

No longer two but one...



St. Agnes Wedding Guidelines



Saint Agnes Catholic Church
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Revised 11/8/2008

Choosing St. Agnes

For those of you engaged to be married, we offer our most heartfelt congratulations! We share in your joy and happiness as you begin your new life together.

You have chosen to begin your commitment of marriage publicly with your friends and family, in the presence of God at St. Agnes Church. Through the many details of fashion, flowers, photography, rehearsal dinners and receptions, we encourage you to keep focused on the commitment you will both make to God as you prepare for your wedding.

The wedding liturgy should be a celebration that gives praise to God for the love you have found in each other. It should also be an experience of prayer and spiritual transformation for your family and friends as well.

All liturgical celebrations are worship, the prayer of the entire church. The wedding liturgy is never to be seen as an event or a show for the bride and groom, with family and friends attending as if they were an audience. The music and prayers that you choose should allow all in attendance to pray and express their faith.

People needed in your wedding

CELEBRANT: A priest or deacon is needed to preside at your wedding liturgy. Fr. Jack Conley or Fr. E. John Hilgert will preside at your wedding, although you may invite a guest priest from another parish. Choice of priest will be discussed at your initial Marriage Preparation meeting.

CROSS BEARER: The cross is always carried in the opening procession of all weddings. This person can be anyone of your choosing as long as they are capable of carrying the cross safely.

GOSPEL BEARER: It is important that the Word of God is brought into church in the procession. Usually the person proclaiming the first reading is the one who carries the gospel book in the procession.

WITNESSES: This is usually the best man and maid of honor, but can be any two of your wedding attendants.

LECTORS: Usually three readers are needed, one to proclaim the First Reading from the Old Testament, one for the Second Reading from the New Testament, and one to recite the General Intercessions. The response to the General Intercessions may be sung, in which case, the cantor will recite the Intercessions.

Care should be taken in selecting readers for your wedding. These should be people who have lector training or speak very confidently, distinctly, and most of all have a sense of prayerfulness in how they worship.

SERVERS: If your wedding is celebrated within a full Mass, two servers are needed to assist the Priest. The parish assigns servers; however, you may request specific parish servers.

CANTOR: The cantor is the person who will musically lead the assembly in sung prayer. This includes singing the verses of the Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, Eucharistic responses, communion song, etc. The cantor may also be used to sing vocal music before your wedding.

ORGANIST: Geoffrey Vickery is scheduled for all weddings at St. Agnes. In the event that he is not available for your wedding date, we will arrange for another well-qualified organist for that date.

We strongly encourage the use of St. Agnes parish singers and musicians. They know the music that we suggest, are comfortable with the acoustics and sound delay in church. St. Agnes musicians are liturgically trained. All musicians, singers and music selected for weddings need to be approved by Geoffrey Vickery.

Wedding Preparation Timeline

The first step in planning your wedding liturgy is to meet with our Marriage Minister, Laura Zoeller. This needs to be done at least nine months before your wedding date.

All couples are required to attend a Wedding Workshop at St. Agnes. Workshops are held every three months and will address the details of planning your wedding.

Wedding liturgical forms should be turned in two months before the wedding date or submitted online at <http://www.stagnesweddings.com>.

Wedding Rehearsals

Wedding Rehearsals may be scheduled on 7:00 on Friday evenings or 2:00 on Saturday afternoon. Rehearsals for the Friday evening weddings will be at 5:30 p.m. Thursday. Rehearsals for the Saturday evening weddings will be at 4:30 on Friday evening.

All members of the wedding party, including bridesmaids and groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearers, lectors, as well as parents of the bride and groom are encouraged to attend the rehearsal. It is recommended that everyone arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time so that the rehearsal may begin on time. The bride and groom are especially encouraged to arrive early. They can help your presider know when everyone has arrived and the rehearsal can begin.

If the persons you have selected to read one of the readings or the intercessions are not experienced lectors, they are encouraged to practice reading over the microphone before or during the rehearsal. Have several people listen to help them determine that they are speaking clearly and audibly.

The rehearsal will usually last no longer than an hour. During this time, the entrance processional and recessional will be rehearsed. It is helpful to have already determined the order of the people in the procession. More detailed guidelines for determining the order of the procession will be discussed at the wedding workshop, but it should be noted that all those in the procession will begin in the rear of the church as they would in a regular Sunday liturgy.

Photography

Photographers should arrive no earlier than ninety minutes before the scheduled time of your wedding. Pictures taken **after** the wedding ceremony are to be completed within 30 minutes.

Pictures may be taken anywhere inside the church before the wedding. Although backdrops may be used, they are not encouraged since there are many beautiful locations inside the church that are suitable for taking pictures. Pictures may also be taken on the grounds outside the church. Pictures should be completed at least 30 minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin. This way, the photography is complete prior to the arrival of most of your guests, and your wedding party has 30 minutes to mentally focus, prepare, and tend to last-minute details.

Photographers may take flash photos during the processional and the recessional, but not during the actual wedding ceremony. Photographers may use the center and side aisles, the area directly in front of the sanctuary (before

the steps), and the balcony, but they may not be in the sanctuary during the ceremony.

Videography

Video photographers should follow the same guidelines as still photographers for arrival times. Video cameras may be placed in the balcony, either of the transept areas of the church, and the rear of the church. An **unattended** video camera may be placed in the sanctuary. Video cameras should remain stationary during the ceremony to minimize distractions.

Church Decorations

You are responsible for providing any additional decorations (if desired) inside or outside of the church, placing them before the wedding, and removing them after the wedding.

Existing church decorations such as banners, plants or floral decorations may not be removed. The exception to this is that floral arrangements on either side of the high altar may be replaced with floral arrangements that you have provided. Alternatively, existing arrangements can be left in place, and you can place your additional arrangements on pillars in the sanctuary or by the altar.

Bows may be placed on pews to designate reserved pews or as a decorative feature. However they may only be attached by tying them around the ends of the pews. No tape or other devices may be used that might damage the finish of the pews. Likewise, bows or ribbons may be placed on handrails outside of the church, if desired.

Wreaths on the doors are discouraged but they may be used on hangers provided by you that fit over the top of the doors. Nails or any other hanging devices are not allowed.

Candelabras are not allowed in the sanctuary of the church. Candles down the aisle may obscure your guests' view. However, they are permitted as long as the candles are enclosed in glass. Once again, they should not be affixed to the pews in any way that might damage the pew or its finish. Remember, you are responsible for removal of all additional decorations. Please designate a responsible person to make sure this is done.

Because of liability, cloth or paper aisle runners are not permitted in the church.

Please observe that nothing should be dropped or thrown in the aisle during the procession or as the bridal party is leaving at the end of the wedding ceremony.

This includes rose petals, rice, etc. Bubbles have sometimes been used in lieu of rice to wish the couple well. These are permitted but should be used **outside the church only**. These guidelines are intended to ensure the safety of individuals who might unexpectedly slip on flower petals, rice, or spills from bubbles.

Arriving at the Church the Day of Your Wedding

The wedding party should arrive no earlier than ninety minutes before the wedding, provided that the church is available. Please check with the Parish House [(502) 451-2220] secretary to assure availability and to reserve the church.

A limited area is available for the bride and her attendants to get ready. This area is located on the lower level in a section of the passageway that leads to Aloysius Hall. Because this is not a large area, the bride and the bridesmaids are encouraged to arrive at the church as “ready” as possible. The area is large enough to accommodate simply changing into bridal and bridesmaids gowns after arrival. The groom and groomsmen are encouraged to arrive fully dressed because there is not another space available to designate for their use.

Your wedding begins

As your guests arrive they will be greeted with beautiful music and the warm ambiance of St. Agnes Church. Music before and during the liturgy should not be secular in nature, but should foreshadow the sacredness of the ritual about to happen.

Traditionally, guests have been escorted to their seats by ushers. Many couples are now choosing to have their entire wedding party and family greet their guests as they arrive. Your guests will feel welcomed when are greeted by someone they know. This also gives your parents, family and wedding party something to do while they are waiting for the wedding to begin.

In this celebration of unity, we encourage you to seat your guests as they arrive and as close to the front of church as possible. The tradition of seating guests on the bride’s or groom’s side only creates an unnecessary division, and may result in unbalanced seating. This is especially true if one of the families is from out of town.

The best decorations are simple ones. The church grounds and buildings, both inside and out, are already very decorative, and too many bows, netting, ferns, flowers, colors, ribbons, and cloth create an appearance of clutter rather than style. Please do not obstruct handrails with cloth, netting or plant material, as

they are needed by some of your guests for support in climbing the steps. There are lampposts and plant hangers at the parking lot entrance and along the sidewalk that may be decorated with ribbons, bow or banners. Please do not use tape, nails, screws or staples to affix decorations to wooden or painted surfaces, as this may mar the finish.

You may want to reserve the first few pews on both sides of church for your wedding party and family. Bows may be tied to ends of pews to mark this section, but keep in mind you will want your wedding guests as close as possible, so make this area only as large as necessary to comfortably seat your family and wedding party.

Keep in mind the comfort of your family members who are elderly and those with small children. Trying to keep a toddler quiet during the wedding is hard enough without asking them to behave for an hour or more before the wedding, too. For their comfort, please advise family members escorting young children and elderly relatives to arrive shortly before the wedding.

For those in a wheelchair or needing assistance, there is a ramp on the south side of the church next to the monastery. Convenient parking in the circular drive in front of the monastery is also available near the ramp, and a special wheelchair area is available near the front of church on the left side.

We recommend that grandparents and other family members not in the wedding party be seated as they arrive. Having a group of people gathering or waiting in the back of church creates noise and confusion for guests arriving for your wedding.

Guests should be greeting at the door and escorted to their seats without delay. If you are going to have a guest register, it should be stationed outside, weather permitting, or in the lobby. When they reach the inner doors to church they can be escorted to their seat. Ask your family and wedding party to avoid congregating in the back of church unless they are greeting and escorting guests.

The Opening Rite

Your wedding begins with a liturgical procession, just like the procession we have at Mass on Sundays. Your guests should be instructed to stand for the procession. If you have a program, you can include the words, *“Please stand for the Wedding Procession.”*

The order of people in the procession begins with the Cross Bearer, followed by the Servers (if wedding is celebrated inside the Mass), Gospel Bearer, Celebrant, and then wedding party. We have three options that will accommodate your choice of the order for the wedding party.

Option A (Preferred)

Cross Bearer
Servers
Gospel Bearer
Celebrant
Bridesmaids and Groomsmen, as couples
Flower Girl and Ring Bearer, if any
Maid of Honor and Best Man
Parents of the Groom
Parents of the Bride
Bride and Groom

Option B

Cross Bearer
Servers
Gospel Bearer
Celebrant
Bridesmaids and Groomsmen, as couples
Flower Girl and Ring Bearer, if any
Maid of Honor and Best Man
Parent, Groom, Parent
Parent, Bride, Parent

Option C (Traditional)

Cross Bearer
Servers
Gospel Bearer
Celebrant and Groom
Bridesmaids and Groomsmen, as couples
Flower Girl and Ring Bearer, if any
Maid of Honor and Best Man
Bride and Parent

Since this is a celebration uniting the bride and groom, and the two of you have chosen to be married in the church, we encourage you to come in together in the procession. The tradition of bride and groom being hidden from each other until they are paired at the altar by the bride's father is carried over from medieval times when marriages were arranged by parents. The simple act of bride and groom processing in together speaks clearly that this is *our* wedding, a choice we have made together.

The best choices in music for your wedding procession are those that will accompany the entire wedding procession and lead directly into a gathering hymn sung by the assembly and wedding party. For example, Variations on Hymn of Joy is arranged for string quartet (optional), organ, and trumpet, and

begins with a simple melody line. Each variation builds in texture and dynamics until the trumpet joins for the final variation when the bride and groom process in. Without stopping, the music modulates into a welcoming introduction for everyone to sing, "Joyful, joyful we adore you, God of glory, Lord of love..." Singing a gathering hymn is encouraged today as it engages your guests in active participation in your wedding liturgy, helps create a feeling of unity among members of various church denominations, and starts the liturgical celebration off right. If you have a program, please include the name of the gathering hymn and the number in hymnal in your program. The Music Director can provide you with music in graphic format that can be inserted in your program if you would like to include the music and text in your program.

Singing a gathering hymn as the wedding procession ends is optional, but you are encouraged to choose one piece of music for the entire procession. This avoids drawing undue attention to the bride, alone. Having the processional music stop, then beginning a different piece of music for the bride changes the focus from a liturgical procession of the all people in the wedding, and puts too much emphasis on only one member of the wedding celebration.

Everyone in the wedding party should remain standing until instructed to be seated. The cross bearer will proceed to the sanctuary and place the cross in the stand, then go to their seat. The Gospel bearer should proceed around the altar, place the Book of Gospels in the middle of the altar, and go to their seat. As each person or couple in the wedding party approaches their pew, they should pause, bow toward the altar, and then enter the pew to their position and remain standing.

Once the wedding party is in place and the procession is over, the celebrant will greet everyone and welcome them, give an introduction and opening prayer. After the prayer, he will invite everyone to be seated. This ends the Opening Rite.

Liturgy of the Word

During your marriage preparation you will choose the readings for your wedding. You may choose one or two readers to proclaim these readings.

THE FIRST READING: After everyone has been seated, the person assigned to read the first reading should pause a few seconds, then rise from their seat, proceed down the middle aisle, pause before the first step, bow toward the altar, then proceed to the ambo (lectern). They should proclaim the reading slowly, deliberately and clearly so everyone can hear and understand. After the reading, they should pause for a few seconds, and then end by saying, "The Word of the

Lord.” The assembly will respond, “Thanks be to God.” The reader should return to their seat.

THE PSALM: The cantor will pause a few seconds after the reader has been seated, then approach the altar, bow, and proceed to the ambo to lead the responsorial psalm. The cantor will intone the refrain, and everyone, including the wedding party, will be invited to sing the refrain in response. After the psalm, the cantor will return to their seat.

THE SECOND READING: After the cantor has been seated, the person assigned to read the second reading should pause a few seconds, then rise from their seat, proceed down the middle aisle, pause before the first step, bow toward the altar, then proceed to the ambo (lectern). They should proclaim the reading slowly, deliberately and clearly so everyone can hear and understand. After the reading, they should pause for a few seconds, and then end by saying, “The Word of the Lord.” The assembly will respond, “Thanks be to God.” The reader should return to their seat.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: When the celebrant rises to proclaim the Gospel, the cantor will lead the assembly in the Gospel Acclamation — Alleluia. The celebrant will gesture for the assembly to stand, and everyone should sing the acclamation. At the end of the acclamation, the celebrant will proclaim the Gospel. After a brief pause, he will end by saying, “The Gospel of the Lord.” The assembly will respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” Everyone will be seated.

THE HOMILY: The celebrant will give a brief reflection on the readings and how they apply to our lives.

The Sacrament of Marriage

At the end of the homily, the celebrant will invite the bride and groom and their witnesses to join him in front of the altar for the Sacrament of Marriage. The bride should leave her flowers on her seat during this time. The groom needs to be alert to any extra care that may be needed in moving about or helping his bride move about in her wedding dress. Before the rehearsal you and the presider should decide where attendants will stand during the exchange of vows/rings; please know that no more than five couples can be present in the sanctuary.

The Nuptial Blessing (Marriage Blessing) is special blessing of the Church on the newly married couple. Some celebrants reserve this for use at the end of the wedding ceremony. The blessing is spoken by the celebrant; however, you may choose a Nuptial Blessing with sung responses. The cantor will lead the

assembly in singing a short response in between blessings spoken by the celebrant.

After the exchange of vows and exchange of rings, your witnesses will return to their seats and the celebrant will invite everyone to stand and join in the General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful.

(In compliance with liturgical norms for the Archdiocese of Louisville Office of Worship we do not use the unity candle as part of the wedding ritual. Historical and theological reasons also support this policy.)

You are encouraged to write your own intercessory prayers during your marriage preparation using a sample set of intercessions as guidelines. These intercessions may be read by a reader of your choice, or by the cantor. At our Sunday Masses the cantor reads the intercession, and then invites the assembly to respond with a simple sung response of “Loving God, hear our prayer” or “Lord, hear our prayer.” If you choose the sung response, the cantor should read the intercessions. If you choose a spoken response, you may assign this to one of your readers, or select a different person for this task.

If your wedding is being celebrated as a Liturgy of the Word, all will be invited to join in saying the Our Father, (Lord’s Prayer) and Sign of peace, followed by the Concluding Rite.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

If your wedding is being celebrated within the Mass, everyone will be seated while the gifts of bread and wine are prepared. You should designate two people to bring the gifts to the altar. A brief instrumental selection, chosen by your musicians, will be played during this action.

DURING THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER, the cantor will lead the assembly in singing the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen. We suggest the Mass of Creation or the Mass of Remembrance settings as they are widely known by most parishes across the country.

THE OUR FATHER (Lord’s Prayer) is an important prayer in all Christian denominations, and is a unifying element. The celebrant will invite all to join in saying the Our Father. It should not be sung as a solo in place of the assembly participation.

THE SIGN OF PEACE is a time when all will be invited to share a sign of peace — a handshake, embrace or kiss. As a couple you will certainly want to share this sign of peace with each other. You may want to share this sign of peace with

some of your wedding party or immediate family. We recommend that you stay together as a couple and stay close to the front pews and center aisle for best results. Trying to reach too many people during this time creates logistics problems and unduly elongates the rite.

After the Sign of Peace, the cantor will lead the assembly in the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) as the presider and three Eucharistic ministers you have designated prepare for communion distribution. Members of the Body of Christ are then invited to communion. Those not of our Church are encouraged to approach the minister for a blessing (hand over heart), or join us in meditation, praying that someday Christ's own prayer "that all may be one" will be fulfilled.

Concluding Rite

Some celebrants may reserve the Nuptial Blessing (Marriage Blessing) to be used at this point in the wedding ceremony. See the paragraph about the Nuptial Blessing options in the Sacrament of Marriage section above.

After a final prayer and blessing, the celebrant will introduce you as a couple to your family and friends who will respond with applause. The recessional music will begin. You may kiss each other before processing out of the church. Your wedding party and immediate family will follow you out. It is not necessary for Cross Bearer and Gospel Bearer, servers and celebrant to process out.

After the Wedding

If you want to greet your guests as they depart the church, it is best to form a receiving line outside on the ground level after you have left the building and descended the steps. If you are going to take pictures immediately after the wedding, you should process out, down the steps and come back up the ramp to the side entrance.

Please keep post-wedding picture session to no more than 30 minutes. Often there is another wedding, confessions or a Mass following your wedding. Please assign someone to be responsible for gathering all personal belongings and any flowers or decorations you wish to keep.

Fees and Gratuities

The fee to reserve the church for your wedding is \$400. This fee includes the cost of your organist. Please add \$20 to the wedding fee for each server. The fee for your St. Agnes cantor is \$100.

The checks for the church, servers and cantor are due one week before your wedding. The check for the church and servers should be payable to St. Agnes Church, and the checks for the cantor should be made out to them individually. All checks should be sent to the rectory and marked to the attention of Joe Edlin.

The fee for Michael Giangarra, the trumpeter, is \$150. When you book Michael for your wedding he will discuss payment arrangements at that time. If he is not available, the fee charged by another trumpeter might be different and must be arranged separately.

You are welcome to have additional professional musicians such as brass quintets, string quartets, harpists, flutists, violinists, etc. Geoffrey Vickery will be happy to assist in recommending or reserving such musicians for your wedding, but these musicians set their own fees and payment arrangements.

A gratuity to your presider is not required. However, most couples like to thank their presider with a monetary gift and sometimes question what amount would be appropriate. While the amount is strictly up to the giver, \$100-\$150 is recommended.

Important Contact Information

Send checks for wedding fee, servers and cantor to:

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