St. Anthony of Padua Parish

259 Forest Ave. Ambler, PA. 19002

215-646-4742 www.saintanthonyparish.org

Dear Engaged Couple,

You have made one of the most significant decisions of your lives as you choose to enter into marriage with each other. The parishioners here at Saint Anthony's join with me in offering our congratulations and support to you both. From the perspective of the Catholic faith, we believe that Christian marriage is a sacrament and that the Lord Jesus is present in your lives.

This is truly an exciting time in your lives and often a hectic one too. Over the next several months you will be doing a great deal of planning for the events of your wedding day. We at Saint Anthony's want to be of help to you, especially as you plan the actual Marriage Ceremony. It is with that in mind that the information below is provided to you.

Take your time and read through what is here. It is helpful if both of you take the time to become familiar with all the various details associated with the church celebration of your wedding day. You may have some questions along the way. Feel free to call the Parish Center to speak with a staff member about things which are unclear or questions that have recently arisen.

May the Lord who brought you into each other's lives be your source of guidance and enlightenment throughout these days of preparation.

In the Peace of Christ,

Fr. Jim

Father James Mc Guinn
Pastor

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Because of the seriousness of the step you are about to take, we encourage you to increase your personal prayer to the Lord for the success of your marriage. You may want to pray with each other for this special grace from the Lord. Do not hesitate to ask other family members and friends to pray for you throughout this period of preparation. It is truly beneficial.

For Catholics, immediately prior to your marriage day we encourage you to make a good confession and receive absolution. It is a genuine blessing to be able to leave behind any past sins of your life, and enter renewed and spiritually refreshed into this new sacrament.

CONFIRMING THE WEDDING DATE AND TIME

Both spouses-to-be must be present to enter the date into the Parish Wedding Calendar. No dates will be given or confirmed over the telephone or via email. The latest time we can offer you a Saturday wedding is 2:30 PM. For practical reasons we must allow 2 hours between weddings. Friday evening weddings are allowed if other parish events are not scheduled on that day or at that time. As a general policy, because of already existing commitments on Sundays throughout the year, weddings will not be scheduled on Sunday.

Each parish in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is required to provide a Six-Month Preparation Time for marriages. This means that there must be at least six months from the time of the initial contact with the parish and the actual date of the wedding. This policy is designed to ensure that each couple will have the appropriate amount of time to fulfill the necessary preparations. It also allows the couple time to procure the necessary documentation and undergo the approved series of instruction prior to the wedding.

NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

Providing the following documents is standard operating procedure for marriages today. There are certain documents the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania wants you to produce and certain documents that the Church wants you to produce.

1. Baptismal Certificate.

If baptized, each person must provide a Baptismal Certificate. For Catholics, this must be a certificate newly issued by the parish where your baptism took place.

To obtain a newly issued Baptismal Certificate, simply call the parish where you were baptized, inform them that you are getting married and ask them to provide a new Baptismal Certificate with any notations. For those baptized in another Christian denomination simply call the church and inform them that you are getting married and ask them to provide a new baptismal certificate.

2. Affidavits of Freedom to Marry.

The Church shares a concern with the Civil Government when it comes to marriage, namely that both parties are free to enter into the marriage. On the Marriage License issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania you will each be asked to indicate whether you have ever been married before. If either of you have been married before you must produce to the Commonwealth proof that the marriage ended.

It is similar to Church procedures, if either of you have been married before you must provide civil proof that the marriage has ended. In addition, you must also provide canonical proof that you are now free in the eyes of the Church to enter into this marriage. An Annulment Decree of Nullity or an Annulment Decree of a Lack of Form is required.

In addition, each person will be asked to have two witnesses fill out Affidavits (provided by Saint Anthony's) indicating that you are free to marry. These documents may be signed by family members or others who can attest that you have not been married before.

PRE-MARITAL INSTRUCTIONS

As with so many other Christian Churches, the Roman Catholic Church Marriage Policy presently mandates that there be a period of instruction prior to the reception of marriage. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia offers the course the *Joy-filled Marriage* program, which is a thorough, enjoyable, and comprehensive program which will discuss practical "life skills" and the sacramentality of marriage.

The purpose of Marriage Preparation is to introduce you to the theology behind the sacrament and give you practical advice and teaching that will equip you for your life journey together.

For more information please visit - https://phillycatholiclife.org/marriage-prep-classes/. Please note that these lists do change and not all are listed. You may want to check with your Parish first. If you are interested in online courses please visit - phillycatholicmarriageprep.com.

Upon completion of the Instruction classes, you will receive a Certificate of Attendance. Please supply that to the staff member at the time of the Premarital Interview.

INTER-DENOMINATIONAL MARRIAGES

If you are entering into an Inter-denominational marriage (that is, between a Roman Catholic and a member of another Christian denomination such as Orthodox or Protestant), you may want to consider involving the pastor or minister of the other Christian denomination in the Marriage Ceremony. If you would like to do this, please supply the name and phone number of the pastor you would like to invite.

MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS

Musical arrangements for your wedding are handled by the parish Music Director. The Director will discuss with you all the music options, policies and procedures from the Archdiocese and the parish. Accompanying this Information Sheet are a few pages from the Music Director. Please read all of the information and then contact directly.

FLOWERS---PEW MARKERS---UNITY CANDLE

You are not required to supply floral arrangements, but many couples prefer to do so to enhance the appearance of the sanctuary. Flowers may be placed on either side of the tabernacle or in front of the altar. Flowers may be placed at other places in the sanctuary but in ways that will not hinder or impede the movement of the bridal party members. Bouquets for presentation to the Blessed Mother or roses for presentation to mothers at the sign of peace are provided by your florist. Please let us know if you plan to leave your flowers or take then with you.

Saint Anthony's does allow the use of the Unity Candle. The parish will supply one if you prefer if you do not have one.

Sometimes there is a desire to use bows as pew markers. This is allowed but the use of adhesive to attach the bows to the pews is not. It removes the finish from the pews. It is easy enough to attach the bows to a loop that fits easily over the end of the pews or some string that may be tied in loop fashion.

PHOTOGRAPHERS---VIDEOGRAPHERS

Please inform your photographer and videographer to check in with the Celebrant in the sacristy before the wedding celebration begins. During the ceremony we allow the use of flash with the photography and lights with the videotaping. Photographic equipment and Videotaping equipment may be used throughout the entire wedding ceremony. We ask that those using them remain outside the sanctuary area (where the steps begin) and try to be as unobtrusive as possible. We do allow set shots in the sanctuary area after the ceremony has been completed. Please convey this information to your professionals as early as possible.

WEDDING REHEARSAL DATE AND TIME

Approximately three months before the date for the Wedding, the couple and the staff member will meet to finish up all the necessary paperwork and go over all the details of the wedding ceremony itself. At that time, the date and time for the rehearsal will be set.

At the time of the rehearsal the bride and groom should bring with them the Marriage License, the fees for the church, organist, soloist, sexton, servers, and the selection sheet indicating readings and prayers.

TIMELINESS

We ask that you make every effort to be on time for your rehearsal and for the wedding itself. We ask you to encourage all those involved with the wedding to be on time as well.

SOME PERSONAL SAFETY CONCERNS

For safety and liability reasons we are limited in some of the things that can be done at weddings. For example, white runners for the center aisle are not permitted. We find that their use can actually become hazardous and slippery. For similar reasons we do not allow the strewing of rose petals or the like by Flower Girls during the entrance procession of the wedding party.

After the ceremony has ended we ask you to remind your guests that the throwing of rice, birdseed or confetti is not allowed. The ringing of small bells or the use of containers with bubble soap are both allowed. You may choose to designate a family member or friend to ring the church bell outside the Narthex.

WEDDING PARTY DECORUM

Your marriage is a truly sacred moment in your lives. We ask that you remind your family, friends and guests to conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate while in the Church and on parish grounds. Boisterous activity or the use of alcohol are not allowed at the time of the rehearsal or the wedding itself, either beforehand or afterwards. Thank you for your cooperation.