



Guidelines for the Sacrament of Matrimony

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! May God Bless you two during this happy time. The following guidelines will give an overview of what lies ahead of you as you prepare to celebrate your marriage in our parish church.

The Catholic Church requires that a **preparation program** be undertaken by an engaged couple before marriage. Your first step, then, is to speak to the pastor of St. Mary's to schedule meeting dates for this preparation. At this time, until our new pastor, Father Scott VanDerveer, is "in place", we will skip this step. This fall when he is settled here at St. Mary's, rest assured that he will be reaching out to you to schedule your initial appointment with him.

We expect that you are seeking a Catholic marriage because your faith is important to you. Please note the following:

- You should begin the steps at least six months prior to your intended date of marriage.
- Weddings cannot take place at St. Mary's during the following times of year: Sundays, the seasons of Advent and Lent, as well as certain Holy days.
- The following documents (for both the bride and the groom) must be collected and brought to the first meeting with the pastor:
 - A recently-issued Baptismal certificate, which is obtained from the church where you were baptized. (If one party is Protestant, a certificate is also needed from his/her church of baptism.)
 - A copy of your Confirmation certificate, which can also be obtained from the church where you were confirmed.
 - If one or both were married previously, a copy of the Annulment decree from your previous marriage, or a copy of the Death certificate of your late spouse.
 - A New York State marriage license.
 - The certificate that was issued at the conclusion of your Pre-Cana class.
- If you or your fiancé is not Catholic, there are a few additional documents required that the priest will tell you about at your initial meeting.



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- If you and/or your fiancé are Catholic, you will be expected to partake of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) before your wedding. Since the Sacrament of Matrimony is a channel for great grace, you will want to be in the state of grace at the time you receive it.
 - You must attend a Diocesan Pre-Cana conference as a couple. Go to this link for information on how to do that: <https://www.rcda.org/pre-cana>.
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Preparation programs for marriage differ from parish to parish, so don't be surprised if your friend's pastor in another parish has handled marriage preparation differently. All parishes, however, will require attendance at the Pre-Cana conference and private conferences with the priest.

You can ask a priest, or deacon, who is a friend or relative to perform your wedding in our parish if you wish. However, your formal preparation for marriage usually takes place with the pastor in your home parish. Your deacon or priest-friend or relative must contact your pastor to receive formal permission to conduct your wedding here.

During your private conferences with the priest, you will discuss several issues relating to Catholic marriage: why the church considers marriage a sacrament, what the church believes are the responsibilities of husband and wife, the need for consistent practice of our faith in order to make for a happy and successful marriage, raising happy and faith-filled children, natural family planning, cohabitation, obstacles in today's culture that make it difficult for permanency in marriage, the duty of husband and wife to keep the marriage alive and mutually nourishing. You should not feel defensive about discussing these topics openly and honestly. They are intended to benefit you and your future family.

At the end of your preparation sessions, you will discuss plans for your marriage ceremony. You will need to contact Sue Wright, St. Mary's Director of Sacred Music, for help in choosing your scripture readings for your ceremony and the people who will read them at the ceremony. She may be reached at: at 518-338-8464 or swright@stmarysglensfalls.org. You will also have opportunity to choose the liturgical music for your celebration. You will be given a Planning Book by your pastor, which should make this easy for you.

There are two options for celebrating weddings in the Catholic Church:

1. The marriage ceremony within Mass.
2. The marriage ceremony outside of Mass.

We encourage couples to choose the Sacrament of Matrimony within Mass since the reception of the Holy Eucharist on the day of marriage is a great blessing. However, if one party is non-Catholic, then



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the second option may be a better choice. A priest is always the celebrant of a wedding within Mass. However, a deacon may be the sole celebrant of a wedding if it is conducted outside of Mass, within the Liturgy of the Word. Both ceremonies take approximately the same length of time, usually about an hour.

SPECIFICS

1. Weddings may be scheduled on Friday evenings or Saturdays at Noon, 1 p.m. or 1:30 p.m.
2. Floral arrangements are up to the discretion of the couple. Runners and thrown rose petals, rice, confetti, or birdseed are NOT to be used. No floral arrangements may be placed on the altar itself. Two arrangements on pedestal stands (we have both short and tall stands available) on either side of the altar are usually the best way to decorate the sanctuary. Keep in mind that the church is a sacred space and any activity which compromises proper decorum should be avoided.
3. You should inform your photographer that he/she must use discretion when filming your wedding, exerting care not to become a distraction. Group pictures may be taken after the ceremony in the church. Keep in mind that other services may be scheduled after your wedding, so these sessions should not be overextended.
4. Limousines should not block the handicapped parking spaces around the church. If your wedding is on Saturday, all vehicles from your wedding must vacate the front of the church by 3 p.m.
5. Rehearsals must be scheduled before the wedding, usually on the day/night before the wedding. Please ask your bridal party to be on time, also ask the readers in the wedding ceremony to be present. The sacrament of reconciliation (confession) will be available after the rehearsal for Catholics in your bridal party.
6. You **MUST** bring your marriage license to the rehearsal! Your two witnesses will sign the license at that time. Get your license from the local municipality about four weeks before the wedding. (To get information about how to get a license, call City Hall or the Town Clerk.)
7. The priest would like to attend your reception to deliver the prayer before meals (before the toast), but given the busy schedule of today's priests, it would be better for you to plan to have a member of the family or bridal party deliver this prayer.

MUSIC

Contact Sue Wright at 518-338-8464 or swright@stmarysglensfalls.org regarding music for your ceremony. You will need a cantor/soloist to sing the mass music, and Sue will help you with this. If



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you have your own musicians, they will be expected to comply with the religious tradition of the church and only use music suited for Catholic worship and approved by Sue Wright.

FEES

FOR REGISTERED PARISHIONERS OR THEIR CHILDREN: The offering for a wedding in our parish is \$500 including the organist's fee. The cantor/soloist fee of \$75 is payable at the rehearsal (please mark cantor on an envelope with \$75 cash.) (Note: no one is ever refused a liturgical service in our parish because of an inability to cover the cost of fees.)

FOR NON-PARISHIONERS: The offering for a wedding in our parish is \$950. The cantor/soloist fee of \$75 is payable at the rehearsal (please mark cantor on an envelope with \$75 cash.) You will need a letter from your home pastor giving permission for your wedding to take place in St. Mary's.

For us to book the day and time of your wedding on our parish calendar, you will have to forward the FULL fee to the Rectory office. The date cannot be confirmed until after we receive the payment. The check should be made payable to St. Mary's Church. Please write "Wedding" in the memo section of the check. Payment may be mailed to St. Mary's Church, 62 Warren St., Glens Falls, NY 12801.

Susan Wright, Director of Liturgy and Music

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GETTING MARRIED? HERE ARE SOME FAQs!

Q: What is Pre-Cana?

A: Pre-Cana is a marriage preparation program for those who want to have a Catholic wedding.

Q: How can I find a marriage preparation program near me?

A: The Diocesan marriage prep programs can be found at <https://www.rcda.org/pre-cana>.

Q: My clergy person said I need a copy of my Baptismal certificate?

A: Although you may have the original, a current copy is needed. This can be easily obtained through the church you were baptized in. Give them a call and they will mail it to you.

Q: What if the church that has my Baptismal certificate has been closed?

A: All records from parishes within the Albany Diocese are safely transferred when a church has closed. To access your records online, use the RCDA institutional and parish search tools at <http://www.rcda.org/parishes.asp?type=ir>.

MARRIAGE TIMELINE:

12 MONTHS Prior to Ceremony:

- Contact the church you wish to be married in.
- Meet with the pastor or deacon or Sue Wright to select a wedding date and time, and discuss the parish requirements for a wedding celebration.

9 MONTHS Prior to Ceremony:

- Select readings (one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament and Prayers of the Faithful (Universal Prayer/Intentions)
- Plan to attend a marriage preparation program (Pre-Cana). Register now.

6 MONTHS Prior to Ceremony:

- Create your guest list. Design or select and order wedding invitations.

3 MONTHS Prior to Ceremony:



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- Meet with the pastor to discuss decoration requirements, which may include placement and size of floral arrangements, and meet with the music director.

2 MONTHS Prior to Ceremony:

- Finalize the invitations and ceremony details. Publish a wedding announcement in the church bulletin. Make sure all documentation has been delivered to the pastor, example baptism records. Finalize music and reading choices.

3 to 4 WEEKS Prior to Ceremony:

- Meet with the pastor to discuss last minute details. Communicate with the music director any last minute changes or music details.

DAY (or Two) BEFORE THE CEREMONY:

- Participate with a priest, the music director, and the wedding party in a rehearsal ceremony.