



Sacrament of Marriage Preparation

at

St. Catherine of Siena Church

10 N. Pocono Road
Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046

Phone: 973-334-7131
FAX: 973-334-3202

Congratulations on Your Engagement!

Planning your wedding tends to be one of the more exciting times of your life. We are happy that you have chosen St. Catherine of Siena Church to be part of your special day. We want to help you plan for this sacrament which is a lifelong commitment between the two of you and the Lord. Since planning a wedding can be overwhelming at times, we have prepared this booklet to help guide you through the process. There are many questions that will arise and are very common. This booklet will provide guidance for those concerns. Please be assured of our thoughts and prayers for you at this very special time in your life. Trust in God to give you divine grace and wisdom throughout this preparation period and throughout your married lives.

We are here to help you

Reverend Jared J. Brogan, Pastor

jbrogan@stcatherine-ml.org

Sally Zahuta, Parish Secretary

parishoffice@stcatherine-ml.org

Kathie Hegarty, Organist

973-219-4305

SECTION I – PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Parish registration – The exchange of wedding vows in the Catholic Church is a sacrament (Matrimony) when it occurs between two baptized Christians. All sacraments, including marriage, are celebrated in the presence of a faith community, within a consecrated church structure itself (as opposed to catering halls, gardens, beach, etc.) Also, registration as a member of our faith community signifies your commitment to practicing the Catholic faith which includes regular attendance at Sunday Eucharist. Either the bride- or groom-to-be (or their family)¹ should be a registered, practicing member of the parish.² Non- registered Catholic parties are asked to obtain a letter of permission from their own parish.

Days and times for weddings – Weddings are celebrated at St. Catherine’s on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. To accommodate our housekeeping and liturgy schedules, Friday weddings may be celebrated in late afternoon, Saturday weddings may be celebrated at 1 p.m. or 3pm, and Sunday weddings may be celebrated at 3pm.

Steps in sacramental preparation – The wedding preparation process is designed to help you assess your readiness for sacramental marriage. During this time an issue may arise that deserves more time and attention. It is better to address these issues during the preparation period when steps can be taken to resolve differences before the sacrament is celebrated. Please refer to the following “steps” for an overview of the process which can serve as a convenient checklist.

Steps in the Marriage Preparation Process

It is assumed throughout this process that the couple (or Catholic party) is attending Mass on Sunday. The best way to spiritually prepare for the Sacrament of marriage is by celebrating the Eucharist on a regular basis.

12 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

___ Schedule an initial meeting with parish priest by contacting Sally Zahuta in the parish office parishoffice@stcatherine-ml.org

___ Tentatively schedule your wedding date and time with the parish priest

8-10 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

___ The priest will put you in touch with the diocese to schedule FOCCUS, the online pre-marriage inventory.

6-8 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

¹ Bride or groom was raised in the parish and registered with parents.

² The parish is the spiritual home of an individual and it is the norm that all sacraments are celebrated in that parish.

___ Attend “God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage” & “Marriage Skills” Contact St. Paul Inside the Walls at 973-377-1004 or <https://insidethewalls.org/sites.ecatholic.com/gods-plan-registration>

___ Schedule a meeting with priest to discuss the sacrament and complete paperwork.

3-4 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

___ Turn in your copies of your baptismal records to the parish office

___ Contact Kathie Hegarty to discuss music (973-219-4305)

2 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

___ Schedule a meeting with priest to plan the liturgy.

1 MONTH BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

___ Contact Mountain Lakes Borough Hall (Registrar of Vital Statistics) at 973-334-3131 for instructions on obtaining the marriage license.

WEDDING REHEARSAL (typically a night or two before the wedding with the presiding priest)

___ Church, Presider, musician fees (total will vary) are due

SECTION II – PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Guidelines – Your wedding ceremony will be primarily planned by you with assistance of the priest. Your information packet contains a booklet titled “Together for Life,” which contains guidelines for planning Catholic wedding ceremonies that are liturgically appropriate, and walks you through the process. When you meet with the priest who will preside at your wedding, he will review your plans for the wedding ceremony and make any modifications that may be needed. We strongly encourage you to follow the guidelines we have provided for you and to work closely with us in order to minimize the possibility of any last minute changes deemed necessary by the priest due to lack of liturgical appropriateness. This will help everyone involved to avoid disappointment and keep stress levels to a minimum.

Deciding whether to have Mass – If you choose to celebrate Mass as part of your wedding ceremony, the order of liturgical rites would be Liturgy of the Word (scripture readings), Marriage Rite, Liturgy of the Eucharist (consecration and communion). If you choose to plan a wedding ceremony outside of a Mass, the order of liturgical rites would be Liturgy of the Word (scripture readings), Marriage Rite, Blessing.

It is appropriate and encouraged that a Nuptial Mass be celebrated when both the bride and groom are Catholic. A ceremony is suggested when one of the members is a baptized Christian

of another denomination or unbaptized. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony is not lessened when Mass is not chosen. There are many reasons why you may or may not choose to celebrate your wedding with Mass. Your priest can help you make that decision when you meet with him.

The Catholic wedding – While allowing for certain personal preferences and choices, the wedding liturgy follows certain prescribed norms.

- The congregation actively participates in both spoken and sung parts of the liturgy
- Readers may be family members or close friends (3 readers is the norm)
- Gift bearers may be family members or close friends (2 gift bearers is the norm)
- Eucharistic ministers may be family members, close friends (one to three ministers is the norm)
- Musicians and cantors are usually provided by the Church; any non-Parish musicians, cantors or soloists must be approved
- Music selections are sacred or classical pieces

Entrance procession – The entrance procession usually involves grandparents, parents, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ring bearers, flower girls, and bride. Some of the aforementioned or all may be involved.

Choosing scripture readings – Liturgy of the Word generally consists of a first reading from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a second reading from the New Testament, and a Gospel from the New Testament. There are several appropriate scripture selections you may choose from in the booklet “Together for Life” in your information packet (pp 16-84). Usually the readings are proclaimed by your chosen reader and the psalm is sung by the cantor. The Gospel is read by the priest. The readings suggested in the packet are suggestions. Other readings may be chosen from scripture.

Vows – The exchange of wedding vows in the Catholic Church is a liturgical celebration and, therefore, certain formulas must be used according to the Church. Several beautiful ways of exchanging vows can be found in the “Together for Life” booklet in your information packet (p. 88). Couples do not write their own vows.

Rings – Rings are blessed and given to each other as a sign of your love and fidelity. You will repeat the words of exchange after the priest.

Intercessions – Suggestions for prayers can be found in the “Together for Life” booklet in your information packet (pp 91-92). It is appropriate to remember deceased relatives and friends in these prayers.

Presentation of the bread and wine – If you choose to have a Mass, parents, members of the wedding party, family or friends may bring the bread and wine to the altar (2 gift bearers is the norm).

Sign of peace – The priest will ask the congregation to share a sign of Christ’s peace with one another. You may exchange a sign of affection with each other, your families and wedding party.

Communion – If you choose to have a Mass, those who are Catholic will receive communion at this time.

Introduction and recessional – The priest will introduce you to your family and friends as a married couple for the first time. It is at this time that the couple kisses each other. You will leave the church followed by the wedding party, families and guests.

Local/Cultural Traditions – Some couples like to include traditions in the liturgy. Such traditions can be discussed with the priest.

Choosing music – Because marriage in the Catholic Church is a liturgical celebration, songs played right before or during the wedding ceremony should focus on the religious nature of love – the love that exists between God and the couple being married – and the sacred character of Holy Matrimony. This means that any music which would be appropriate at Mass or other liturgical rites is also appropriate for your wedding. You have many songs to choose from in our Gather hymnal and from many other sources as well. The place to focus on the romantic aspects of love is at the reception which is a social and cultural celebration. Work closely with Kathie Hegarty (973-219-4305) on the music at this stage of your planning.

If you have a friend or family member who is a musician or who is trained as a cantor, they are welcome to assist with the approval of Kathie Hegarty. Any instrumentation may be used and coordinated through Kathie. Many couples choose a family member or friend as a guest soloist or musician for one particular piece of music. All of this can be coordinated at the time you pick your music with Kathie.

SECTION III – AT THE WEDDING REHEARSAL AND CEREMONY

Respect for God’s house – Please respect the church as the sacred place that it is. We ask everyone to behave in a manner appropriate to being in church. Please refrain from chewing gum, eating, using profane or inappropriate language, letting children run around in the church, etc. In order to keep the church clean for your wedding and the services following your ceremony, food, drink and chewing gum are prohibited in the worship space. Smoking inside the church building is prohibited.

The wedding rehearsal – We ask that everyone arrive before the appointed rehearsal time. We ask everyone involved to carefully listen to the instructions. Any questions or problems that arise will be answered/resolved before the rehearsal is completed. Each step of your wedding ceremony will be practiced at the wedding rehearsal. Rehearsal typically lasts one hour. All those who have a part in your wedding ceremony should attend the rehearsal to become familiar with their roles, that is members of the wedding party including flower girl(s) and the ring bearer if applicable, readers, gift bearers, parents and grandparents. A smooth, well-ordered rehearsal makes for a less stressful wedding ceremony.

Flowers and decorations – We ask couples to keep their flowers and decorations tasteful and simple to keep the focus on the sacrament. When planning for flowers and decorations, please keep in mind the nature of the liturgical season in which your wedding ceremony will be held. For instance, during the weeks after Christmas and Easter the church may already be decorated with Christmas trees and poinsettias or Easter lilies and you will not need to do much more.

During other seasons you may choose to decorate with floral arrangements at the ambo and/or on the top steps on the right side of the sanctuary, and/or behind the altar against the wall. Flowers are not to be placed in front of the altar. Flowers may be attached to pews by a band. No tape is to be used on the pews. Your florist is welcome to visit our church prior to your wedding if they are not familiar with its layout. Flowers may be delivered on your wedding day one hour before the ceremony begins.

For reasons of safety and maintenance rice, birdseed, sparklers, poppers, bubbles, real flower petals and the use of aisle runners are not allowed in or outside the church. These represent safety hazards or maintenance problems and cannot be used on church grounds.

Candles – The only candle you will need to supply is the large unity candle with tapers if you choose to light one during your wedding ceremony. Most come with candle holders or we have a holder you can borrow.

Photographs and videotaping – Please remember that a Catholic wedding is a liturgical ceremony. Photographers and videographers must be mindful of this sacredness. The priest can speak with them prior to the wedding ceremony. Flash photos may not be taken. Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary area. Posed pictures may be taken in the church before or after the wedding depending on the schedule of the parish.

Stipends for Marriage Preparation Process & Church Ceremony

Marriage Preparation Process	Amount
FOCCUS (Pre-marital Inventory)	Varies
Marriage Skills	Varies
God’s Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage	Varies
Marriage Ceremony /Parish Fees	Amount
Church (Parishioners)	\$400
Church (Non-Parishioners)	\$500
Other Stipends	Amount
Presider	Free will donation
Organist	\$200
Cantor	\$200
Additional Musicians	Varies
Servers	\$20 each

All stipends are due at the rehearsal.

Parish expenses/Church stipend check to be made out to “St. Catherine of Siena Church”

Other stipend checks to be made out to the individual or cash.

WEDDING MUSIC SELECTIONS

PROCESSIONAL/RECESSIONAL

Air on a G String (Bach)
Canon in D (Pachelbel)
Trumpet Voluntary (Clarke)
Jesus Joy of Man Desiring (Bach)
Arioso (Bach)
Bridal Chorus “Here Comes the Bride”
(Wagner)
Ode to Joy (Beethoven)
Trumpet Tune (Purcell)
Spring (Four Seasons Vivaldi)
Ave Maria (Schubert/Gounod)
Water Music (Handel)
Wedding March (Mendelssohn)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 128 “Blest are those who love you...”
Psalm 98 “All The Ends of the Earth” (Refrain
II)
I Have Loved You

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

(optional)/**Offertory**
Not for Tongues of Heaven's Angels
God Is Love
When Love is Found
God in the Planning
I Have Loved You
Irish Wedding Song
Wedding Song (Stokey)
Wherever You Go

COMMUNION

One Bread, One Body
I Have Loved You
Prayer of St. Francis (Make Me a Channel of
Peace)
Here I am Lord
We Are Many Parts
Panis Angelicus

FLOWERS TO MARY (optional)

Ave Maria (Schubert /Gounod)
Hail Mary Gentle Woman
Our Lady of Knock