

Marriage Preparation/Wedding Guidelines

MEMBERSHIP

Since Marriage is a Sacrament of the Catholic Church, it is normally celebrated in the parish where the couple worships. This means that in general, to get married in our parish, at least one party is a registered parishioner, has been a parishioner but has moved from the area, or lives in the area and will now become a parishioner. For other practicing Catholics, wedding requests are considered on a case by case basis since our church is not simply “rented” for weddings. For those who currently reside outside the Silver Bay area, marriage preparation normally takes place at the parish where they currently live. The couple must have an initial meeting with the clergy or other personnel with whom they will be doing their marriage preparation and that clergy or other person must send a letter to the pastor, Fr. Steve Laflamme, attesting to the fact that they have carried out the initial pre-nuptial interview and have established that both parties to the marriage are free to marry in the Catholic Church. This letter should be printed on parish letterhead, signed and dated by the clergy or other person preparing the couple for marriage, and mailed to Fr. Steve at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. Fr. Steve must receive this letter before a wedding date can be placed on the Church calendar.

TIME OF YOUR WEDDING

The wedding liturgy, with or without Mass, is normally scheduled on a Saturday no earlier than 11:00 am and no later than 2:00 pm. Evening weddings are normally only allowed on Friday evenings. It is preferable not to schedule weddings during Lent because of its penitential nature. Weddings are not celebrated during Holy Week, or on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

PREPARATION PROCEDURES

- o Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage begins at least 6 months prior to the planned date of the wedding. The marriage itself cannot be scheduled until an initial meeting with the priest (or deacon). Subsequent meetings with the clergy will follow.
- o Preparation also includes completion of the FOCCUS survey. This is followed by feedback sessions with a married couple in the parish. The cost for this service is **\$35.00**, to be paid by the couple, to FOCCUS.
- o Each engaged couple will participate in a pre-marriage course or retreat. You will receive information from the priest or deacon about possible retreat dates.

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

- Baptismal Certificate
 - o For Catholics: a baptismal certificate issued in the last 6 months. Those baptized at St. Mary's can simply ask the parish secretary to verify their baptism.
 - o Non-Catholics: a baptismal certificate. It need not be recent.
- Marriage License ...from the State of Minnesota
 - o This is to be left at the parish office one week (7 working days) before the wedding. You will get \$50 off the fee. You can obtain a notarized form from us to receive this discount once you have submitted to the Church a certificate of completion for pre-marital education class attendance.

LITURGY & ENVIRONMENT

The environment in the church reflects the liturgical season of the year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time. Occasional liturgies such as weddings can influence the environment, but they should not dominate nor replace the seasonal décor. All questions as to what are acceptable decorations for a wedding at St. Mary's are referred to Fr. Steve.

- o The church has candles and candelabra if you choose to use them. (Rented candles or candelabra are not normally allowed.) We also have a podium for the guestbook and a stand for a unity candle.
- o Please attach pew bows with ribbon, elastic or string. No tape, tacks or glue may be used.
- o Due to safety issues, aisle runners are highly discouraged.
- o As stated above, the liturgical décor is not removed or changed for a wedding. So, for example, Easter and Christmas church decorations may not be changed for a wedding.
- o Flowers and plants are not permitted on the altar or ambo (pulpit). Plants may be removed or left as a floral gift to the parish. No balloons are allowed inside the church.
- o Flower petals may not be scattered in the Church unless they are artificial, and then it is the bridal party's responsibility to clean them up after the wedding.
- o Rice, bird seed, and confetti are not permitted on church grounds.

PHOTOGRAPHER

- o No church furnishings are to be moved for pictures. If wedding pictures are taken prior to the ceremony, all photography equipment is to be removed from the worship space at least 1/2 hour before the ceremony.
- o Movement by the photographer during the liturgy is to be kept to an absolute minimum.

MUSIC

"Songs that are chosen for the Liturgy should be appropriate for the celebration and express the faith of the Church." (USCCB document Sing to the Lord, 1/220.)

- o During wedding celebrations, either within or outside the Mass, only liturgical music is allowed.
- o If any other kind of music is desired for use, it must be checked by the pastor and, if approved, may be performed either before or after the liturgy, but must retain a sacred character.
- o Selection of musicians and vocalists will be under the guidance of the pastor and music director.
- o If you have family members or friends you would like to include in providing music for your wedding, you must discuss this with the pastor and the music director.
- o All musicians' fees are to be paid prior to the wedding.

REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are normally scheduled the day before the wedding at 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m, and are conducted by the priest or deacon who will be assisting at the marriage ceremony itself. All members of the wedding party are to be present. If someone must be absent, another person stands in his or her place and instructs the absentee prior to the wedding. The readers will practice the Scripture readings (Please note that if the wedding is taking place within the celebration of Mass, then the reader must be a Catholic). Musicians are usually not present at the rehearsal but may practice before the rehearsal begins. Wedding rehearsals usually take about one hour. The bride and groom must be present at the rehearsal no later than 15 minutes prior to the rehearsal to answer final questions regarding the ceremony, and the rest of the wedding party must be on time!

- Following the celebration, the wedding party is responsible for removing all items brought into the church facilities (decorations, boxes, etc.) and placing all litter in waste baskets.
- If any kind of food or beverage is provided before the wedding, it can be placed and consumed only in the parish social hall. You should appoint someone who will be in charge of assuring that the social hall is left clean prior to the wedding ceremony. No alcoholic beverages allowed. No food or drink in Church proper.

DONATIONS AND FEES

A donation is normally given to the Church where the Marriage is celebrated. This donation should be made prior to the wedding, preferably when the Marriage License is dropped off at the parish office. Additionally, you may choose to make an offering to the celebrating clergy.

TO RESERVE A DATE FOR CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE AT ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH:

Please Contact:

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