

St. Patrick Church – Milford, NH

Wedding Information and Guidelines

It is prudent TO CONTACT THE PASTOR FIRST before any other commitments to reception venues ideally 12-6 months before your desired wedding date. Engaged couples should never confirm their wedding reception plans with any reception venue before confirmation of date and time with the church!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Weddings are a special time of joy and promise for a bride and groom, their families and friends, and in an indirect way, for the entire parish community. Indeed, our faith tells us that in the reception of matrimony, where the bride and groom are themselves ministers of the sacrament, it is a privileged and grace-filled time. It is a time which foreshadows the great Marriage Feast of the Lord Jesus Christ to us His people in the Resurrection and eternal life.

In view of this religious significance and lifelong importance, it stands to reason that the celebration of marriage must be entered into with prayerful planning. Therefore, it is in a spirit of joyful anticipation and responsible preparation that these directives have been developed to guide and direct couples in solemnizing their marriages at St. Patrick Borromeo Parish.

A man and a woman who celebrate their wedding at St. Patrick will appreciate that marriage is a sacred event – and is a gift from God - and requires a life-long commitment to each other in union with God. Some degree of religious commitment by the couple is essential for a wedding to take place at St. Patrick.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT ST. PATRICK CHURCH

Preference for wedding dates is given to couples who demonstrate a faith commitment and who are registered or whose parents are registered members of St. Patrick Parish for at least one year.

Couples from outside the parish may contact the pastor and request a wedding date. Confirmation of date and time will be made upon the pastor's determination of the faith commitment of the couple and the availability of the Church.

If, for "convenience of location's sake", you choose to be prepared outside St. Patrick Parish, a *Certificate of Completion* from the preparing parish or Catholic institution must be sent upon completion. The requirement form preparation of engaged couples from any parish will suffice for your preparation to be mailed here at St Patrick Church.

1. The prospective bride and groom must meet with Fr. Dennis (Pastor) 12-6 months prior to the contemplated date of marriage. The date and time of the wedding is usually confirmed at this meeting. PLEASE do not make any definite plans with a reception hall until your wedding date is confirmed by the pastor.

2. At the next appointment, couples will be asked to fill out the *Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire*. This includes biographical information as well as the intended spouses' testimony, under oath, concerning their intentions to enter into Christian Marriage according to the teaching of the Church. At this same meeting the couple will be administered a couples' communication instrument (FOCCUS) that will reveal the couple's understanding of the marriage vocation and its commitments. At a follow-up meeting, the couple will meet to discuss the results.

3. The couple must also participate in an approved marriage prep program. Further details to be discussed at the meeting with the couple.

4. The couple will meet with the clergy/celebrant of their wedding to plan the wedding ceremony.

If, for convenience of the couple, they choose to be prepared by a priest or deacon outside St. Patrick Parish, a letter from the preparing parish must be sent to the Pastor as soon as possible after the initial contact with the Pastor of St. Patrick Church. The letter from the preparing priest or deacon should state that he will gather the necessary documents and conduct the necessary marriage preparation as outlined in this policy.

DOCUMENTS

1. If the bride and/or groom have not been baptized in St. Patrick Church, they must obtain from their churches of baptism a RECENT COPY OF THEIR CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM (issued within six months of the time presented).

2. In the case of ANY PREVIOUS MARRIAGE on the part of either party, documents must be presented that assure the freedom of one or both parties to marry in the Catholic Church - i.e., *Decree of Annulment*.

3. A CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE (cost \$45.00) must be obtained from any City or Town Hall in the State of New Hampshire (licenses in the State of NH are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance) - no blood tests are required in NH. The minister of marriage must have in his possession a civil wedding license at the time of the wedding. Couples must make the license available to the minister of marriage at the wedding rehearsal (usually the night before the wedding). No marriage may legally take place without a civil marriage license.

DATE, TIME & PLACE

Weddings are reserved on the basis of the criteria above by the Pastor. All marriages at St. Patrick will take place INSIDE THE CHURCH. Weddings are celebrated on Friday afternoon or evening, and Saturdays between 9 AM and 2 PM. In very unusual circumstances, a Sunday afternoon ceremony (no Mass is permitted other than Sunday Mass) may be permitted. Please consult with Fr. Dennis.

When the prospective bride or groom is of another religion or when the couple is non-practicing, the marriage ceremony will be celebrated within a Service of the Word of God (NO MASS).

The teachings of the Church on Christian Worship recommend that weddings not be celebrated during the Lenten Season (Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday) due to the special penitential character of that time in the life of the Church.

WEDDING MUSIC NOTES

After your first meeting with the priest and when your date has been confirmed by the priest, it is your responsibility to immediately call Mr. Christopher Maynard music.stpatricksmilford@gmail.com our Parish Music Director and organist to reserve the time with him. It is the responsibility of the organist and/or a trained parish cantor to play and sing at all weddings. If you choose a relative or friend to sing or play for your wedding, all music must be approved by the Director of Music and, under the terms of his employment agreement, his fee is not waived. The Director can assist you if you wish to have a solo instrument (trumpet, flute, violin, etc....). Recorded (taped/CD) music is never allowed!

FLOWERS AND OTHER DECORATIONS

Our church is always well decorated for weddings. Flowers or candles may never be placed on the altar. * At the directive of our Diocesan Risk Management Department, aisle runners (white carpets) are not permitted in our Church.

If pew bows are used, they should be attached with ribbon or specially covered wire (NO TAPE) that will not scratch or ruin the church furniture.

No flower petals (real or artificial), rice, confetti or bird seed may be thrown in or around the Church.

It is the responsibility of the couple to see that their decorations are properly in place for their wedding and taken down and removed after the ceremony, i.e., programs, flower boxes, flowers, pew bows, etc. Thank you!

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY - REST ROOMS

St. Patrick Church has an elevator for access to the church. Rest rooms are located in the parish hall for the convenience of our guests.

VISITING CLERGY

Visiting Catholic clergy (priests or deacons) who are family friends/relatives and in good standing with the Catholic Church are most welcomed to witness marriages in the parish. All clergy are aware that they are required to obtain a *Statement of Suitability* attesting from their Bishop/Religious Superior that they are in good standing if they come into the Diocese of Manchester to celebrate a wedding. It is expected that the visiting celebrant will adhere to the regulations of the Diocese of Manchester and the policies and customs of our parish. The celebrant **MUST** agree to be present for the wedding rehearsal. Celebrants who reside outside of the State of New Hampshire must obtain permission from the New Hampshire Secretary of State.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

All rehearsals for Fr. Dennis' weddings are conducted by Pastoral Associate Patti Hendrickson pattih2015@comcast.net (603) 673-1311. The rehearsal is usually scheduled for the day before the wedding. It normally takes 30 - 60 minutes. Please schedule rehearsal parties AFTER the rehearsal. To waste no one's time, it is important that everyone should be on time.

PHOTOGRAPHERS/VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographers/Videographers are asked to introduce themselves to the celebrant of the marriage prior to the wedding ceremony and are asked to be cooperative with the policies of the parish. Fr. Dennis requests that he NOT BE ASKED TO BE "MIKED UP" for any wedding. At no time is the photographer/videographer permitted in the sanctuary area of the Church to photograph or video couples during their ceremony. We urge couples to take formal wedding pictures on another site - not in Church after the ceremony.

MARRIAGE DONATION

The customary donation for weddings for **registered parishioners** for at least one year at St. Patrick Church is **\$475.00** which is **payable at the rehearsal**. This includes: Organist - \$175, Soloist - \$100, Church - \$200. Please make check payable to: St. Patrick Church.

The customary donation for weddings for **unregistered couples** at St. Patrick Church is **\$675.00** which is **payable at the rehearsal**. This includes: Organist - \$175, Soloist - \$100, Church - \$400. Please make check payable to: St. Patrick Church.

In all cases, the donation to the Church does not include a stipend for the priest/celebrant. If you wish to give a stipend to the priest or deacon/celebrant, please present the stipend in cash or make the check payable to him personally.

THE CHURCH IS A SACRED SPACE

While in the Church for the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, all wedding parties and their guests are expected to honor the dignity of the sacred place that is a church building. Eating or drinking (except water if necessary) is not permitted in Church.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Fr. Dennis at any time prior to the wedding ceremony at daudet52@gmail.com or call Diane, our Parish Secretary at (603) 673-1311.

*It is our privilege to have been requested to be a part of your Wedding.
May God Bless and Keep You in His Love.*