parish or have parents registered and active in the parish. If the couple does not reside in Holy Angels Parish, a letter of permission must be obtained from their proper pastors. Only one wedding date may be penciled on the calendar and will be entered permanently once *freedom to marry* has been properly established.

Catholics are expected to be married within a Nuptial Mass. The Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage Outside of Mass may be appropriate, especially when a Catholic is marrying someone from another faith or if one or both of the engaged parties do not regularly practice their Catholic faith.

The date and time of a wedding should be arranged with a priest at least one year in advance, if possible. Because of other services, weddings cannot be scheduled before 11:00am or after 2:30pm on Saturdays. Friday evening is also a practical alternative. Photographers are permitted no more than 30 minutes after the ceremony for pictures, provided the wedding has started on time. Lateness can jeopardize the type of ceremony planned and prompt the substitution of a shorter liturgy.

There are dates during the calendar year on which the Sacrament of Marriage may NOT be celebrated at Holy Angels Parish: All Sundays, January 1, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Ascension Thursday, August 15, November 1, November 2, December 8, December 24 and December 25. The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage during Advent and Lent must take into account the liturgical prescriptions for these seasons. Flowers, rich decorations, and instrumental music may not be permitted.

A priest or deacon from another parish or diocese is welcome to preside at your wedding Mass or ceremony. If this is done, the officiating priest is responsible for the necessary marriage instructions, the premarital investigation, and all paperwork, including any and all dispensations. He should also conduct the

rehearsal. If you are requesting a priest from outside this parish to perform your wedding ceremony please have him write for proper delegation and state in the letter that you and he have agreed to comply with all wedding policies of Holy Angels Parish. If the visiting priest is not a priest or deacon in the State of New Jersey, he also needs a Letter of Suitability from his bishop. Once these letters are received, your wedding date and time will be confirmed.

A wedding rehearsal is mandatory for all celebrations. This will be scheduled during one of your initial meetings. There may be times when someone other than the celebrant conducts the rehearsal.

## **PREVIOUS MARRIAGES**

If one or both of you has/have been married before, you may be required to obtain a Church annulment. The Catholic Church recognizes the marriages of non-Catholics as valid. If your fiancée is not a Catholic, his or her previous marriage in another church or even a simple court ceremony may require a Catholic Church annulment otherwise known as a declaration of nullity. To determine the validity of a previous marriage, call the pastor's office. If an annulment is needed, you will be asked to make an appointment with the pastor to begin the annulment process. The granting of annulments generally takes at least one year in this diocese. No marriage date may be reserved at Holy Angels Parish until all previous marriages are resolved.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

The normal preparation process includes a number of formational meetings with the priest as well as participation in one of the diocesan sponsored preparation programs, often referred to as the Pre-Cana program. You will receive a pamphlet detailing the types of diocesan programs including their dates and times.

## **WHAT PAPERWORK IS REQUIRED?**

### **FOR CATHOLIC PERSONS:**

A newly issued Certificate of Baptism (dated not more than six months prior to the wedding date) from the Church in which you were baptized and a copy of your Confirmation certificate. If you were baptized here at Holy Angels Parish and are being married here at Holy Angels Parish you are still asked to obtain a copy of your Baptism certificate from the parish office.

### **FOR NON-CATHOLIC PERSONS:**

If a non-Catholic person is a baptized Christian, a photocopy of his or her Certificate of Baptism is required. In addition, two affidavits of freedom to marry are required (the celebrant will explain this during your initial meeting with you and provide the necessary documentation). If the non-Catholic person is at the same time un-baptized, affidavits of non-baptism and affidavits of freedom to marry are required as well.

### **ALL COUPLES:**

- Parental permission is required if either party has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- A certificate of completion from the Diocesan Marriage Preparation Program (this will be given to you at the end of your program).
- A civil marriage license (obtained from your city or township clerk or the clerk of Woodbury). This must be received by the celebrant at the rehearsal. Normally, you cannot obtain a marriage license until 72 hours (3 days) from the time application and once obtained the license is valid for 30 days. Do not let this go until the last minute. **You cannot be married at Holy Angels Parish without a civil marriage license.**

## THE MARRIAGE LITURGY – GENERAL POLICIES

- Reverence for God’s House and for the parish community is a priority at all times.
- The bridal party and guests are expected to dress appropriately and modestly. What might be considered acceptable at the reception may not be appropriate in church. Traditionally, women’s shoulders, back, etc. are to be covered and skirt lengths should fall below the knee.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the church for any reason or at any time except medical necessity.
- We do not permit the use of a bridal runner in church as it often becomes a hazard during the different processions in the wedding ceremony.
- The scattering of flower petals or any other substance in the church is not permitted.
- Nothing is to be affixed to the church pews with tape or other adhesives; flowers or bows may be held in place with rubber bands.
- Candlelight ceremonies are not permitted as candles in the assembly pose a hazard and melting wax is difficult to remove from the pews and floor.
- The Unity Candle is not part of the Roman Catholic Rite of Marriage. This ceremony may be more appropriate at your reception. Please discuss this with the priest presiding at your wedding.
- **Flower Girls/Ring Bearers must be at least six years old at the time of the wedding, no exceptions.**
- All females shall sit together on the Bride’s side; all males shall sit together on the Groom’s side.
- The throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, etc...is NOT PERMITTED due to slip and fall hazard it poses. In addition, balloon launches are not permitted due to their detrimental effect on the environment.
- **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE NEVER PERMITTED IN THE CHURCH OR ON THE CHURCH GROUNDS. THIS INCLUDES THE LIMOUSINE. THERE ARE TO BE NO TOASTS PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE FROM THE CHURCH PROPERTY.** The Woodbury Police Department will be contacted if alcohol is served on the church grounds.
- **THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR ILLEGAL DRUGS IS NOT PERMITTED PRIOR TO THE CEREMONY.** If a member of the bridal party or a guest at the wedding is intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance he or she will be asked to leave the church. If necessary, the police will be asked to remove them.

## WEDDING MUSIC

All music during the wedding Mass or ceremony is to be sacred in nature, reflecting the holiness of sacrament that is to take place, and must mirror the action that is occurring. Secular songs or “pop” songs may be permissible only as prelude before the Mass/service, and only after approval by the celebrant. Songs that speak of love in a physical or sensual manner are strictly not permitted. Please note that if the celebrant is unfamiliar with a requested song, it is the couple’s responsibility to provide sheet music of that song, for approval. If there is a song that has special meaning to a couple (“our song”), it is better presented at the wedding reception. There its importance can be noted and appreciated by all present. Your music should be chosen in consultation with the musicians available for weddings at Holy Angels Parish. Musicians should be contacted as soon as possible, so that they may accommodate your wedding in their schedules. We suggest that you discuss fees and preview your musicians before contracting with them. Other musicians may be employed but should be discussed with the person preparing you for the marriage. The fees for the Organist and Soloist and any other musicians are the responsibility of the couple to be married. These fees should be paid to the musicians at the time of the wedding.

## VIDEOS AND PHOTOS AT YOUR WEDDING

This day of celebration is so very important in your lives, and you will undoubtedly want video and/or pictures of your church ceremony. Holy Angels Parish has set up some guidelines that help maintain the sacredness of your ceremony, while providing ample opportunity for a beautiful recorded memory

- Anyone taking pictures or video during the ceremony, whether they be a photographer hired by you or a relative or friend, must exercise discretion and respect at all times.
- During the ceremony, no photographer or videographer is allowed in the sanctuary area (on or above the steps across the front of the church where the altar is located). Please instruct photographers to stay to the side of the aisle.
- Please also instruct your photographer or videographer to refrain from: stopping the bridal party walking in or out of the church, using spotlights, or running to capture a shot.

Many times, another wedding or event at Holy Angels Parish will immediately follow your wedding. For this reason, we ask that you quickly organize your group for post-ceremony pictures, and suggest that your receiving line take place at your reception rather than at the church. This will allow you the time you need for pictures without inconveniencing the next event scheduled at Holy Angels Parish.

It is important that you give a copy of these guidelines to your photographer and/or videographer. They are intended to help make your wedding a reverent, spiritual, joyful and memorable occasion, while still meeting your need to get great pictures of your day! Please be sure to give the name and address of your photographer and videographer to the parish priest who is assisting you with your wedding preparations.

### Rehearsal

The Rehearsal is normally scheduled the evening before the marriage. All those involved in the wedding (with the exception of musicians) must attend the rehearsal. In addition to being prompt and dressed properly, please ask your wedding party to be respectful and aware of the sacredness of the place of the rehearsal. It is a holy place where God is present. Remember to bring on the rehearsal night the following items: (1) Marriage License, if not previously submitted, (2) Programs to be distributed, if applicable, (3) Altar Server Offering, (4) Liturgy Planning sheet, if not previously submitted.

### THE ISSUE OF “LIVING TOGETHER”

In their document, Faithful to Each Other Forever, the United States Bishops wrote, “Premarital sexual intercourse and cohabitation (living together) without marriage are not identical issues or questions. One can exist without the other. Couples may engage in sexual intercourse without living together; other couples, particularly those sharing homes for financial reasons, may live together without having sexual intercourse. Premarital sexual intercourse violates an objective moral code that the Church officially teaches and is not, in our judgment, a recommended or wise way to prepare for marriage. Cohabitation, on the other hand, especially for those couples bound by affection or even contemplating marriage, establishes a situation in which avoidance of premarital sex becomes exceptionally difficult. Moreover, when a couple moves in together without exchanging formal nuptial vows and live externally as husband and wife, they create an occasion of scandal for others by weakening the sanctity of marriage itself. In addition...empirical data raise doubts about cohabitation as a healthy preparation for marital life. For these and other reasons we reject cohabitation that simulates marriage as appropriate behavior for Roman Catholics.” In light of the above statement of the United States Bishops, recent studies and personal counseling experiences, the priests of Holy Angels Parish strongly recommend that during the time of preparation couples live apart and refrain from sexual intercourse. Resistance to the value and wisdom of these recommendations, as well as, most importantly, being contrary to Divine Law, may jeopardize not only the possibility of your marriage taking place at Holy Angels Parish, but more importantly, the long term stability and well being of your marriage. This includes the giving of a false address to hide the fact of cohabitation. Experience shows that couples who refrain from sexual intercourse prior to marriage do not regret doing so and are more focused on the sacred aspect of marriage.

## STIPENDS AND FEES

**The wedding stipend is due to the parish office *four weeks* before the wedding date. Please put the name of the couple in the memo section of the check.**

In thanksgiving for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the couple is asked to present the Holy Angels Parish with a stipend in support of the ongoing mission of the Church (to put this into perspective, the Bridal Association of America estimates the average amount currently spent on weddings in our area to be over \$24,000, not including the honeymoon). The stipend goes directly to the parish to support the continuation of its mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If the amount requested is more than you can afford please do not worry, we can make any adjustments necessary; please talk to the priest helping to prepare you for your marriage.

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|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
|                      | 2021 Weddings |                          |
| Parishioners*: \$500 |               | Non-Parishioners: \$800  |
|                      | 2022 Weddings |                          |
| Parishioners*: \$500 |               | Non-Parishioners: \$800  |
|                      | 2022 Weddings |                          |
| Parishioners*: \$550 |               | Non-Parishioners: \$1000 |

***\*Parishioners are registered in parish for at least one year, regularly practicing the Faith and supporting the parish through the use of envelopes. Children of parishioners who no longer reside with their parents are not considered registered unless they have registered independently and fulfill the normal requirements.***

***If you wish also to make a personal offering to thank the priest or deacon who prepared you for the sacrament, you are welcome to do so privately.***

Altar Servers will be provided by the parish if desired. If you wish to request someone special, such as a relative, friend or neighbor, please make this known in advance. It is customary to give the servers an offering; the suggested amount is \$20 each.

**Other expenses must be taken care of between the couple and whomever they hire (e.g.: florist, organist, singer, etc.)**

## THE BANNES OF MARRIAGE

Couples marrying at Holy Angels Parish will have the announcement of their wedding published for three consecutive weekends in the parish bulletin. If you are a parishioner of Holy Angels Parish and are marrying in another Catholic parish, you may request that the banns be published in our bulletin. Please contact the parish office to arrange for this announcement.

## A PRIEST AT YOUR RECEPTION

Due to the busy schedule of services at Holy Angels Parish on weekends, our priests cannot promise to attend your reception. If you wish to invite the priest to attend, it is proper to send him a printed invitation with a reply card.

## A FINAL WORD

Know that our prayers are with you as you approach your wedding day. We appreciate your cooperation with these guidelines and look forward to assisting you in the months to come. May God continue to bless you all the days of your life.