

SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH
353 MAIN STREET
HIGHLAND FALLS, NEW YORK 10928-1944

WEDDING GUIDELINES FOR PARISHIONERS OF SACRED HEART

(As of September 2020)

Congratulations on your engagement! It is an occasion of great joy for you, your parents, relatives and friends. It is also a time to begin plans for your wedding and for your life together. These parish guidelines will help guide you through this process.

Throughout this packet, there will be a line at the end of each section for you to initial to confirm that you have read, and understand, the guidelines up until that specific point.

SETTING THE DATE: The parish secretary can inform you about available dates over the phone and take initial information. They will also send you the necessary information. You will have **one month** to confirm the date. Only the pastor of Sacred Heart may confirm the date with you. A date will be confirmed only after the priest has personally met with the bride and groom. Arrangements **are not** made with the parents or other relatives. Sufficient time is needed to complete all marriage preparation requirements. Generally, six months are needed.

LOCATION: Parishioners who live in Highland Falls may have their wedding celebrated at Sacred Heart Church. Only those parishioners who live in Fort Montgomery may choose to have their wedding celebrated at Sacred Heart Church or Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Those who live outside the parish must have their wedding celebrated in the main church of Sacred Heart. **No exceptions are granted in this case.**

SCHEDULING THE TIME

Friday: 4:00 pm or 5:00 pm
Saturday: 11:00 am, 1:00 pm or 2:00 pm
Sunday: **2:00 pm ONLY**

Only one wedding per day is scheduled.

Initial: _____

PREPARATION FOR YOUR SACRAMENT

Documentation – Certain documents must be obtained before your marriage may be celebrated.

For Roman Catholics:

1. Baptism certificates issued within the last six months by the church of your baptism (Not photocopies of original certificate).

Dates and places of First Communion and Confirmation (photocopies are acceptable in this case).

For Baptized Christians: An original or recently issued copy of your Baptismal certificate.

2. Arrangements for announcing the banns of marriage in both home parishes.

3. A letter from the pastor of the home parish that you are free to marry.

4. If you are under 18, written permission from your parents.

5. With Marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic, a dispensation (proper permission from the Church) needs to be submitted to the proper diocese. In that dispensation, the Catholic party must make, in writing, two promises: a) to remain a member of the Catholic Church and b) to do everything possible to raise their child(ren) in the Catholic faith.

6. A marriage license issued by the State of New York.

Marriage Preparation – In light of current marriage statistics, it is not surprising that the Catholic Church is also very concerned about your life together **AFTER** your wedding. Marriage preparation programs: *Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, or Engagement*. At your first meeting with the priest, you should be receiving a booklet with the dates and locations of these programs in this Archdiocese. You will need to sign-up well in advance of your wedding date. If you live in another diocese, you can attend one of their marriage preparation programs.

Preparation – When a priest from another parish is marrying you, please follow his specific requests.

Initial: _____

Planning the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage

PLANNING – You will receive a wedding planning book at the Marriage Preparation Program that you will attend. You may use this book to plan your wedding (choice of scripture readings and prayers used at the ceremony). The priest will go over the material with you and answer any questions you may have.

MASS OR CEREMONY: Catholics normally celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage during a Mass. Your sacrament may also be celebrated in a ceremony (Scripture readings and exchange of vows). A marriage between a Catholic and a baptized Christian (non-Catholic) may be celebrated at Mass, but please realize that the non-Catholic may not receive Communion since the Catholic Church does not permit intercommunion at this time. A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Christian is **always** celebrated in a ceremony.

MUSIC – Music at your wedding will normally be provided by our parish organist and cantor. They are trained in Catholic liturgy and they will make it a special experience for you, your family and friends. On occasion, we receive requests for the use of an outside organist and/or singer who may be a friend of the family. **From much prior experience**, we strongly discourage this here. We also wish to point out that our own musicians are on contract and have the right of *first refusal* – meaning, that if you bring your own organist and singer, you will also have to pay the parish musicians. This is standard practice in all churches. In any event, you will receive a sheet with suggestions for music at your wedding. *Please complete* and *submit* this paper at least one month before your wedding to the pastor of Sacred Heart Church.

The solemnity of the Sacrament of Matrimony calls for sacred music appropriate for a wedding. Realize that chosen music should reflect the sacred nature of the Sacrament of Marriage. Other selections of music, while popular and even well-composed in themselves, are more suitable for the wedding reception than for a church ceremony. There will not be any use of tapes, CD's, or any other music playing device as a part of the ritual of marriage.

Our music director, Ms. Helen Lindsey, is available to answer any questions that you may have. No selection may be played/sung in our church without prior approval of the Director of Music and the pastor of Sacred Heart.

FEES – A down deposit of \$100 is to secure your date of your wedding. Fees are due no later than the day of the rehearsal. You may bring cash or check made out to “Sacred Heart Church”. The fee for 2021 is \$700. The fee for the **organist** and **singer** is \$150 **each**. The fee for the organist and singer are paid in cash or with a separate check to each person.

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CONSIDERATION OF TIME – It is assumed that couples will be on time for appointments, rehearsals, and of course, the wedding itself. There is no such thing as being fashionably late. Please be considerate of your guests and the church.

THE DAY OF THE REHEARSAL – All required paperwork must be submitted by the rehearsal. Most importantly, this includes the marriage license.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS – As you know, Sacred Heart is not a large church, so a few modest arrangements would be appropriate and tasteful. Any flowers and bows that are not secured to the pews must be fastened with large rubber bands. No bows or flowers can be secured with tape, wire or plastic clips, Please inform your florist that they will scratch the pews.

Please take a note of the following:

Runners are **not** permitted in Sacred Heart Church. The floor of this church is an attractive tile. The paper runners that are often used will cause those who walk on it to slip. Trees or arches are **not** permitted in the church. Flower girls are **not** permitted to scatter rose petals when they walk down the aisle. If you wish to do a unity candle in your ceremony, you will need to purchase one as we do not provide one.

PHOTOGRAPHY – Your photographer should be a professional one. As a courtesy, photographers and videographers should introduce themselves to the priest who is the celebrant prior to the wedding to discuss what is permitted. Flash cameras may be used in the church. Photographers are never allowed in the sanctuary. They should never distract during the celebration of the Mass. No extra lighting is allowed to be set up in the church. Existing lighting in the church is sufficient. If time permits, pictures may be taken in the church after the wedding. Remind your photographers to please be aware of the sacredness of the church when gathering after the wedding to take pictures. Respectful behavior is assumed. (Realize that there is a 5:00 Mass on Saturday evening. All should be out of the church by 4:30 pm)

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH – The throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals or any other item is not permitted. The steps of Sacred Heart Church are somewhat steep and we want to avoid accidents that would affect the celebration of your wedding.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE HANDICAPPED – There is a ramp into the church on the south side entrance to the church. There is also an accessible bathroom in the church.

DIRECTIONS – You will be given a printed sheet with directions to Sacred Heart. Please include them with the invitations to your guests.

A FINAL WORD – We hope that you will find these guidelines helpful. They are intended to ensure a reverent and joyful celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. It is our conviction that time and effort spent preparing for your Sacrament will help to ensure a lifetime together. We look forward to celebrating your Sacrament with you! May Christ abundantly bless your love for one another.

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