

Most Holy Trinity Church
524 Mifflin Street
Huntingdon, PA 16652

GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1. The following guidelines are intended to assist the members of our community in properly preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage. These guidelines are a combination and summary of church (Canon) law, diocesan regulations, and parish policies and must be followed unless properly dispensed by the priest or bishop, whoever has proper jurisdiction.
2. Marriage is a sacrament because it is a sign of the presence of God in the love that two people share with one another. Marriage in the Church implies that love and presence will be shared with others in the faith community. Furthermore, in witnessing the exchange of marriage vows, a Christian community says, in effect, that “we will support you in your vows”. This can be done effectively only in the context of a living, sharing community. Therefore, we welcome those who share their faith and themselves regularly at Most Holy Trinity to prepare for and celebrate their wedding with us. It is extremely important to be an active and participating member of the faith community in which your marriage is to be celebrated and strengthened.
3. In order to properly conduct the pre-marital investigation and complete a marriage preparation program, couples who are contemplating marriage must contact the pastor at least nine months before they expect to be married (diocesan regulation). To contact the parish and the pastor one year before the marriage is ideal.
4. The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown requires engaged couples to do the following:
 - a. Contact your pastor at least nine months prior to the marriage date;
 - b. Attend a diocesan marriage preparation program and complete the “Foccus” pre-marital inventory;
 - c. Meet with the parish priest or the priest presiding at the marriage with you at least two additional times.

The diocesan marriage preparation programs which fulfill requirement ‘b’ above include:

- a. Engaged Encounter
- b. The Sponsor-Couple Program
- c. The Marriage Preparation Program (formerly called Pre-Cana Program)

Further information on these programs, their dates, times and locations are available from the parish office. Each engaged couple must complete at least one of the above programs before their marriage. **The date for your wedding cannot be confirmed until your marriage preparation program has been completed.**

5. The following documents will be required in order to complete the necessary documentation:
 - a. The baptismal certificate of the Catholic party(ies). (This is to be obtained from the church where the baptism took place and to be dated within six months of the marriage.) (If one of the parties is a baptized Christian but not a member of the Catholic Church, a photocopy of the baptismal information is sufficient.)
 - b. The Pre-Marital Investigation to be completed by each of the parties in the presence of the priest after the marriage preparation program has been completed.
 - c. A certificate or some proof of completion of the marriage preparation program described in item number four above.

- d. Testimony of Free Status to be completed for the non-Catholic party in the presence of a priest; i.e. two people (parents, other relatives, long-time friends) who can testify that the individual has (or has not) been baptized and is free to marry.
 - e. All dispensations and/or permissions (i.e. for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic) will be finalized and acquired by the pastor or the priest presiding at the wedding ceremony.
6. During the last meeting with the priest (usually the third), the wedding liturgy itself will be planned. You will have received a booklet from which you are to select the readings and prayers from the various options. You will be asked to complete a "Marriage Liturgy Planning" form. Normally, if both parties are Catholic, the wedding ceremony takes place in the context of Eucharist (Liturgy of the Word, the Rite of Marriage, the Liturgy of the Eucharist). Normally if one party is not Catholic, the wedding ceremony will take place in the context of the Liturgy of the Word only. If the Catholic party marrying a non-Catholic wishes to be married in the context of Eucharist, the non-Catholic party must make this request in writing to the bishop of the diocese (please consult the pastor about this process).
 7. The marriage license and traditional stipends for the parish, priest, organist, cantor and other ministers are due at the wedding rehearsal. The standard charge for the use of the church is:
 - \$100.00 for registered and contributing members of the parish;**
 - \$150.00 for non-registered and non-contributing members.**

This check should be payable to Most Holy Trinity Church. Checks for the stipends paid to the organist and cantor should be made payable directly to the individuals. Stipends for the priest, servers and other ministers are optional and should be made payable directly to those individuals.

8. To help you plan the music for your wedding liturgy, please contact John Bukowski at (814) 641-0104.
9. Because the Sacrament of Reconciliation is scheduled at 4:30 p.m. with a regular parish liturgy at 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays, weddings may not be scheduled later than 2:00 p.m. Please note that weddings may take place at regular Sunday liturgies or during the week.
10. Wedding rehearsals normally take place the evening before the wedding ceremony between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.
11. Photographers and videographers may **not** walk around the front of the church during the ceremony. Consult with the priest before the service to find a discreet location for videotaping. Photographers should also meet with the priest prior to the ceremony. No flash photography is permitted during the ceremony; flash photography is permitted during the processional and recessional only. Following the ceremony, you may take posed photos up until 4:00 p.m.

We want your wedding to be the unique, special, and holy event that it is. With your cooperation and the support of your faith community, it will be. God bless you in your marriage planning and preparation.

The Most Holy Trinity Parish Community