



ST ANTHONY OF PADUA

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Celebrating Marriage at St. Anthony Church

We congratulate you on your plans to be married! We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure your Catholic wedding is an authentic expression of the faith you profess and the vows you will exchange. Before your wedding is scheduled, we want to ensure you are aware of our expectations for Celebrating Marriage at St. Anthony Church and agree with them. Our policies are based on Canon (Church) Law and policies and practices of the Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. Our parish follows these policies for all marriages. We ask that you review this document in preparation of meeting with our pastor, Fr. Tom Donovan.

I. Catholic Marriage is a Sacrament

Marriage is a sacrament of the Catholic Church. Your request to be married at St. Anthony pre-supposes that you are an active, practicing Catholic. An active, practicing Catholic is a person who:

- is a registered member of St. Anthony Church or another Catholic Church, or the child of a registered parishioner while in college or in military service,
- participates in Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation,
- is confirmed and receives Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly,
- observes the Precepts of the Church, including required Lenten periods of fast and abstinence,
- strengthens and supports the Church locally and universally through 'stewardship' contributions of time, talent, and treasure,
- is committed to observing the marriage laws of the Church, including giving religious training to children, and
- in the case of a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic, that the non-Catholic party understands the responsibilities and obligations of the faith professed by the Catholic party, to include the effort to bring any children up in the practice of the faith.

It is not always appropriate to celebrate a Catholic ceremony when the practice of Catholic faith in one's everyday adult life is lacking. As a matter of honesty and integrity, candidates for marriage who are not practicing Catholics need to take definite, concrete steps to become fully-engaged and practicing Catholics. Our pastor will be happy to discuss this matter with you, as the situation applies.

II. Marriage Preparation requirements and expectations at St. Anthony Church

To be married at St. Anthony Church, you are agreeing to the following:

- An initial meeting with the pastor, to verify that there are no impediments to the marriage according to Church law (most notably, previous marriages which have not been resolved by death of a former spouse or a church declaration of nullity),
- completion of a Pre-Marital Inventory (usually "FOCCUS") and meeting with the pastor or deacon to discuss the results,
- participation and completion of an approved "pre-Cana" program or another approved pre-marital preparation program,
- meeting with the parish staff to obtain approval of wedding music and ceremony details,
- completing the Wedding Liturgy Planning Form and reviewing it with the pastor to finalize plans for the marriage ceremony,
- participating in the wedding rehearsal and ensuring all participants are present and punctual, (rehearsals take place at 6:00 pm *sharp* on Friday evening before a Saturday wedding.)
- presenting a valid marriage license from the Adams County clerk, (this can be obtained up to 60 days before the wedding),
- sharing relevant policies and expectations with florists, photographers, videographers, and members of your wedding party,
- completing other paperwork and fees as required,
- responding to requests by the pastor and parish staff on a timely basis, and
- reimbursing the parish for any damage or extraordinary cleaning resulting from your wedding.

The norm is that the pastor of St. Anthony Church will preside at your marriage celebration, or at his direction, the deacon assigned to the parish when Mass does not take place. We are happy to extend an official invitation and permission ("delegation") to other Catholic clergy to witness your vows and to celebrate your wedding, upon your request. However, even when another priest/deacon is delegated by the pastor to celebrate your wedding, all policies regarding wedding preparation and the use of St. Anthony Church remain in force.

III. Residency:

Catholics who live in the parish territorial boundaries or those who live outside the boundaries and are registered in the parish may be married at St. Anthony Church. Alumni status from St. Anthony or St. Dominic School does not in itself confer parish membership. Membership at St. Anthony Church is based on one's *bona fide* residence according to these norms of Church Law.

There are additional requirements if you live away from home (school, military service, or employment) and wish to be married at St. Anthony Church. In this case, you should have parents who are registered and active members of St. Anthony parish. Marriage preparation may take place at St. Anthony Church or in your local Catholic chaplaincy, depending on the availability and convenience of the parties involved. In any case, however, a personal meeting with the pastor of St. Anthony Church and both the prospective bride and groom is necessary to begin marriage preparations and to secure a date on the parish calendar.

High school or college graduates who are out of school, who live away from home, and who are employed are considered residents of the territorial parish where they live. If you have changed your residence in this way, you will be bound by the marriage preparation of the diocese and parish in which you reside. Your marriage may take place at St. Anthony only with the written permission of your own pastor where you live. You will normally need to complete the necessary marriage preparation process required in that parish. These permissions are important because they are *necessary for the very validity* of the marriage celebration to take place.

We are happy to assist you in marriage preparations for a celebration in the Quincy University Chapel, but parties need to be aware that the chapel has its own rules for weddings set down by Quincy University and by the pastor of St. Francis Solanus Church which must be observed.

IV. Fees and Honoraria:

The Church and all of its services are offered at no additional cost to parishioners in good standing who are living the Stewardship Way of Life. This presumes that parishioners are registered in the parish at the time they begin marriage preparations, that they have previously filled out an annual Stewardship Renewal Form, they attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and have a previous record of financial contributions to the parish.

For others who consider themselves parishioners but are either engaged in life in another local parish or are not otherwise engaged at St. Anthony's as full Stewardship Parishioners, St. Anthony Church requests a donation of \$300 to cover the many expenses incurred by the parish for hosting and preparing weddings. For non-parishioners, we ask \$500. This fee is payable by check to "St. Anthony Church" and should be brought to the parish office at the time of booking the wedding date. This fee can be modified or waived by the pastor in circumstances where there is a demonstrated need. Normally the pastor will ask as an alternative that the couple to consider a contribution of approximately 8-10% of the total expense of the wedding (to include expenses such as flowers, rings, 'the dress', the reception, music, and so on). Under no circumstances will anyone be denied the benefits of the Sacrament of Marriage due to an inability to make an offering.

The parish fee includes

- normal and customary custodial services from 11 am to 3 pm, (extra hours for extra-ordinary cleaning are billed at \$50/hr),
- use of church appointments, including musical instruments and church-owned decorations,
- and use of the church for up to two hours before the wedding and approximately one hour after the wedding (under any circumstance never to exceed 3:00 p.m. after Saturday weddings).

These fees do not cover costs of a keyboardist and other musicians, purchased flowers, labor for decorating the church or removing decorations afterwards, photography, a unity candle (if desired), reimbursement for damage or extra cleaning resulting from your wedding, or use of the parish facilities after the wedding for a reception (this may be contracted separately, depending on availability—see our parish secretary, Ava Fessler, in the parish office (222-5996) for more information).

Residential clergy are not allowed to charge for their services, however an honorarium or gratuity may be offered in a separate check made out in his name, or by cash. If the priest or deacon officiating at your wedding is not from the parish or is traveling, it is most appropriate to offer a gratuity of between \$50-200, along with mileage and travel (hotel) expenses. While a parish priest is usually unable to attend Saturday evening receptions due to Saturday evening Mass and other obligations in the parish, visiting clergy should receive invitations for hospitality while he is in town for the wedding.

If you intend to live in St. Anthony Parish after your wedding, we expect you to be registered with the parish and to work towards becoming full, participating Stewardship Parishioners, if you are not doing so already.

V. Respecting our Parish and Catholic Traditions:

As a liturgical event that brings the faith community together, your wedding is very important to the life of our parish. There are many practical matters to keep in mind that pertain to the celebration of your marriage at St. Anthony Church:

- The pastor of St. Anthony Church is the proper minister to assist with marriages in this parish and is responsible under Church law for all marriages performed in this church. Other Catholic priests or deacons in good standing officiate with the invitation of the pastor. Visiting clergy from outside the Diocese of Springfield, will be required to validate their credentials to the Office of the Vicar General at the Catholic Pastoral Center (a procedure most priests and deacons are familiar with).
- If a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic, the norm is that the marriage ceremony takes place during a Liturgy of the Word celebration (outside of Mass), presided over by a deacon or a priest. This liturgy typically includes an Entrance Procession, Liturgy of the Word, Rite of Marriage and Recessional. A Wedding celebration for two Catholics normally includes the Eucharist (Mass), which requires the ministry of a priest and may include a deacon.
- Flowers and other decorations are to be used in moderation and should not obscure the actions taking place in the Church.
- Aisle runners are prohibited because they present a safety hazard.
- Parish staff will work with you to plan music for your wedding. If there is to be an instrumentalist, we require that there also be present an appropriately-trained and prepared cantor to proclaim the psalm and lead congregational singing. The Catholic Church requires that only sacred music is used for liturgies. Favorite secular music is best reserved for use at a reception.
- Throwing rice, birdseed, and/or confetti or releasing balloons is not allowed, as this is also a safety hazard.
- Possession and service of alcohol is STRICTLY PROHIBITED, with the exclusive exception of **after** the wedding when the hall is rented for a reception AND required dram-shop insurance, liquor licenses, and security personnel are present. In no case should 'tailgating' take place in our parking lot or on our property. If the bride or groom is seen consuming any alcoholic beverage or intoxicating substance, or if they appear to be intoxicated in the judgment of the pastor and/or the minister who is to solemnize the marriage, the celebration CAN NOT and WILL NOT TAKE PLACE. Even minimal intoxication of either party to a marriage may call into question the consent which is required for a valid marriage. The parish and its staff cannot and will not be responsible for any damages as a result of or consequence to the cancellation of a wedding under these circumstances. If a wedding attendant or usher is witnessed drinking or appears intoxicated at the time of the wedding, they cannot be allowed to serve as a witness or usher.

VI. Seasons for Catholic Celebrations of Marriage and Times at St. Anthony Church

- Outdoor or off-site weddings are not permitted in Church law in recognition of the public and ecclesial nature of Catholic marriage. Exceptions are only granted by written permission of the diocesan bishop. You are welcomed to write Bishop Paprocki to ask for an exception. Please note that he is not known to have granted such permissions in the past.
- The Catholic Church discourages, but does not forbid, weddings during Lent and Advent. When a wedding is scheduled on one of these days, there are particular requirements for the liturgy and certain restrictions on church decoration and music which must be followed. Weddings scheduled on Holy Days of Obligation (Jan 1, Aug 15, Nov 1, Dec 8) or on All Soul's Day (Nov 2) also have particular liturgical requirements which also profoundly impact wedding celebrations. Please consult with the pastor before considering any of these dates.
- Because of the many activities that are often scheduled on the weekends at St. Anthony Church, only one wedding can comfortably be accommodated each weekend. In addition to Saturday afternoons, Friday evening or Sunday afternoon weddings are possible and might provide greater leisure and flexibility (as well as, perhaps, substantial savings) to the couple. Saturday weddings may be scheduled only at 1 p.m. Couples are welcome to arrive at the church up to two hours before the wedding and to re-main in the church for photography until 3:00 p.m. The church must be vacated by 3:00 p.m. because of our Saturday confession and Mass schedule. With regret, no exceptions can be made.
- Couples are urged to avoid weekends of the St. Dominic Junefest, the St. Anthony Picnic, and other major parish events.
- Because of the possibility of funerals or other events in the Church, we cannot guarantee that the Church will be available to be decorated or used for photography before 11 am on the day of a Saturday wedding. When there are no unusual scheduling conflicts, typically the Church can be made available for these activities earlier—even the night before. Because of the unpredictable nature of funerals, final clearance to use the Church before 11 am can only be given by calling the parish office (222-5996) on Thursday before a Saturday wedding.
- The rehearsal for a Saturday wedding will normally take place promptly at 6 p.m. the Friday before the wedding. All participants (the entire wedding party and any liturgical ministers such as lectors) should be on time. The rehearsal will take 40-45 minutes. It is normally not necessary or desirable that musicians be present for the rehearsal.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available after the rehearsal for the wedding party and their families. It is earnestly recommended that couples enter this (as with any sacrament) in a state of grace.

VII. Previous Marriages

- If either party has previously attempted marriage (whether ‘in church’ or not), then the Church normally presumes that this previous union is legitimate and binding—even if a civil divorce has been sought and awarded. Unless a former spouse has died or unless the Church has determined that the previous attempt(s) at marriage were “invalid” due to some substantial defect in form or intention, subsequent attempts at marriage in the Church are simply not possible.
- Before a date can be scheduled for a wedding at St. Anthony Church, it is necessary to demonstrate that the parties involved are ‘free to marry’. If either party has been previously married, it will be necessary to produce documentation (a death certificate of a former spouse or a ‘declaration of nullity’ from the Church) to allow a marriage to be scheduled.
- If there has been a previous attempt at marriage, the pastoral staff at St. Anthony are able to assist you in the examination of previous marriage(s) to determine if a ‘declaration of nullity’ is possible. This can be a lengthy process (sometimes 6-18 months or longer) which should be started at the earliest possible opportunity if you are hoping to be married in this or any Catholic Church in the near future. Weddings cannot be booked/scheduled until this documentation is ‘in hand’.

VIII. Convalidation and Sanation of Merely Civil Marriages

If a couple is married only civilly to each other, it is possible to have the marriage ‘blessed’ by the Church through a *convalidation* (public restatement of vows) or by *sanation* (a documentary procedure which recognizes the marriage in the Church, but without a public ceremony). In this case, the pastor will assist couples in this situation to determine the most appropriate course of action.

IX. Cohabitation (living together before marriage)

Cohabitation is major problem affecting all persons preparing for marriage—a problem that does not get discussed openly or often enough. The Catholic Church does not condone cohabitation. Cohabitation presents very difficult problems for the Church when couples ask to make wedding arrangements, in that it is very difficult to discern whether a cohabiting couple truly have the *freedom* to enter into a *Catholic marriage*, as envisioned by the Church. As a Church, we must be realistic. Many young couples living together present themselves at the parish office with music lists, *The Dress*, and a menu for the reception all planned. Many co-habiting couples want to “make right” that which is, perhaps, “not all right” yet. Many couples cohabit for social or economic reasons. Indeed, if children have already been born to the union, then it is often necessary for the unmarried parents to live together for the sake of their child(ren). In any case, unmarried couples are called to live *chastely* until the time of sacramental marriage— with a chastity that is not only physical, but also emotional and spiritual, so that they give a good Christian example to family and friends and the entire Christian community, and so that they may prepare for life-long marriage (not just a wedding) with greater freedom and the motivation of pure love.

The *overwhelming evidence* from sociological research indicates that *all* cohabitating couples (*whether sexually active or not*) who attempt marriage are at a *significant disadvantage* to their non-cohabiting peers, not only for the likelihood of their marriage *lasting for life*, but also for the *total satisfaction* gained out of their marital union. The Church wants to avoid those factors which undermine the permanence and dignity of marriage.

For the good of couples presenting themselves for marriage, for the good of the Church, for the avoidance of dishonesty, and for the integrity of the Sacrament of Marriage and the Eucharist, we have strived to develop a coherent and workable strategy to deal with this issue. Therefore:

- *Couples who live together before marriage (whether sexually active or not) are urged to separate and live separately (separate addresses and no ‘overnights’) until reception of the Sacrament. At all times, pre-marital chastity is appropriate and expected.*
- *Those couples who are unwilling or are unable to separate (most notably in the case that they already have children) may be married in the Church, but the most appropriate way to celebrate this marriage would be through a low-key celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and the Exchange of Vows (not a Mass). This celebration should be for immediate family and necessary witnesses, where elaborate ceremonies are avoided. This service thus formally recognizes and remedies an informal (and potentially scandalous) arrangement that is already occurring, namely the cohabitation (living together, often described as ‘living in sin’) of the bride and groom. A simple Evening ceremony would be very appropriate in this circumstance.*
- *All couples, but especially cohabiting couples, are reminded of the importance of entering the Sacrament of Marriage in the “State of Grace”. If there are particular problems with sin against the virtues of chastity or temperance or modesty (or for that matter, any other sin), Catholics are urged to bring these to his or her confessor in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially before receiving Holy Communion or the Sacrament of Marriage itself.*
- *This rule cannot anticipate the complications of every individual situation, and for some approaching marriage this may be a first effort to bring one’s life and relationship in greater conformity to the ideals of the Catholic Church, thus the pastor will make every effort to accommodate those who are making a good-faith effort to honor the laws of the Church in these matters.*