Guidelines for celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at Mount Saint Peter Parish

Please follow this step-by-step guide as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage to make sure that no important details are overlooked.

- **SCHEDULING:**
  - Parishioners (and their adult children) who are registered and active for at least twelve months may schedule a wedding at Mount Saint Peter Parish. The initial contact with the Parish Office should take place at least one year prior to the date requested to celebrate the Sacrament.
  - *Non-parishioners* and parishioners who have been registered and active in the parish for less than twelve months may schedule a wedding no sooner than six months prior to their intended date and only if that date is not already booked.
  - The date will be confirmed at the initial meeting with the Pastor of the parish.

- **MEETING WITH THE PASTOR:**
  - At the Wedding Workshop in January, the pastor will arrange for a separate meeting time with the couple.
    At this meeting:
  - The Pastor will verify the couple's freedom to marry.
  - The wedding date will be confirmed.
  - You will be informed of all necessary documents that must be provided well in advance of your wedding day.
  - You will receive information concerning the required marriage preparation course.
  - You will receive information concerning the required Wedding Workshop for all couples planning a wedding at Mount Saint Peter Church.
  - [If you would like permission for another priest to officiate at your wedding, you may share that request with the Pastor at this initial meeting. The visiting priest will be required to read, agree to follow and sign the *Visiting Clergy Form*, in order to assure that the wedding policies of the diocese and parish will be followed.]

- **REQUIRED MARRIAGE PREPARATION**
  - Register and attend one of the Marriage Preparation Programs (The Pastor will present the options available at your first meeting with him).
  - Register and attend the parish Wedding Workshop in January to take the FOCCUS survey and meet with the parish musicians, wedding coordinators and other staff.
  - Schedule a second meeting with the Pastor to review the FOCCUS survey and to return form with readings and procession choices, and finalize the details for the liturgy.

- **FINALIZE:**
  - Schedule your wedding rehearsal.
  - Apply for a Pennsylvania marriage license.
  - Complete and return registration and change of address form.

WEDDING POLICIES
for
MOUNT SAINT PETER CHURCH

The canonical requirements of the Church governing the Sacrament of Marriage are the same in all parishes of the Diocese of Greensburg. The way parishes approach the celebration may differ from parish to parish. We have established these policies at Mount Saint Peter Parish to ensure a reverent and memorable day for you and your guests. These policies have been designed to help you have a beautiful and prayerful celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. Please know that the clergy and staff of the parish are here to help you with any concerns or questions that you may have.

1. WHERE SHOULD THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE BE CELEBRATED?

The proper place for celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage is the parish church. In the Roman Catholic Church, the wedding liturgy is usually celebrated in the parish of the bride. The wedding liturgy may also take place in the parish of the groom.

When one of the parties is not Catholic, the Catholic partner may be granted permission for the wedding to take place in the non-Catholic's church if desired. This permission is granted by the diocesan bishop on an individual basis via the parish priest.

To marry without proper dispensation or permission makes the marriage invalid. When a Catholic, with proper dispensation, is married in a non-Catholic church, it is not necessary for the priest to be present. The priest may be invited to participate in the ceremony, and may do so on a limited basis.

In the Diocese of Greensburg, the wedding is not permitted in secular places such as gardens or hotel settings.

2. HOW OLD MUST A PERSON BE FOR MARRIAGE?

Both parties must be at least 18 years old.

3. HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE COUPLE HAVE TO MEET WITH THE PRIEST?

A minimum of two personal visits is required to complete the required paperwork and to review the details of the liturgy. The priest may want to spend more time with the couple in preparation if he feels that there is a need.

4. WHAT TIME OF THE DAY MAY THE WEDDING LITURGY BE CELEBRATED?

- A wedding liturgy may be celebrated on Saturday at 2:00 PM.
- Friday weddings may be scheduled between 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM.
- When planning a winter wedding, check with the Pastor for adjusted time availability.
- Rehearsals are usually scheduled at 6:00 PM and last for one hour. They are to be scheduled with the Pastor and are usually held the evening before the wedding unless there is a Friday wedding scheduled. In that event, the rehearsal will be scheduled according to the parish availability.

5. WHAT ABOUT THE MUSIC FOR OUR WEDDING?

The Director of Music Ministry, Mr. Thomas Octave, will preview musical options at the Wedding Planning Workshop that will be held annually at Mt. St. Peter Church. You will have an opportunity to meet with the Music Director who will help you to choose music that will enhance your wedding liturgy. All couples are **required** to attend the Liturgy Planning Workshop that is offered at the church. If you are participating in Marriage Preparation elsewhere, **you must still attend this workshop**. **All music selections must be finalized and turned in at the end of the session**. The date for the **Wedding Planning Workshop** for **2010** is:

Saturday, January 9, 2010 from 1 - 4 PM

6. WHAT ABOUT ALTAR DECORATIONS?

Fresh flowers are always appropriate; however, they are not required. Artificial flowers are not permitted. If the couple chooses to have flowers, they are to be left in the church following the wedding. They are offered in honor of the living presence of our Lord and may not be removed by the wedding guests.

There are certain times of the year when the church is decorated for the liturgical season. These decorations may not be removed for a wedding. More details about seasonal decorations will be provided at the Wedding Planning Workshop.

7. CAN THE BRIDE PRESENT FLOWERS TO THE BLESSED MOTHER?

Yes. If the couple has a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother, live flowers may be presented after communion. Since this is a private devotion of the couple, others are not permitted to participate.

8. CAN WE HAVE THE WEDDING / UNITY CANDLE?

No. The liturgy of the Church makes no mention of the unity candle. If this ceremony is important to the couple, we recommend using it at part of the prayer of blessing at the wedding reception.

9. MAY WE DECORATE THE AISLE OR PEWS WITH CANDLES OR ROPE OFF THE CENTER AISLE WITH ROPE OR RIBBON?

No. Candle aisle markers are not permitted. Fabric and ribbon may not be used to "rope off" the center aisle. Individual aisle markers may be used. Flowers, ribbons, or bows may be used to decorate individual pews. They cannot however be taped, stapled or tacked, and must be removed immediately following your ceremony. A florist can assist you by adding rubber bands to your decoration that will slip over the end of the pew for easy application and removal. It is the responsibility of your florist or some other designated person to place and remove aisle markers. The wedding coordinator is unable to assist with this process.

10. MAY WE THROW RICE, BLOW BUBBLES OR HAVE A BALLOON OR DOVE RELEASE?

No. Flower petals, rice, confetti, birdseed, balloons, bubbles, and similar items may not be used in the church or on the premises. Living creatures, including birds or butterflies, may not be released on the premises, nor may pets and/or other animals serve any role in the wedding.

11. MAY THE BRIDE'S FATHER ESCORT HER DOWN THE AISLE?

Yes. However, this is not the Church's intention, with the focus only on the bride. The Church teaches that the bride and groom should process down the aisle together, since they have already been walking together on life's journey.

There are several options that will be explained at the Wedding Workshop. These options are described below.

The Wedding Procession

Processing, or walking, is a sign of your life journey together towards God's reign and your eventual entrance into paradise***….together***! The Wedding liturgy is not only the joining of your lives as a couple, but is also the joining together of your families, friends and all those dear to you.

With this in mind, the procession options offered at Mount Saint Peter Church reflect this joining of your lives by inviting the entire bridal party, your parents, children of the wedding party and ministers of the church to approach the altar of the Lord together with you.

You will notice that the bridal party processes toward the altar in pairs and that both the parents of the bride *and* the groom are an important part of the procession. Weddings are about moving forward together towards a life of Christian commitment, faith and love. Where better to begin than with your new family as you process towards this Sacrament?

In many countries the Bride and Groom walk together to church along with their families and friends as a strong symbol of the "new" family that is about to be created by the Sacrament of Marriage.

As you choose the procession option that fits your family's needs, please remember that there are **three options** available to you. We know that you will find an option which allows you to reflect your family's needs while at the same time remaining faithful to the precepts of the Sacrament of Marriage.

If you have special needs or considerations that you wish to discuss, you may address them at your meeting with the Pastor.

Wedding Procession Option 1

Bride
&
Groom

Children of the Wedding Party

(Ring Bearer, Flower Girl, etc.)

Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor

Attendants in Couples

Parents of the Bride

Parents of the Groom

Priest

Servers

Seats/Best Man/Maid of Honor

Seats for Attendants

Seats for Bride & Groom

Kneeler

ALTAR

January, 2010

Wedding Procession Option 2

Bride with both Parents

Children of Bridal Party
(Ring Bearer, Flower Girl, etc.)

Best man and Maid of Honor

Attendants as Couples

Groom with Parents

Priest

Servers

Seats for Best Man/Maid of Honor

Seats for Attendants

Seats for Bride and Groom

Kneeler

ALTAR

January, 2010

Wedding Procession Option 3

This option is used when Bride is being accompanied by ONE Person.

Bride with Family Escort

Children of the Bridal Party
(Ring Bearer, Flower Girl, etc.)

Best Man and Maid of Honor

Attendants in Couple

Mother of the Bride w/ escort

Groom with his parents

Priest

Servers

Seats for Best Man
Maid of Honor

Seats for Attendants

Seats for Bride and Groom

Kneeler

ALTAR

January, 2010

12. WHAT ABOUT THE MARRIAGE LICENSE?

A Pennsylvania marriage license is required by state law and must be secured before the wedding date and **presented to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal.** You may apply for a marriage license at any county courthouse in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is valid for 60 days. **No wedding will be celebrated if a valid license is not presented.**

13. WHICH PRIEST WILL PERFORM OUR WEDDING?

The Pastor of the parish will preside at the wedding liturgy. If the bride or groom has a relative or personal friend who is a priest, he is welcome to celebrate the wedding according to parish policy and guidelines. The visiting priest is responsible for all paper work associated with your wedding. He must also complete a *Visiting Clergy Form* that will be given to you if you desire this option.

14. MY FIANCE IS NOT CATHOLIC. MUST I HAVE A MASS?

No. The Church offers two options for the wedding celebration. One takes place within Mass, the other takes places within the Liturgy of the Word. The second option does not include Holy Communion. This option is recommended when your fiancé is not Catholic, since he/she would not be able to receive Holy Communion if Mass is celebrated.

If your fiancé is not baptized, the Church does not allow the wedding to take place within Mass. This is the universal law of the Catholic Church.

15. MY FIANCE IS NOT CATHOLIC. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR HIS/HER MINISTER TO TAKE PART IN THE CEREMONY?

Yes. In the case of a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, we heartily welcome the minister of the non-Catholic party to come and share in the ceremony according to our diocesan regulations. The minister must make a courtesy call to the presiding priest as soon as the wedding date is set.

16. MAY WE HAVE A RECEIVING LINE AFTER THE WEDDING?

No. Because of the Parish Mass schedule a receiving line is not possible. Since most of your wedding guests coming to the church will be attending your reception, please greet your guests there.

17. WHO PROVIDES THE WEDDING WORSHIP AIDS (PROGRAMS)?

The couple, in conjunction with the Music Director, provides any desired worship aids for the congregation's use during the ceremony. The Music Director will send you all the finalized music selections and an order of the ceremony that you may use as a guide when drafting your worship aid. Please do not change any of the information that will be listed. It is also your responsibility to have your ushers remove all programs from the pews after the ceremony.

18. WHAT IS THE POLICY REGARDING PHOTOGRAPHS?

Please refer to the *Guidelines for Photographers / Videographers* at the end of this packet, and share them with your photographer / videographer.

19. WILL THERE BE SOMEONE AT THE CHURCH TO GUIDE US ON OUR WEDDING DAY?

Yes. Our parish has two wedding coordinators, Mrs. Christina Discello and Mrs. Susanne Graham, who will lead the wedding rehearsal and be present to assist you on your wedding day.

20. MY FLORIST WANTS TO KNOW SOME CHURCH MEASUREMENTS.

- There are 19 full-length pews on each side of the center aisle.
- Floral arrangements for the back altar should be no taller than 30 inches to avoid contact with the candles.
- Flower urns, baskets, portable pillars, rented items, etc. are the responsibility of the couple or their florist and should be clearly marked with the name of the florist or rental company. They should pick up these items during regular office hours, Monday - Friday 9:00AM until 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM.
- Any floral containers that do not bear the name of the providers will be considered disposable.

21. IS A WEDDING CRASH ALLOWED? (The white runner that covers the center aisle)

No. Crashes are not permitted at Mount Saint Peter Church.

22. ARE THERE OTHER THINGS TO BE MINDFUL OF?

Yes. Weddings are a time of great celebration. However, the use of alcoholic beverages, while appropriate at the reception, is strictly forbidden prior to arriving at the church or anywhere on church property.

The couple needs to be aware that the use of alcoholic beverages prior to the ceremony could prevent the couple from being married since drinking alcohol could compromise their free and full consent at the time of the exchange of the wedding vows. Additionally, no member of the wedding party is permitted to use alcohol prior to the wedding.

There is no smoking in the church, Marble Hall or in the restrooms.

On the following page you will find the schedule of stipends for marriages celebrated at Mount Saint Peter Church, effective January 1, 2009.

God's choicest blessings are extended to both of you as you embark on this very special time in your lives,

Rev. Monsignor Michael J. Begolly and
The Mount Saint Peter Parish Family

January, 2010

PARISH STIPENDS

Effective January 1, 2009, the stipend for marriages celebrated at Mt. St. Peter Church is as follows:

- For parishioners of Mt. St. Peter Parish who are registered and active for at least a year prior to the wedding, the stipend is:

  $525, including Parish Priest
  Parish Organist
  Parish Wedding Coordinator
  Parish Cantor
  Altar Servers

  No stipend is assigned for the use of the church building, maintenance, heat or air conditioning, lights, etc. as you are a supporting member of the Mt. St. Peter Parish family.

- **For weddings of non - members, and parishioners who are not active, or who have only registered within twelve months of scheduling the wedding, the fee is**

  $800*, including Parish Priest
  Parish Organist
  Parish Wedding Coordinator
  Parish Cantor
  Altar Servers

  *The additional $275 is assigned for the use of the church building, maintenance, heat or air conditioning, lights, etc.

  Non-members are required to pay a non-refundable $275 deposit at the time of booking their wedding. No dates will be considered confirmed until this deposit is received in the Parish Office. Therefore dates being considered for wedding ceremonies will be removed from the schedule if the deposit is not received within two weeks from the booking date.

  Fees may be subject to change based on diocesan/parish stipulation.

- **All stipends must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to your scheduled wedding date.** We know how busy those few weeks before a wedding can be. Therefore, as a courtesy, if your fees are not paid in full at least two weeks prior to your wedding date, you will receive a call from the parish office as a reminder.

- If you are requesting a priest or deacon from outside the parish to preside, an additional stipend should be offered to him for his service.

- All concerns about wedding fees should be directed to the Pastor, Rev. Monsignor Michael J. Begolly. He and the entire staff of Mt. St. Peter Church want you to feel comfortable with your decision to marry here. Monsignor Begolly would be happy to address any concerns that you might have about our fee structure or any of our policies discussed here. Please call the parish office for an appointment.

January, 2010

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER

MOUNT SAINT PETER GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

In order to maintain a spirit of prayer and reverence during the wedding liturgy and to allow the couple to capture special moments of their wedding day in photographs, the following guidelines must be observed at Mount Saint Peter Church:

- Only the official photographer is permitted to move about the church to take photographs.
- Flash photography is not permitted during the liturgy.
- The photographer is not permitted to rearrange altar appointments or sanctuary furniture for these photos.
- No one is permitted to take photographs from the upper pulpit, upper altar, or from any position inside the sanctuary of the church (inside the communion rail).
- The use of stationary tripods to set up camera/video equipment is recommended for the liturgy. However, the setup must not impede the movement of the liturgy nor block the entrance to the Chapel.
- Photographers/Videographers are not permitted to interfere with the wedding procession or recession by stopping subjects as they walk down the aisle.
- Following the ceremony, 30 minutes are allowed for picture taking at the church (inside or outside). It is essential that the above time schedule be adhered to so that we can continue to offer this privilege. Please remember that the church building is sacred space and that an atmosphere of reverence must be maintained at all times.
- Pictures may not be taken at the outside grotto; masonry and steps are unsafe.
- Photographers must follow any additional directions given by the Priest or the Parish Wedding Coordinator.
- The wedding coordinator of Mount Saint Peter Church is to be afforded the utmost respect. Disrespect to any member of the staff will not be tolerated.

We continue to offer these privileges with your professional assurance that you will adhere to the regulations of Mount Saint Peter Church. We know that your wish for the wedding couple echoes ours: that all will uphold the dignity of the sacrament that they celebrate on their wedding day. Following these simple guidelines will help to ensure just that.

January, 2010