

**SACRED HEART PARISH
62 SCHOOL STREET
MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA, MA 01944**

AND

**SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH
52 MAIN STREET
ESSEX, MA 01929**

978-526-1263

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Dear Engaged Couple,

It is with great joy that we, your parish staff, welcome you as you begin to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. We are ready to assist in making your marriage a lasting encounter of love with each other and an expression of the love of God. Marriage in the Catholic Church is more than the celebration of the couple's love for each other, it also presupposes a relationship of faith with God and with the Church. The Sacrament of Marriage in the Church solemnizes marriage in the context of prayer. Great care should be taken to see that the prayer for this special moment is reverent, graceful, and beautiful and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us. The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is incomplete unless it is filled with song, with prayerful gestures and with silence in which we hear the voice of God in our lives. In this spirit, we provide the following Archdiocesan and Parish Guidelines so that this time of joy will not only be an experience filled with happiness, but also one that expresses faith in and reverence for God, in whose love we have been created.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

1. MEETINGS WITH PRIEST:

This first meeting will enable the priest and couple to get acquainted. *Marriage arrangements and times cannot be accepted over the phone.* Subsequent meetings are part of the preparation for marriage. As the wedding date draws near, attention will shift to planning the wedding liturgy.

2. MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM:

We feel strongly that couples contemplating marriage should attend a Marriage Preparation Program. Various parishes and retreat centers offer these programs. There are a variety of types of programs such as Engaged Encounter, and other types of weekend retreats. It is suggested that you attend one of these programs as early as possible and at least six months, to one year prior to your wedding date. More information can be found at: <http://www.bostoncatholic.org/MarriageMinistries.aspx>

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

1. Mass or Ceremony:

A Nuptial Mass is the most appropriate celebration for two Catholics as they begin *their* married life. This is the recommended form of marriage celebration for all engaged Catholic couples. There are certain circumstances, however, when a ceremony would be more appropriate. For the celebration of a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic a marriage ceremony, without the celebration of the Eucharist, is usually recommended. You should make your decision in consultation with the priest who is assisting in the preparation for your marriage. You might want to consider the following:

What is our relationship to the Sunday Eucharist? Have we been regularly participating in the prayer life of the community? If you have not been, have you committed yourselves to returning?

If one of you is not a member of the Roman Catholic Church you may want to consider what this means for you and your families. Do you want to include the Eucharist in this celebration in which some will not be able to fully participate?

Who will your guests be? If many of your guests are from outside the Catholic community, you may want to consider celebrating your wedding within a ceremony.

Above all, be open and honest with the priest with whom you are preparing your wedding and make the decision, which will provide the best context for prayer and celebration.

2. SCHEDULING THE TIME OF THE CELEBRATION:

Weddings are scheduled with respect to the couple's wishes and the availability of the church building and parish ministers. **Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays from 11:00 AM through 2:00PM. Weddings are scheduled on Sunday's beginning at 1:00 PM. through 4:00 pm. Friday evenings weddings may begin after 4:00. Due to the parish weekend Mass schedule it is not possible to begin a celebration after 2:00 pm on Saturdays.**

3. MUSIC:

Music is an integral part of the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. The music you select must be prayerful and in keeping with the liturgy of the occasion. The choice must always be consistent with the Church's understanding of worship. Popular songs, even those with great sentimental value for the couple, have their rightful place at the reception and not at the celebration of the Sacrament. The priest and the music ministers can assist you in choosing appropriate music for your wedding. Parish Organist is available to assist in the planning of your celebration. **The musicians with whom you meet will arrange a fee that will be paid directly to them.** If you are not using the services of the Parish Organist, and Cantor, you are reminded that the organist and Cantor are to receive the usual fee, in addition offerings for any guest musicians. This is the parish organist's livelihood and we ask you to kindly bear this in mind. All music selection must be finalized through the parish organist and music director. We suggest that you contact the parish organist as soon as you set the wedding date with the priest.

4. FLOWERS/FLOREST:

Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary on the back altar area on the rear Altar, on each side of the Tabernacle. Flowers are not placed on the Main Altar. When there are several weddings on the same weekend we recommend that couples consider sharing the expenses for floral arrangements. The florist, is responsible for placing the flowers in the sanctuary and setting up the floral arrangements and if pew bows are used, to use elastic bands or wire to attach them to the pews. The use of tape is prohibited as it damages the finish of the pews.

We prohibit the use of an aisle runner or any other type of carpeting. Runners tear easily and create a hazard for the bride and can cause guests to fall.

The florist should prepare the Church an hour before the celebration.

Flowers should be left in place after the celebration for the continued enrichment of our sanctuary and the enjoyment of your fellow parishioners.

In keeping with the norms of the Universal Church, flowers are not permitted in the sanctuary during the season of Lent.

5. PHOTOGRAPHY:

The Liturgy during which you celebrate your marriage is a sacred moment of rejoicing in prayer, song and gesture. While we understand your desire to record this moment, we ask that you observe the following guidelines so that the sacred joy of this day will be preserved.

- ❖ **Photographers and Videographers must consult with the priest or wedding coordinator before the service begins concerning any restrictions that may apply.**
- ❖ Professional photographers and video technicians are welcomed. We ask that only Professional Photographer and Video Technician be employed for the taking of photos during the ceremony. Any relatives or friends taking pictures must remain in their seats.
- ❖ **No photographer or video person is permitted into the Sanctuary (Altar Area) at any time.**
- ❖ Video-photographers are not permitted to roam about the Church once the Liturgy has begun. Video cameras must remain on a tripod once the bride reaches the altar until the final blessing.
- ❖ Only the lighting already available in the Church may be used. No additional lighting may be brought into the Church or used with a video camera.
- ❖ Any wireless sound equipment must be tested for interference with the church system, before the ceremony begins.

6. VISITING CLERGY:

A visiting priest or deacon is welcome to witness your marriage, however, the parish priest should assist the couple with the preparation for marriage. Clergy visiting from out of state are reminded that they must secure permission for the Secretary of State of the Commonwealth (<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/premar/marnon.htm>) . It is presumed that all visiting clergy will adhere to the parish guidelines for the celebration of weddings.

7. LITURGY PLANNING BOOKLET:

The priest will provide you with a booklet to help you plan your Wedding Mass/Ceremony. Within this booklet you will find a number of choices of prayers, readings, vows, etc., that you can select for your wedding. **A handy pullout selection sheet is found at the rear of the booklet to be filled out with your choices and given to the wedding coordinator or the priest at the rehearsal.**

8. DONATION TO THE CHURCH:

Donations to the Parish should be in proportion to the amount spent on the wedding. **The suggested offering is \$350.00 for registered contributing parishioners, and \$800.00 for couples who are not registered parishioners or live outside the parish. Please note that this offering is for the Parish and not to the priest witnessing the wedding.** If you care to give a separate offering to him, feel free to do so. The offering for the wedding coordinator is \$150.00, given at the time of rehearsal. It is customary to give a gift to the two altar servers assigned to your wedding. The recommended offering is \$10-\$20 each.

9. DOCUMENTS NEEDED:

A. Church Documents:

If you are a Catholic, you will need a copy of your baptismal certificate and confirmation certificate sent directly (by mail) to the parish, c/o the priest who is witnessing your marriage. **These should be newly furnished (dated within six months of your marriage) by the parish in which the sacrament was celebrated. Confirmed Catholics will also need to submit a copy of their Confirmation Record in the same manner.**

If you are a non-Catholic Christian, you will need a copy of your baptismal certificate. This document should be furnished by the Church, in which you were baptized.

B. Civil Documents:

You must obtain a marriage license at any town/city hall in Massachusetts before the celebration of the Marriage. You can apply for this license from 30 days before your wedding date. There is a three-day waiting period from the application for a license to its issuance. **Please present this to the wedding coordinator at the time of rehearsal.**

10. WEDDING REHEARSAL:

Your Wedding Rehearsal should be held one or two days before the date of the wedding. These are usually held between 5:30 PM -7:30 PM. Please schedule this with the rehearsal co-coordinator at least two months before your wedding date. Rehearsals are scheduled every 45 minutes. Please be certain that everyone attending the rehearsal is **on time**. All plans must be finalized before the rehearsal. Rehearsals will begin at the time they are scheduled, regardless of those who might be late. The following are asked to be present at the wedding rehearsal: the Bride, Groom, Best Man, Maid/Matron of Honor, Ushers, Bridesmaids, Bride's Father, and any others who will take part in the ceremony (parents/readers. etc.).

11. OTHER INFORMATION:

A. **Penance:** All Catholics should be properly disposed to receive the Sacraments of Matrimony and the Eucharist by availing themselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation before their wedding day. Please consider receiving the Sacrament of Penance before your scheduled wedding date.

B. **Reception:** Due to weekend schedules and other duties, please do not assume that the priest will be able to attend the reception. If you wish him to attend please inform him in writing and he will respond according to his other duties and commitments

11. THE DAY OF THE WEDDING:

- A. **Ushers:** Ushers are asked to arrive at the Church 45 minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin.
- B. **Groom/Best Man:** The Groom and Best Man are asked to arrive at the Church 30-45 minutes before the wedding is to begin. If the groom is not processing in with the bride, he should remain in the sacristy until the wedding begins.
- C. **Bride/Maid of Honor/Bridesmaids:** The Bride, Maid of Honor, and Bridesmaids should arrive outside the Church at least 15 minutes before the ceremony. The Bride should be inside the Church at least 10 minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin. *It is extremely important that your wedding begins at the scheduled time.* Please be aware that your guests arrive 1/2 hour to 45 minutes before the bride arrives. Therefore -if the wedding starts late by 15 minutes, some of your guests have been waiting for an hour before the celebration even begins. When making arrangements for transportation and photographs at your homes and on the Church steps please be aware of the time involved.
- D. **Readers:** We encourage the participation of relatives and friends as readers during your ceremony. Someone of your choice may proclaim the first reading (Old Testament), second reading (New Testament), and Prayers of the Faithful. The readings must be from Sacred Scripture, We highly recommend that you choose someone who is comfortable reading in public and has had some experience in public speaking. Please be sure that your readers know the meaning behind the words and will speak clearly and loudly. If possible, they should come to the rehearsal.
- E. **Gift Bearers:** Members of the congregation sometimes offers the gifts of bread and wine, which will be consecrated at Mass. If you wish, two relatives or friends may bring forward the gifts of bread and wine at offertory time.
- F. **Confetti, Flower Petals, Rice, and etc.** We must insist that you request your guests to refrain from the throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, blowing of bubbles, etc. outside or inside the church. This is due to the danger of a person's falling and being injured and due to insurance regulations. The dropping or throwing of flower petals by the flower girl is not allowed.
- G. **Receiving Line:** Receiving Lines are permitted after your wedding ceremony when there is no conflicting Mass or Wedding Ceremony immediately following. Please inquire with the priest handling your wedding for further instructions on this matter. We suggest that the receiving line should only include the Bride and Groom, their Parents, the Best Man and the Maid of Honor.

13. After the Wedding: Please contact the Pastoral Staff in the parish where your new home is located. Please be involved as much as you can in the spiritual and social life of your parish community.

14. Names and Numbers to remember:

Parishes' Office Mailing Address:

**62 School Street
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts 01944**

Office Phone Number: (978) 526-1263

Parish Fax Number (978) 526-4335

Mobile Phone Contact 978-943-6969
Day of Wedding Darice McIntire

Parish Website: www.mecatholic.org

**Parish Secretary Email
For Wedding Correspondence: shsjbulletin@comcast.net**

Parish Email Address: shsjparishmail@comcast.net

Fr. Paul Flammia's Email: FrPaulF@comcast.net

Organist: Mr. Joseph S. Stella
978-594-4434
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