



MARY PARISH MARRIAGE PREPARATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL INFORMATION

Membership:

Parish membership is an important aspect of married life. Through active participation in a parish community your marriage will grow in an atmosphere of faith and grace through reception of the sacraments and community support. You are not required to be members of St. Mary Catholic Parish to have your wedding here. However, it is important that you are registered in a parish that you plan on attending and being active members of going forward.

Scheduling your Wedding:

Weddings must be scheduled a minimum of six months before they are to take place and are scheduled by contacting the Administrative Assistant to the Discipleship Department, Debbie Cottone. Weddings are not scheduled on Sundays, during the Seasons of Advent and Lent, during the annual parish festival weekend, or the Patronal Feast Weekend. Weddings may be scheduled on Saturdays at 12 Noon, or 2 PM. On Fridays, weddings can be scheduled at 1:30 or 3:30 PM. No more than two weddings will be scheduled on any given date. Rehearsals will normally take place the evening before at either 5 or 6 PM. Please know, we will make every effort to accommodate you on your preferred date.

If either of you has been married previously in either a church or civil ceremony, you must inform the pastor before your wedding is scheduled. This applies to non-Catholics as well as Catholics. In this case, the pastor will assist you in determining what the Catholic Church requires in order for you to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Initial Meeting:

After contacting the Administrative Assistant to the Discipleship Department, you will contact the priest or deacon who will witness your wedding. The purpose of this meeting is to explain the two major phases of the preparation process, to fill out the initial set of papers required by the Church, and to answer any questions which the bride or groom may have.

Baptismal Certificates:

Every baptized Catholic and non-Catholic Christian intending to marry in the Catholic Church must present evidence of his or her baptism.

FOR CATHOLICS: A *newly issued* copy of your baptismal certificate, which is no more than six months old, is required. A new certificate can be obtained by contacting the parish of your baptism and asking them to send a copy to you.

FOR NON-CATHOLICS: A copy of your baptismal certificate, no matter how old, or a letter from the church of your baptism is sufficient.

Marriage License:

Your marriage license must be obtained through the County Clerk's office in the county where one of you is in residence in the state of Wisconsin. If you live in Milwaukee County, you apply for your license at the Milwaukee County Courthouse. The application for a marriage license must be made no less than 6 days or more than 36 days prior to the ceremony. Both applicants must appear in person, bringing with them a certified copy of their state birth certificate and a social security card. For those living in Milwaukee County, additional information can be obtained by calling the County Clerk's office at (414) 278-4067. **You must present your marriage license to the parish when you arrive for your rehearsal.**

THE FORMATIONAL PHASE**Marriage Preparation Conference:**

The couple will participate in a Marriage Preparation Conference sponsored by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. These are a series of videos offered online. Upon completion of the preparation conference, the couple receives a certificate, which they in turn give to the Administrative Assistant to the Discipleship Department. <https://archmil.regfox.com/online-marriage-preparation-conference>

FOCCUS Inventory:

Every couple preparing to be married in the Catholic Church will complete the FOCCUS inventory (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study). This inventory will assist the couple to assess areas of life where both are in agreement with each other and where they disagree with one another. This is not a test but rather an opportunity to see how well couples are communicating about important marriage issues. After both of you complete the inventory, you will be paired with a married couple from the parish who will walk you through the results and help you have a conversation about areas of life with which you differ or that you may not have already discussed together.

THE LITURGY PLANNING PHASE

Once the Formational Phase has been completed, the couple meets with the priest to prepare the wedding liturgy. An explanation of the various liturgical options is included with this packet and will be discussed in detail.

All choices of wedding music are made with the parish Director of Liturgy & Music. The Director of Liturgy & Music is most willing to help you select music for your wedding.

The Director of Liturgy & Music serves as the musician for all celebrations of the Sacrament of Matrimony. A parish cantor leads the sung prayer of the ceremony and is required at all weddings.

OTHER POLICIES REGARDING THE CELEBRATION OF WEDDINGS

On the day of your wedding, you will have a 2-hour time block for arriving, your ceremony and photos after the ceremony: 11:30 – 1:30 PM; or 1:30 – 3:30 PM. Because of time constraints, St. Mary does not permit a receiving line at church.

Please have everyone ready to begin ON TIME for both the rehearsal and the actual wedding liturgy. All members of your wedding party must abide by the following:

- **No smoking is allowed in the church building;**
- **No consumption of alcohol or other behavior-influencing chemicals is allowed anywhere on the parish grounds.**
- **Anyone under the influence of such substances will be asked to leave.**
- **If the bride, groom or other attendants are involved in drinking or using drugs prior to the rehearsal or ceremony, the priest or deacon has the obligation to postpone the marriage.**
- **The marriage, if witnessed while the bride or groom has been drinking, may be considered invalid because of the lessening of one's ability to freely offer their marriage consent due to the influence of alcohol/drugs.**

The Bride's Room, church entry area, and the pews are to be in good order after your wedding. All furniture should be replaced in its original position.

For safety reasons, the parish does not allow the use of aisles runners. The floors are kept clean and aisle runners have proven to be hazardous to wedding guests.

Your church decorations may not conflict with those of the parish and parish decorations may not be moved or disturbed. No flowers/decorations may be placed on top of the altar or in such a way to obscure it. The parish assumes no responsibility for the situating of your approved decorations; you must attend to this.

A Parish Wedding Host will conduct your rehearsal and be present for your ceremony. It is the Wedding Host's responsibility to make sure all the necessary preparations for the celebration of your wedding are in place.

If you have a relative who is a priest or deacon, you may ask the pastor for permission to have them preside, concelebrate or assist with your ceremony. A priest who is a family friend is welcome to concelebrate the wedding liturgy.

- ❖ If the priest or deacon is from outside of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, they must present a *Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry* from their bishop or religious superior. This letter is sent to the Chancery Office of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and a copy is sent to St. Mary Parish. **Please note: if the priest or deacon fails to present this document, he may not function in any capacity at your wedding.**