***ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH***

*14200 East Old U. S. Highway 12*

*Chelsea, Michigan 48118*

*734.475.7561 stmarychelsea.org*

*Congratulations to you both! The people of St. Mary Church share in your happiness as you begin to make plans for your life together as husband and wife.*

*On your wedding day, the love that you will publicly profess to one another is the same love, which is at the heart of our faith, for marriage itself images God. Sacred Scripture tells us about this. When God created man in his likeness, He said “It is not good for a man to be alone; let us make him a helpmate equal to him.” It was within the intimacy of their relationship that God meant for a man and woman to find greater perfection and happiness, drawing closer to Him as they draw closer to one another.*

*God continued this revelation through the prophets who used the example of married love to describe the infinite mercy, compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, and understanding that is the expression of God’s love and fidelity that is present in a marriage relationship.*

*Christ himself speaks of the happiness of the kingdom of heaven in terms of a banquet that was prepared for a wedding feast. St. Paul goes a step further and says that marriage is a great mystery, which signifies the relationship between Christ and His Church. Just as Christ died for us to redeem us and make us holy, so too must a husband and wife have this same kind of sacrificing love for one another.*

*As Christians we believe that marriage is much more than a social institution, much more than a religious blessing added onto a legal contract. It is a personal commitment to life-giving love and a way to holiness. That is why, as Catholics, we recognize marriage as a sacrament; a sign by which two people make the love of Christ present to each other and to those around them. Through living out their life together as husband and wife, a couple are not only drawn closer to Christ themselves but reveal the nature of Christ’s love to others.*

*A wedding isn’t a happy ending to a love story. It is a happy beginning to a life-long relationship of love in Christ. That is why the Church places so much emphasis on preparation for marriage. The pages that follow will explain the procedure and process you will need to follow in planning for your wedding and preparing for your life together. We have also included some supplemental material, which we hope you will find useful and informative as you plan for your special day.*

*Our parish community looks forward to welcoming you and serving you. Together we pray that God will bless you abundantly during this time of preparation and throughout your married life.*

 *Yours in Christ,*

 *William J. Turner, PhD, KCHS*

 *Pastor*

***THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION***

*Marriage preparation is part of the ministry of the Church to engaged couples. It is the process of their coming together in the Sacrament of Marriage. It is a time during which the couples focus on their relationship and commitment to one another. It is a journey of faith in which the two people have an opportunity to examine, appreciate and grow in their own personal self-esteem, their faith, and their love, within the context of the parish faith community. It is an opportunity for the parish community to give of itself and to extend its love, faith, and concern to the engaged couple.*

*The goals of a process of marriage preparation are:*

1. *To further the involvement of the engaged couple with the parish faith community and the pastor and deepen that relationship. This is similar to the purpose of other sacramental preparation programs*

*And it draws the couple into the life of grace lived by the entire parish family.*

1. *It is a sacramental preparation which enables the engaged couple to come to a richer understanding*

*of marriage as a sacrament, as a covenant, as a vocation, and to an ever-deepening experience of*

*the strength of the sacrament as they progress through their marriage.*

*By this sacrament, persons in marriage share in the mystery of the unity and creative love which*

*exists between Christ and His Church, as well as to help each other grow in this Christian Life and*

*the attainment of personal holiness.*

1. *The process of marriage preparation involves the couple in the development of skills which will be*

*needed for marriage and parenting. Engaged couples will bring widely varying skills to a potential marriage, depending on their backgrounds, their education, and their maturity.*

*These skills may include communication and adjustment within the relationship; the personal and*

*relational dimensions of sexuality; defining roles within the particular marriage; economic considerations in setting up a home; relating to in-laws, and the community at large; and parenting.*

1. *Finally, the process of marriage preparation seeks to support and affirm a couple’s relationship as it moves toward the marital commitment. The various assessment instruments used and programs offered extend to the couples’ ways of discovering the strengths in themselves, one another, and their relationship, as well as surface areas that need to be developed and enhanced.*

*Through the dialogue, discussion and participation in parish marriage preparation programs, a greater understanding of one another can be achieved and possible areas of differences, which could lead to conflict later in the marriage, could also be resolved.*

*The realization of the above goals of marriage preparation in the Church is meant to form a solid foundation on which a couple may build the framework of their married life. Yet, only by a daily living in the grace of God and an unwavering commitment of selfless love and uncompromising fidelity to one another, can the process be ultimately accomplished.*

***\*\*PLANNING FOR YOUR WEDDING – PREPARING FOR YOUR LIFE TOGETHER***

***WHAT DO WE DO FIRST?***

*At least 9 months before the anticipated date of your wedding, contact the priest and arrange for an appointment with him. At this first meeting you will set the wedding date and he will reserve the church for you. At this time the church fee is due ($800 parishioners - $1000 non-parishioners).*

*Although weddings may be celebrated any day of the week except Sunday and Holy Days, most are scheduled for Friday evenings or Saturday morning, afternoons, or evening. A nuptial Mass lasts about 40 minutes; a wedding celebrated outside Mass normally lasts 30 minutes.*

*Coordinating available dates for reserving the church, which match with the availability of our hall or the facility where you plan to hold your reception, can be a source of some frustration. Therefore, it is not unusual for couples to have their initial meeting with the priest 12 months in advance of their planned wedding date in order to reserve the church.*

***BESIDES RESERVING THE CHURCH, WHAT ELSE HAPPENS AT OUR FIRST MEETING WITH THE PRIEST?***

*The priest will fill out certain forms required by the Church, which deal with personal data on both you*

 *and your fiancé; birthdate, place of employment, family history, sacraments, received, etc. If yours is an*

 *interfaith marriage, a special dispensation form will also be completed.*

*You will also be asked to complete a pre-marriage inventory (FOCCUS). The inventory takes 45 to 60 minutes, so your initial meeting will last approximately 1.5 hours.*

***WHAT IS THE PRE-MARRIAGE INVENTORY?***

*Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS) was created to deal with current issues and needs in marriage preparation. This instrument is designed as a series of statements, which seek to help you discover your strengths and the strengths in your relationship, as well as surface areas, which need to be discussed and developed between you.*

***WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE TAKE THE INVENTORY?***

*Within a few months after your initial meeting with the priest, a parish couple will contact you. This married couple will invite you and your fiancé to meet with them in their home to discuss the inventory. You may meet more than once with the team couple. These meetings will be scheduled at your mutual convenience and are part of our Marriage Prep Program.*

***WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO BETTER PREPARE OURSELVES FOR MARRIAGE?***

 *You are about to enter into a covenant relationship with one another and with the Lord. Regular reception*

 *of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation will strengthen and heal you not only during this time of*

*preparation but throughout your married life. If you are not already attending Sunday Mass together, we encourage you to do so.*

*We also* ***require*** *that you make plans to attend an Engaged Seminar. This weekend seminar offers couples space and time to focus exclusively on one another and explore their thoughts and feelings about their future life together.*

*Classes on Natural Family Planning (using the Sympto-Thermal Method) are offered locally. Call the office for information.*

***WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR MARRIAGE?***

*Besides the forms for the Diocese of Lansing, which the priest will complete at your initial interview, you will need to present the following:*

1. *BAPTISM CERTIFICATE – Unless you and / or your fiancé were baptized at St. Mary, you will each need to give the priest a current copy of your baptism certificate. You must call or write the parish or church where you were baptized, and they will be happy to send you a copy free. An old certificate is not acceptable.*
2. *MARRIAGE LICENSE – Before you can obtain your marriage license, the State of Michigan requires*

*that you receive counseling on – and be offered testing for – sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.*

*This counseling, and the appropriate certificate, will be provided when you attend the Natural Family*

*Planning Information Evening. This certificate is good for 60 DAYS. It must be presented to the County Clerk’s Office in the county you reside in - NO LATER THAN 3 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING. The clerk will issue you your license.*

1. ***Please note that your license needs to be dropped off to the Office no later than three (3) days prior to your wedding!***

***WILL WE MEET THE PRIEST BEFORE OUR WEDDING REHEARSAL?***

*While the priest is happy to meet with you if needed, St Mary has two Wedding Coordinators.* ***You should make plans to meet with the coordinators about 6 months before your wedding so that they may answer any questions you may have and/or assist you with wedding liturgy.*** *You will also meet with them one month before to ensure that all readings and such are in order and approved by the Priest.*

 ***FEE MUST BE PAID IN FULL ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY.***

*This is also the time to reserve the church for your wedding rehearsal. Rehearsals last about 45 minutes. The coordinators will conduct the rehearsal, helping to finalize the ceremony plans and answer any final questions you may have. They will also be at the church for the entire wedding.*

***CAN SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE LOCAL PRIEST OFFICIATE AT OUR WEDDING?***

*Ordinarily a priest or deacon from St. Mary will be the officiant. However, a priest who is a relative or good friend of yours can be delegated by the pastor to preside in his place. Other clergy are also welcome to assist in the celebration. If you wish someone other than our priest to officiate, just let the priest know at your initial meeting with him. Visiting clergy are required to observe our parish and diocesan customs. They are not permitted to ignore parish regulations on marriage ceremonies and they must request permission from their diocese or their order to officiate at the wedding.*

***CAN WE PLAN OUR OWN WEDDING CEREMONY?***

 *Since your wedding centers around the two of you, it is only natural for you both to be involved in planning*

 *the details. Today’s Catholic marriage ritual makes that possible. When you meet with your priest you*

 *will receive a booklet which contains all the options for readings, prayers and blessings from which to*

 *make your selections. As you plan for your day, your Wedding Coordinators will be happy to assist you.*

 *Remember: Many weddings surround the bride coming up the aisle. Christian weddings express both the*

 *bride and the groom who celebrate today. Couples at St. Mary are encouraged to express active*

 *involvement of both parties at their wedding ceremony.*

***WHAT ABOUT THE MUSIC FOR OUR WEDDING?***

*The parish and / or the wedding coordinators will be happy to provide you with information on available organists, soloists and other musicians. The attached Music Planning Guide outlines those times in the liturgy when music is appropriate, as well as the “type” of music that can be used. Our parish musicians will also help you with your music selections. It is important that you contact an organist soon after you set your wedding date. Times spent in consultation with the bride and groom and in rehearsal are included in the fees.*

***Appropriate fees are suggested by individual musician and are the responsibility of the bride and groom.***

***WHAT FEE IS REQUIRED IN GETTING MARRIED?***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Church (parishioner)* | *$200 Check Made Out To St. Mary Church* |
| *Church (non-parishioner)* | *$400 Check Made Out To St. Mary Church* |
| *Priest/Deacon* | *$250 Check Made Out To Priest or Deacon* |
| *Wedding Coordinators* | *$175 For Each Wedding Coordinator* |
| *Musicians* | *Responsibility of the bride and groom.* |

*Make your check payable as listed above, one to the priest or deacon, one to each wedding coordinator and one to the church. The inability to make these offerings will never exclude someone from being married at St. Mary. Please discuss this with the parish priest.*

***The church fee MUST BE PAID IN FULL ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DAY. (Remember to pay your musician directly)***

***ARE ALTAR SERVERS REQUIRED FOR A NUPTIAL MASS?***

*No, however, we can provide them for your Mass if you would like us to do so. Our Wedding*

 *Coordinator’s are also there to assist with this.*

***WHO MAKES THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FLOWERS FOR OUR CEREMONY?***

*The bride and groom make their own arrangements for flowers with the florist of their choice. Two arrangements are usually placed near the altar, but never on the altar itself. Floral arrangements placed in the sanctuary may be left in church following your wedding. Your florist may deliver the flowers any time after noon (or by special arrangement with the coordinators) on your wedding day, setting the arrangements in the gathering space. The florist should leave the bridal bouquets, corsages, boutonnieres, etc in the Brides Room, which will be unlocked.*

*Bows or greenery may be tied to the pews, but no tape or tacks may be used. These must be removed before you leave the church and disposed of in the trash bin located at the north end of the parking lot.*

***White aisle runners are******not*** *used at St Mary, due to the possibility of tripping / injuries.*

***CAN WE HAVE PICTURES TAKEN DURING THE CEREMONY?***

*Professional photographers are always welcome to take pictures or make videotape during your ceremony. They are NEVER allowed in the sanctuary during the ceremony. A tripod for videos can be placed on the outside of the sanctuary on either side. Once the ceremony begins, the (still) photographer should stay out of the center aisle. The photographer can take pictures from the side aisles or from the back of the center aisle. Photography is allowed from the center aisle during the procession and recessional. We do ask, however, that family members and / or friends refrain from taking candid pictures during the ceremony. \*A word of caution – when taking pictures toward the back of the church, the glass wall may reflect the flash. Also note: St. Mary has a beautiful Garden of Peace for outdoor pictures.*

***PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND CLEAN UP MUST BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN ONE HALF HOUR BEFORE THE START OF THE SATURDAY EVENING MASS.***

***ARE DRESSING ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR THE WEDDING PARTY?***

***THERE IS NO SMOKING, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR FOOD ALLOWED IN THE CHURCH DURING REHEARSAL AND ON THE DAY OF THE WEDDING.***

*The Bride’s room is at available for the bride and her attendants. This room is located in the Gathering Space, adjacent to the women’s restroom. There is a full-length mirror in the restroom. The entire wedding party should be dressed prior to arriving at the church. The only person that can get dressed at the church is the bride.*

***THE BRIDE SHOULD DESIGNATE SOMEONE TO CLEAN UP THE BRIDE’S ROOM BEFORE LEAVING CHURCH.***

***MY FIANCE IS NON-CATHOLIC. CAN OUR WEDDING TAKE PLACE IN HIS / HER CHURCH?***

*Under certain circumstances--yes. The wedding may take place in the church of the non-Catholic party, with or without a priest assisting. However, the proper forms for authorization must be completed by the priest and both you and your fiancé must take part in a Catholic marriage preparation program. Your priest can advise you further on this.*

***IN INTERFAITH MARRIAGES, IS IT STILL REQUIRED THAT THE NON-CATHOLIC PARTY SIGN A DOCUMENT PROMISING TO RAISE THE CHILDREN IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH?***

*The document is still required; however, it is the Catholic party who must sign it. (This is a change in Canon Law). This document states that the Catholic party will remain true to the faith, seeking to have all children from the union baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church.*

***IN INTERFAITH MARRIAGES, WILL THERE BE HOLY COMMUNION?***

*Holy Communion is the sign of unity and reception of it is restricted to Catholics. It is a sign of disunity for one of the couple to receive communion while the other and their family may not. We therefore do not usually have a Mass or Communion Service at an inter-faith marriage*

***IS THE PARISH CENTER HALL AVAILABLE FOR OUR WEDDING RECEPTION?***

*You are welcome to rent the parish hall.*

***HOWEVER NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE PERMITTED.***

## MUST DO’S

Make sure photos are completed, bride’s room is clean and the guests have exited by 4:00PM for Saturday weddings. St. Mary regular weekend mass on Saturday begins at 4:30PM.

*Relax and enjoy the preparations. Marriage is a beautiful sacrament.*

*Please remember that you are in the Lord’s house and should act appropriately. At the rehearsal and the ceremony, you can still enjoy the events, but PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL.*

*Contact the wedding coordinators with any questions.*

***CAN YOU SUMMARIZE THE STEPS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION?***

1. *Make an appointment with the priest to set the date for your wedding, fill out the appropriate forms and complete the pre-marital inventory (FOCCUS).*
2. *Meet with our deacon for follow-up on the inventory to review the results.*
3. *Attend an Engaged Couples Seminar or Marriage Prep Class*
4. *Attend the Natural Family Planning information classes, if possible.*
5. *Meet with the wedding coordinators six months and one month prior to your wedding day to finalize all arrangements for the liturgy.*

***One final word from your parish family –***

***We wish you well and are looking forward to welcoming you among us as a married couple. Please be sure to register at the parish office! We offer you our prayers, our support, and our best wishes for your happiness.***

***PLANNING CALENDAR***

*AT LEAST 9 MONTHS BEFORE THE TENTATIVE WEDDING DATE:*

* *meet with the priest for your initial interview; reserve the church, complete the required diocesan forms and take the pre-marriage inventory.*
* *Obtain copies of your baptism certificates (if not baptized at St Mary) and give these to the priest*
* *make your plans to attend an Engaged Couples Seminar or Marriage Prep Class*

*6 MONTHS*

* *meet with the Wedding Coordinators*

*4 MONTHS*

* *if someone other than a priest or deacon from St.Mary will be officiating at your wedding, obtain a firm*

*commitment from him.*

*Begin planning the liturgical details of the wedding with our wedding coordinators and your musicians. Decide whom you will ask to do the readings, bring up the gifts if there is a mass, etc.*

*Make plans to attend a natural Family Planning Seminar*

*2 MONTHS*

* *If you plan to prepare a printed Mass booklet or program for your wedding, begin putting this together.*

*Apply for the necessary permission to reproduce any copyright materials. Speak to the wedding coordinators about the program before it is printed. Take mass booklet to the printer.*

*1 MONTH*

*- If a visiting priest will preside at your wedding, inform him of all plans for our ceremony.*

 *- meet with the Wedding Coordinators to go over final arrangements for your wedding liturgy*

 *make arrangements for the rehearsal.*

* *Pay the Wedding Fees to Church.*
* *Pay your musician/s’ fees directly to him/her.*

*3 WEEKS*

* *get the marriage license*

*2 WEEKS*

* *notify all those taking part in the ceremony of the time of the rehearsal*

*DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING*

 *- rehearsal and rehearsal dinner / party Don’t overdo it! Get a good night’s sleep!*

***Any questions or concerns…..please feel free to contact the wedding coordinators, priest, deacon, or the parish office staff.***

***Reminder that the wedding fee-- MUST BE PAID AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE WEDDING***

***St. Mary Wedding Coordinators****: Jennifer Dammeyer 734.330.7564*

 *Carolyn Duncan 734.646.3855*

*BE*

*Updated 4/2021*

Agreement to St Mary Church Policy

By the Couple Preparing for Marriage

Congratulations to you both on your upcoming marriage! We are happy that you have chosen St. Mary Church as your location to celebrate the sacrament. Marriage is a sacrament in the Catholic Church and this requires couples to prepare through prayer, Mass attendance, marriage preparation sessions and some required paperwork. As you journey toward your marriage ceremony, we ask you to reflect on the rich tradition of the Catholic marriage rite.

While the liturgy itself is always the same, it also includes many opportunities for personal expression. It is tempting to embrace secular traditions, which often contain appropriate symbolism that can bring additional meaning to your wedding day. While the liturgy itself cannot be adapted to these secular practices, you can incorporate these traditions in your rehearsal, rehearsal dinner and during your reception.

We therefore ask you to read the following policies at this time so that you can prepare your liturgy in keeping with church policy.

1. The unity candle is **not** part of the Catholic marriage rite. The vows and the rings are our symbols of unity. You may wish to use the unity candle at the prayer before your wedding reception meal.
2. All readings at the ceremony must be from the Scriptures.
3. The altar is sacred and used only for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is not permitted to place any other articles upon it.
4. No aisle runners are permitted. The floor is carpeted and aisle runners prove to be a dangerous hazard.
5. *Lit* candelabras may not be used because of problems with wax constantly dripping on the floor.
6. The photographer and/or videographer must be as discreet as possible so as not to detract from the ceremony. Stopping the procession or rites for the purpose of picture taking is inappropriate.
7. The scattering of petals or any materials on the aisle is not permitted.
8. Nothing may be tacked, glued or nailed to the pews. Decorations may be tied.
9. Please instruct your ushers that other than immediate family members, all other relatives and friends may be seated on either side of the church. This symbolizes the unity of the community of witnesses to the marriage.
10. Nothing may be thrown in or outside the church. This includes rice, bird seed, confetti or any other material.
11. Food, alcoholic beverages, chewing gum and smoking on the church grounds is strictly prohibited. If it is discovered that alcohol has been consumed in any fashion by the bride or groom before the wedding, the ceremony will not proceed. If any member of the bridal party is intoxicated at the rehearsal or day of ceremony, they will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony.
12. The entire wedding party is to be dressed prior to coming to the church. While there is a room provided for the bride, she is strongly encouraged to dress, as much as possible, at home before the ceremony and to make the last minute preparations at the church. Please assign someone to be responsible to return the brides room to its original condition.
13. All cell phones must be turned off for both the rehearsal and the ceremony.
14. To make it possible for guests to arrive and depart in an orderly fashion, no guest book is to be signed at the church. May we suggest that you have your guest book at the reception?
15. Secular music may only be played before and after the ceremony. CDs or taped music are not permitted*.*
16. The liturgy allows for only one processional. Therefore the music chosen for the bride will also be used for the entrance for the entire bridal party.
17. During certain parts of the liturgy the assembly will be sitting and kneeling. The couple will have the option to kneel before the altar at these times or to sit in chairs in the sanctuary.

**Agreement to St Mary Church Policy**

**By the Couple Preparing for Marriage**

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The sacrament of matrimony stresses the equality of the man and woman in the marriage relationship. While society may view the wedding as the “bride’s day,” we encourage you to set your sights on your day as a couple. As a bride your focus is the groom; as a groom your focus is your bride. This focus will help you plan a wedding day that supports the equality of a truly sacramental marriage. One optional way to do this is for the bride and groom to process together as they present themselves to the church for marriage.

The wedding coordinators will assist you in preparations and any clarification of how our policies would affect your ceremony plans. If you have any concerns about these policies please consult with the priest or deacons before you sign below.

**We have read and understand the policies above and will prepare our ceremony accordingly.**

**Groom\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Bride\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**In the presence of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Cc: Bride and Groom**

**Marriage Folder**

**Wedding Coordinators**