

St. Mary's Church, Newport Wedding Handbook



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1. MATRIMONY IS A SACRAMENT

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a calling to live out the Christian witness within a married life. We admire your desire to bring your marriage before the Lord. The Sacrament requires a commitment to living out the Christian vocation of married life and giving living witness to the love that Christ has for his Church. It is, therefore, expected that your Catholic faith should be an important part of the lives of those wishing to enter into this Sacrament. St. Mary's Church is not a "venue" and we will not tolerate being treated as such. If we encounter disrespect for the sacrament or our sacred space at any point during the process, we reserve the right to rescind your privilege to have a Wedding Mass in our church.

2. SETTING YOUR DATE AND OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS

NOTE: We will only communicate with the future Bride and Groom!

REQUIREMENTS FOR ST. MARY'S PARISHIONERS

- Prior to making any wedding arrangements with us, a bride or groom to be must be registered at St. Mary's parish for nine (9) months and have contributed to the support of our parish either through budget envelopes or online giving. Catholic parties wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Mary's must give evidence of their regular attendance at Sunday Mass and the reception of the Sacraments. No definite plans may be made for the marriage until such a commitment has been evidenced.
- A bride or groom who has moved away and whose parents are registered members in good standing and who regularly contribute to the support of St. Mary's Church either through budget envelopes or online giving will receive due consideration. However, the bride or groom must be an active member of their new local church and provide evidence from their local pastor.
- Summer "dual-resident" members of St. Mary's parish will also receive due consideration. Special permission by one's home pastor must be granted to register as "dual-resident" members of St. Mary's parish.
- All couples are to participate in an approved program of Preparation for Marriage in the Diocese of Providence

REQUIREMENTS FOR NON- ST. MARY'S PARISHIONERS

- Prior to making any wedding arrangements with us, a bride or groom to be must be registered at their local parish. Catholic parties wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Mary's must give evidence of their regular attendance at Sunday Mass at their local church. No definite plans may be made for the marriage until your local priest verifies your Mass attendance and parish support.
- All couples are to participate in an approved program of Preparation for Marriage in their local Diocese.
- Couples are to provide their own priest/deacon and must provide evidence that your priest/deacon has agreed to celebrate your wedding. Your priest/deacon must also submit a Letter of Good Standing from his Bishop or Superior.

RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE YOU SET YOUR DATE:

1. Gather needed documents and send only copies in one package before you inquire:
 - a. You will need a new copy of your baptismal record (re-issued in the last three months).
 - b. You will also need new copies of your First Communion and Confirmation records (if those entries do not appear on the Baptismal record).
 - c. Non-Catholics will need a copy of their birth certificate and two letters from family members stating that he/she has never been married in any way before.
 - d. You will need to provide the name of a priest or deacon who will take the responsibility of preparing all your paperwork (for non-members of St. Mary's).
 - e. A letter from both the bride and the groom expressing why a Catholic Wedding is important to the couple and please tell us about your faith journey as individuals and as a couple.
2. Contact our Office Wedding Coordinator, **Lisa Sullivan**, for the sole purpose of verifying that we have received the above documentation. Once we receive your documents, only then will we discuss a date for your wedding. Always remember that the wedding comes before the reception, and so, be sure you make arrangements for the Church prior to booking your reception site.
3. Your documents will be submitted to the pastor of St. Mary's. Only after receiving the pastor's approval will the wedding date be set.

RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER YOUR DATE IS SET:

1. Meet with your local priest for the required Pre-Marital Investigation.
2. Make arrangements for a marriage preparation program. These are offered at various times and places around the state. If you are from out-of-state, you may participate in a program from your home diocese.
3. Contact St. Mary's organist, Mr. Cody Mead codywillmotmead@gmail.com to begin making arrangements for the wedding ceremony music at least three months prior to your wedding.
4. (optional) Contact a soloist to begin making arrangements for the wedding ceremony.
5. Contact Mrs. Marie Gionfriddo, our Ceremony Coordinator at mpgionfriddo@gmail.com or at 401-266-4145 three months prior to your ceremony. She will assist you in selecting the readings and will explain the finer details of the Catholic Wedding Ceremony.
6. Be sure to obtain your **Rhode Island Marriage License** well in advance (one month).
and **bring it with you to the REHEARSAL. BY LAW: NO MARRIAGE LICENSE = NO WEDDING**
7. Pay major church fees within two months after registering for your wedding date.
See Financial Arrangements section below.
8. Pay all minor fees / gratuities one month before the Wedding Day.
See Financial Arrangements section below.
9. Verify the date, time and details of your wedding by filling out St. Mary's Ceremony Check List form and returning it at least two weeks before the wedding. BE ON TIME.
10. Finally, relax and enjoy your preparations and your Wedding Day. Focus on the truly important things that will create fond memories and contribute to the overall happiness of your marriage.

3. REGULATIONS REGARDING THE USE OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

DIGNIFIED AND RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR

Please remember that you are guests in our beautiful, historic Roman Catholic Church; you have not RENTED us. What we do is sacred, thus we expect the best from you, your wedding party and your guests while on our premises.

ALCOHOL ANYWHERE INSIDE OR ON CHURCH GROUNDS

Being intoxicated or possessing alcohol is completely disrespectful of the sacredness of the Wedding Mass. If alcohol or intoxication is suspected within the wedding party or bride or groom, the priest will simply conduct a short wedding ceremony and not celebrate a Holy Mass. Further, if a bride or groom is found with alcohol or intoxicated, a notification will be included in your permanent sacramental wedding record or the wedding may be cancelled.

Scheduling

Weddings on Saturday are to be scheduled no later than 2:00 PM; and no later than 3:00 PM during the week. There are no weddings on Sundays or holidays.

Parking for Rehearsal

School parking lot (Parish Center lot) will be open and all chains down. The Sacristy door will be unlocked. All participants will enter the Church through this door. **The wedding coordinator will inform the wedding party of these details beforehand.**

PUNCTUALITY FOR REHEARSALS AND THE WEDDING CEREMONY IS ESSENTIAL.

Rehearsals

All parties involved in the rehearsal are to be present at least five minutes before rehearsal time. All rehearsals are held promptly at 5:00 PM on the day before the wedding. Your wedding rehearsal should take less than an hour. We will not wait for late arrivals.

Wedding Day

Ushers are to be present at the Church at least one half hour before the ceremony.

The Groom and Best Man should be in the Sacristy at least one half hour before the wedding. The Bridal Party should arrive at least fifteen minutes before the ceremony.

Punctuality is a sign of respect for all involved parties. Weddings beginning later than 10 minutes after the agreed start time will forfeit their "Late Arrival Deposit." Any weddings which linger in our Church after the ceremony will also forfeit this fee.

Decorations:

In as much as St. Mary's Church has such natural beauty, all floral arrangements will be placed within the Sanctuary, and should be in keeping with proper Church etiquette and may remain in the church or be removed immediately after the ceremony. Bows, flowers and other decorations may only be tied via ribbons to the ends of the pews. Anything that is taped or tacked to any part of the church will be removed before the ceremony and you will forfeit your "Clean Up" deposit.

Photographer:

Photographs and videos may be taken during the ceremony but discretion is advised. No one is to step into the sanctuary. Access to the choir loft is strictly prohibited. Please instruct your photographer to introduce him/herself to the priest before the ceremony. The dignity of the Liturgy should never be interrupted. No photos are allowed after the ceremony.

Carpet / Aisle Runner:

St. Mary's does not allow the use of any carpet. Tile floors covered by carpet / aisle runner create a safety hazard.

Kneelers:

Please alert us if the bride and groom prefer to sit rather than to kneel throughout the ceremony.

Rice, Confetti and Bubbles:

The throwing of rice, confetti, or other materials, or blowing of bubbles in or around the Church is strictly prohibited and will result in the immediate forfeiture of your Clean Up Fee.

Receiving Lines:

Receiving lines are not permitted within the Church or in the outdoor courtyard. After the wedding ceremony, all wedding party members and guests are encouraged to proceed directly to the reception site. As weekends at St. Mary's are very busy, ample time is needed to prepare the Church and parking lots for the scheduled Masses. Your consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Parking:

Please inform your guests that we have limited parking available. All cars must be removed from the parking lots immediately following the ceremony so that people coming to later Masses may have room to park. **Cars left in the parking lots will be towed.** The towing company number is 847-4000. Parking for the wedding rehearsal is available in the Parish Center parking lot.

Additional notes:

The bride and groom are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance some time before your wedding. There is nothing quite like starting with a clean slate between you and God!

If you plan on living within St. Mary's Parish boundaries after your marriage, please return to the Parish Office in the near future to register as a family.

4. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Church Fee: Our Wedding Coordinator will discuss your fee with you.

Payable immediately upon registering for your date.

The remaining fees are payable one month before the wedding date.

Late Arrival / \$200.00. Made payable to CASH.

Clean Up Fee: Your "Late Arrival / Clean up" check will be returned to you if your wedding starts at the agreed upon start time. You will forfeit this if your ceremony starts 10 minutes later than the agreed upon time. You will also forfeit this if the church has been disrespectfully dirtied - we take great pride in its cleanliness.

Organist: \$250.00. Please make separate check payable to Cody Mead, St. Mary's Music Director and Organist. Mr. Mead's abilities are exceptional. Contact him at least 3 months before your wedding at codywillmotmead@gmail.com to choose your wedding music.

Soloist: Please make separate check payable to the Soloist you chose from a list in consultation with the Music Director. Mr. Cody Mead can also be contracted as a soloist.

Celebrant: Fr. Kris von Maluski (Pastor of St. Mary's) does not receive a stipend; therefore, it is customary to give him a gratuity.

If St. Mary's provides a celebrant other than Fr. Kris, then St. Mary's will collect your stipend to give to the priest directly.

Ceremonial Consultant:

Mrs. Marie Gionfriddo will assist the bride and groom with the choosing of readings and will explain the finer details of the ceremony. She will be there at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding to see that everything runs smoothly in the Church. Three months prior to your wedding, contact Mrs. Gionfriddo at mpgionfriddo@gmail.com or at 401-266-4145 after 6:00 PM to make arrangements. Please be sure to show her your appreciation.

Altar It is traditional to offer them a monetary gift of \$20.00 each.

Servers: Altar Servers will be provided only upon request.

5. GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

In order to insure that the dignity and reverence proper to the celebration of any Liturgy in the Church be maintained, we are offering the following guidelines for any photographer and/or videotaping in St. Mary's Church:

- All photographers and videographers, amateur or professional, must follow these guidelines: They are not permitted to operate anywhere within the Sanctuary area of the Church.
- They may set up and/or use their video cameras and microphones only from the pillar at the top of the Memorial Boulevard aisle of the Church. No extra lighting may be used for camera work anywhere in the Church.
- No extra microphones shall be attached anywhere in the Church. Our pastor will not give permission to have a microphone attached to him.
- Photographers are not permitted to wander around the Church during the Wedding Ceremony of the Celebration of the Mass. They may **not** stand in the Center Aisle during the Mass. Access to the choir loft is not permitted.
- Photographers should not hinder the procession of the wedding party either entering or leaving the Church.
- Before the arrangements for photography/videotaping are made, the couple should discuss with the priest the use of picture taking in the Church to avoid any difficulty later. The photographer should introduce himself/herself to the Celebrant before the ceremony to receive any last minute instruction or to ask any questions.

These guidelines are necessary to prevent annoying distractions and intrusions during the ceremony and to maintain proper reverence and devotion during the liturgical celebration. We hope that everyone will understand and respect these rules and abide by them.

6. GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING EVENT PLANNERS

St. Mary's does not invite Wedding Event Planners to the Wedding Rehearsal or to the Wedding Ceremony. Catholic Weddings are sacred and are best left in the hands of our coordinator who understands the sacramental nature of the Catholic Wedding Ceremony. So to state it clearly - Once the bride and groom enter the doors of our church - we are in charge – your Wedding Event Planners stay outside.

7. MUSIC POLICY AT ST. MARY'S

Contracting of St. Mary's Organist

Contact St. Mary's organist, Mr. Cody Mead, to begin making arrangements for the wedding ceremony music. You may contact him immediately upon having your date set but no later than three months prior to your wedding. Rehearsals, contacting and exceptional situations may cost extra. Please remember that it is the couple's responsibility to contact our organist; his services are not an automatic arrangement. Contact should be made at least three months before the wedding. Mr. Cody Mead is entitled to a "Bench Fee" as he is our Director of Music, thus, if you chose not to have him as your organist, you must still pay his fee.

Contracting of Singer(s)/Other Musicians

The couple should consult our organist before contracting musicians, including singers, for the wedding. Their fees usually range from \$100 - \$200. **If you contract singers or other musicians please note that the couple is solely responsible for the fulfillment and payment of those contracts. These fall outside St. Mary's jurisdiction.**

Music Selections

As the wedding ceremony is in context of the Mass, it is important to remember that all music selections should be *sacred* as opposed to *secular*. That is, the music, particularly sung music, should be religious in nature. For this reason, all music selections must be approved by our Director of Liturgical Music. It is advisable to contact our organist as soon as the wedding date has been arranged.

There are currently several "wedding music" CDs on the market, serving as excellent guides to selecting music for the wedding ceremony. These discs can be found in most record stores. In addition, the organist and soloists can suggest music for the ceremony.

When planning your wedding ceremony music, the couple should consider the following:

- * Seating of the Mothers (optional)
- * Bridesmaids' Processional
- * Bridal Processional
- * Responsorial Psalm
- * Offertory
- * Communion
- * Recessional

All questions regarding wedding music should be directed to the organist.

8. WEDDING REHEARSAL AT 5:00 PM

Remember, you are entering a Sacred Place and we are preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. We reserve the right to simply end a rehearsal if parties are not conducting themselves in a respectful and prayer fashion.

We begin promptly at 5:00 PM. We will not wait for late comers! Only those involved in the wedding ceremony should be present (Bride, Groom, ushers, bridesmaids, parents, ring bearer, flower girls, readers, etc.) Time will be spent arranging everyone and walking through the ceremony so that everyone will feel comfortable on the wedding day. Make sure that any last minute changes are discussed and questions answered. The Church and parking lots will be secured after the rehearsal. Please be sensitive to this. Thank you.

The Wedding Party will go immediately towards the altar and will be seated in front pews.

1. Opening prayer – Let us pray together the Our Father and ask the Lord to guide us today and tomorrow. “Our Father” (recited by all).
2. The two readings and Prayer of the Faithful will be practiced.
3. Presenting the gifts of Wine and Bread will be practiced.
4. BEFORE THE REHEARSAL make a list of the way you want the procession to process: Example – will the maid of honor, bridesmaids, and ushers walk in single file, as a couple, etc. and give the list to Marie Gionfriddo.
5. The processions up and down the aisle will be rehearsed.
6. Reminder regarding punctuality for the wedding – procession of Bride and attendants begin on time.
7. Announcement regarding removal of automobiles after the rehearsal and tomorrow also.
8. Marie Gionfriddo is responsible for securing the school parking lot after rehearsal; please remove your cars.

9. WEDDING DAY REMINDERS

BE ON TIME!!!!

Summer Traffic in Newport can be horrendous. The Jamestown and Newport Bridges can be backed up for miles. Please inform your wedding party and guests that the ceremony will not be delayed. It causes great stress! It is not fair to your guests or to St. Mary's staff. Unless there are unavoidable circumstances, if the wedding is very delayed, the priest may forgo a Holy Mass and simply perform a shortened wedding ceremony.

Groom and Best Man:

The groom, best man and ushers should arrive at least 30 minutes before the wedding. The groom and best man should go to the Sacristy and wait there for the beginning of the ceremony.

Ushers:

- Greet and escort guests to their seats.
- The main door of the Church will be used for the wedding. It will be closed after the bride has entered.
- Ushers do not seat anyone after the bride has arrived and the mother of the bride has been seated.
- Ushers return to the sacristy for the groom's procession before the bridal procession.

Bride:

Please arrive at least fifteen minutes before the wedding is scheduled to allow time for your bridesmaid to get into position. It is not polite or fashionable to keep your guests or our staff waiting. If there is a problem en route, please call one of your ushers so that he can keep everyone informed. SUMMER TRAFFIC in Newport is horrendous!!!

Parents and Bridal Party:

Please assemble at the door immediately and prepare to process in. The Ceremonial Consultant will direct the activities in the back of the Church and will inform the Celebrant when everything is ready.

10. GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION

For Catholics

Catholics fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when they receive Holy Communion in fulfillment of Christ's command to eat His body and drink His blood.

In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, communicants should not be conscious of grave sin, have fasted for an hour and seek to live in charity and love with their neighbors. Persons conscious of grave sin must first be reconciled with God and the Church through the sacrament of Penance. A frequent reception of the sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For Other Christians

We welcome to this celebration of the Eucharist those Christians who are not fully united with us. It is a consequence of the sad divisions in Christianity that we cannot extend to them a general invitation to receive Communion. Catholics believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life and worship of the community. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist, and for which we must all pray.

For Those Not Receiving Communion

Those not receiving sacramental Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For Non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus. While we cannot extend to them an invitation to receive Communion, we do invite them to be united with us in prayer.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops
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