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Guidelines for the Sacrament of Matrimony

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! May God Bless you both 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.

To begin, please call our **Parish Business & Operations Manager Gary Patton (518-792-0989 x 116 gpatton@stmarysglensfalls.org)** to see if we can accommodate your choice of wedding date and time. Once you have a confirmed date, the process can move forward.

After you hear back from Gary, the second step will be to eventually expect a call from **Father Scott VanDerveer** to set up a meeting so he can get to know you and assess the path forward.

To support engaged couples, the Catholic Church requires that a preparation program be undertaken before marriage. If you are a parishioner of St. Mary's, this will be initiated by Fr. Scott. If you are not, Catholic Church regulations require that you contact the priest in the town in which you live to undertake the process. Getting to know that local priest is a key component of choosing a Catholic wedding, whether or not you attend church services in that parish.

These general guidelines will help smooth your planning for a Catholic wedding...

- Pick a wedding date at least six months from the day you contact us; less time than that is insufficient
 - If either of you have been married before, pick a date at least 18 months away
- Weddings are usually scheduled for Saturdays at Noon, 1:00, 1:30 or 2:00 p.m.
 - Weddings cannot take place at St. Mary's during certain seasons or on some Holy Days
 - Fr. Scott is not available to officiate your wedding on a Friday, but if you have another priest to officiate, Fridays can be an option



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- The following documents (for both the bride and the groom) must be collected and brought with you to the first meeting with the priest:
 - A fresh, recently-issued **Baptismal Certificate** (which is obtained by calling the secretary at the parish where you were baptized)
 - If one party is Protestant or from another form of Christianity, a certificate is also needed from his/her church of baptism
 - 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** (available at any town or village clerk office in NYS)
 - A **letter from your home pastor** giving permission for your wedding to take place in St. Mary's instead of at your local parish
 - 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
- You can ask a priest or deacon who is a friend or relative to perform your wedding in our parish, if you wish (only Catholic priests and deacons can officiate Catholic weddings)
- Save this link so you know where to go when the priest explains the "Pre-Cana Conference" to you: <https://www.rcda.org/pre-cana>

Some components of preparation programs for marriage can 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.) At the end of your preparation sessions, you will discuss plans for your marriage ceremony. Ben Rowley will help you with choosing your Scripture readings and selecting the people who will read them at the ceremony. You will also be given a planning guide & have the opportunity to choose the liturgical music for your celebration.



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CEREMONY PLANNING

- There are two options for celebrating weddings in the Catholic Church:
 - The marriage ceremony within a Mass (with communion)
 - The marriage ceremony outside of Mass (without communion)

The reception of the Holy Eucharist on the day of marriage is a great blessing. However, if one party is not Catholic, then the second option may be a better choice so that guests and family members don't feel excluded. 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. Both ceremonies take approximately the same length of time, usually about an hour.

- Floral arrangements are up to the discretion of the couple
 - Runners and rose petals, rice, confetti, or birdseed are NOT to be used, since we do not have personnel to clean the church or front steps before our weekend Masses
 - 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
 - Flowers may be left in the church after the wedding or taken away by the wedding party
 - Keep in mind that because the church is a shared, sacred space, some wishes may not be able to be accommodated
- Please inform your photographer that he/she must use discretion when filming your wedding, exerting care not to become a distraction in a sacred setting.
 - 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



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- Wedding Livestream: There is a 2-camera HD live stream system in the church. The fee to have one of our technicians stream your wedding live to the St. Mary's Facebook page or to your personal FaceBook page or YouTube channel is \$75 (please mark "live stream" on an envelope with \$75 cash and bring to rehearsal)
- Limousines should not block the handicapped parking spaces around the church. If your wedding is on Saturday, all vehicles from your wedding need to vacate the front of the church by 3:30 p.m. so our parishioners with mobility issues will have an accessible entrance to the church for Saturday afternoon Mass.
- Rehearsals must be scheduled with Ben or Lisa for before the wedding, often on the day/night before the wedding.
- You must bring your marriage license to the rehearsal; your two witnesses will sign the license there.
- Because of weekend Masses and parish events, the priest is rarely able to attend the reception or to drop by to deliver the prayer before the meal, so it would be better for you to plan to have a member of the family or bridal party deliver this prayer (perhaps a godparent)

MUSIC

- You will need a cantor/soloist to lead the music, and our music director will help you with this. If you have your own musicians, they must comply with the religious tradition of the church, choose music suited for Catholic worship, and receive approval by Ben Rowley and Fr. Scott
- Please understand that for the sake of community harmony, we are not able to set unsustainable precedents, so all decisions are made in consideration of the greater good.



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FEES

FOR REGISTERED PARISHIONERS & THEIR CHILDREN:

- The offering for a wedding in our parish is \$400
 - The organist's fee will be based on the musical and logistical complexity of your plans
 - The cantor/soloist fee of is payable at the rehearsal, (Please mark "Cantor" on an envelope with requested fee)
 - Please note: no parishioner 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 \$1,000
(This fee is an important fundraiser for our 150-year-old Gothic church)
- The organist's fee will be based on the musical and logistical complexity of your plans
- The cantor/soloist fee is payable at the rehearsal
 - **Please note: Couples may not join the parish at the time of booking their wedding
- To secure your wedding on our parish calendar, you will have to send the FULL fee to the parish office; in fairness to all, the date cannot be confirmed until we receive the payment
- Checks are made payable to **St. Mary's Church** (with "**Wedding**" in the memo section) and mailed to **St. Mary's Church, 62 Warren St., Glens Falls, NY 12801**



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Gary Patton, Parish Business & Operations Manager

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gpatton@stmarysglensfalls.org

Fr. Scott VanDerveer, Pastor

518-792-0989 x120

fatherscott@stmarysglensfalls.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is Pre-Cana?

A: Pre-Cana is a marriage preparation program for those having 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>.

REVISED: April 17th, 2023