

Wedding Guidelines



*St. Patrick Church,
615 Havre De Grace, Md 21078
Parish Office (410) 939-2525*

Dear Friends in Christ,

Congratulations upon your engagement. This guide is presented to you to assist you in planning your wedding here at St. Patrick Church.

You have chosen to celebrate your marriage through the Sacrament of Matrimony in this community. We celebrate with you as you mark the beginning of this sacramental union and stand ready to support you in your life together. Your example of love and fidelity for each other gives us all a living sign of God the Father's love and fidelity for us.

The directions in this guide reflect the laws and policies of the Roman Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and St. Patrick Church. They are intended to aid you in preparing for your wedding. Please call the Parish Office at 410-939-2525 with any questions you may have.

Be assured of our prayers and best wishes as you prepare to confer upon each other this sacrament of life-long commitment, rooted in: grace, love, permanence, and fidelity.

May God bless you always!

The Priest and Staff at St. Patrick Church

Time of the Wedding

Weddings are celebrated at St. Patrick Church on Fridays evenings and on Saturdays at 12p.m. or 2p.m. If you have in mind a different time and day please let the office know so that your request can be considered.

Parish Membership

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament. Therefore, we would hope that at least one of those who wish to receive this sacrament at St. Patrick Church is an active Catholic. Our prayer is that this joyous time in your lives will be an opportunity for you to reconnect with your faith and this parish. If you are not a member of this parish and would like to join, please call the office

Church Offering

\$500.00

- For costs associated with the use of the church.
- Deposit of 1/2 the fee is due with church reservation form. The remainder is due at least one month prior to the wedding.

Preparation

The Marriage License

A Harford County marriage license, obtained from the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Harford County Courthouse, is required before the marriage may take place. The license is to be presented to the priest before the wedding- typically at the rehearsal. There is a 48-hour waiting period for a marriage license, which is valid for six months from the date of issue.

Baptismal Certificates

Baptismal certificates are required of all Christians who wish to marry in a Roman Catholic ceremony. For a Catholic, your church of baptism must issue the baptismal certificate. A record of the baptism of a non-Catholic Christian may be dated anytime. Certificates may be obtained from the church where your baptism took place.

Meeting with Clergy

You should make an appointment with the priest or deacon who will perform your ceremony at least six months prior to your anticipated wedding date. At your first interview, the priest or deacon will discuss the Catholic Christian understanding of marriage and your convictions regarding marriage and family. The date for the wedding will be confirmed following this interview. Materials to assist in planning the ceremony in keeping with the guidelines of the Church will be provided.

Marriage Preparation

The Archdiocese of Baltimore requires that all engaged couples take part in a marriage preparation program before entering the Sacrament of Matrimony. Both the bride and groom must participate in one of the following: Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter Weekend, or a Sponsor Couple Program. We also offer marriage preparation workshops here at St. Patrick Church. Information on marriage preparation can be obtained by contacting our offices on 410-939-2525.

Official Witnesses

Two witnesses are required for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Typically, this is the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor.

Wedding Rehearsal

The time and date of the wedding rehearsal is scheduled with the priest or deacon who will officiate at your wedding. Punctuality is expected of all who are in the wedding party as the priest/deacon may have other commitments following the rehearsal.

The Wedding Liturgy

The priest or deacon will review with you the options for the readings from Sacred Scripture you may choose from for the wedding. If both the bride and groom are Catholic, the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony normally takes place in the context of a Nuptial Mass. In some circumstances, only the Rite of Matrimony itself is used. The priest or deacon will discuss these options with you during your initial meeting.

Readers

Both the Nuptial Mass and the Wedding Ceremony include several readings from Sacred Scripture. We invite you to ask some of your family members or acquaintances to proclaim God's Word during your wedding liturgy. A layperson may proclaim the first and second readings as well as read the Universal Prayer (Intercessions).

Gift Bearers

If the marriage is being celebrated in the context of the Mass, family members or friends may be invited to present the gifts of bread and wine as the altar is being prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Your Wedding Music

The music you choose must be suitable for a wedding liturgy. Popular songs or pieces are often not liturgically appropriate and are therefore discouraged. These of course can be played at your reception. There are many excellent pieces of music from various periods and in many styles that may be used. Church Musician will work with you in choosing liturgically appropriate songs. Our Church Musician should be contacted as soon as possible to arrange an appointment for planning your wedding.

Floral Decorations

One or two arrangements of reasonable size are considered sufficient and appropriate for use within the sanctuary. We request that the arrangements remain in the church to share the beauty that they give to the church and to remind every parishioner of their connection as members of the community to the Sacrament of Marriage which has been celebrated. We also have a flower guild which creates fresh floral arrangements each week. If you are interested in paying to have the sanctuary floral arrangements created for your wedding, please call the office and speak to our Office.

Aisle Runner

If you wish a white runner to be placed in the center aisle for your wedding, you will need to rent or purchase this from your florist. The florist usually needs to know the length of our center aisle; it is 80 feet in the main church.

Decorations

We ask that care be taken to protect the beauty of the church and not to move any furnishings. Tape is not to be used on the pews for ribbon bows or other decorations as it damages the wood finish. Bows may be slipped on with a ribbon loop if desired.

Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, Rose Petals, Balloons, etc.

Insurance regulation, maintenance requirements, and concern for the environment prohibit us from allowing the throwing of rice, bird seed, or confetti outside of the church before or after your wedding ceremony. Balloons are not allowed inside the main worship area in the church.

Photographs/Video

The photographer should be made aware of the sacred nature of the marriage ceremony and avoid being a distraction during the liturgy. Pictures may be taken during the ceremony, but the photographer may not enter the sanctuary area. Video cameras must be on a tripod and remain stationary throughout the service. The photographer/ videographer should consult with the priest or deacon prior to the start of the ceremony. The wedding party is requested not to use the church for photographs after the service for more than 30 minutes out of consideration of those who will be entering the church for another wedding and or our Saturday Confessions. Couples might consider having some photographs taken prior to the ceremony in the interest of saving time.

Again, congratulations on your upcoming marriage.

If there is anything we can do to be of assistance, please let us know. May the Holy family of Nazareth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph help you to become a holy family.

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