

Sacrament of Holy Matrimony



SAINT JOSEPH

ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

24 Halsted Street ✚ Newton ✚ New Jersey ✚ 07860

973.383.1985

www.stjosephnewtown.org



COUPLE'S CHECKLIST

- ☐ Secure date and time of wedding with the Parish Secretary at: 973.383.1985.
- ☐ Secure date and time of wedding rehearsal with Parish Secretary.
- ☐ Make an appointment to meet with the priest/deacon to complete the Pre-Nuptial Investigation Form.
- ☐ Make an appointment to complete the FOCCUS Survey.
- ☐ Make an appointment to complete the **God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage Session.**
- ☐ Make an appointment to complete the **Living a Joy-filled Marriage** *(formerly known as Pre-Cana)*.
- ☐ Forward the Guidelines to your Photographer/Videographer.
- ☐ Select the proper Readings and assign Readers.
- ☐ Choose the appropriate people to bring up the gifts.
- ☐ Contact the Director of Music Mrs. Kelly Robinson at: (973-997-3307).
- ☐ Obtain a Civil Marriage License *(within 30 days of the marriage)*.
- ☐ Drop off the Marriage License at the Parish Office prior to the wedding rehearsal.



**Dear friends of Saint Joseph
Parish Family:**

On behalf of our Catholic worshipping community here in Newton, please allow me to congratulate you and your fiancé on your decision to be married in our church.

In an age where many people are just being married by a Justice of the Peace, on the beach or in a banquet hall, I commend you both for choosing to appropriately celebrate your love for each other in our church, before your priest, Almighty God along with your family and friends.

This booklet was compiled in order to assist you and help you prepare for the many decisions that you will make prior to your wedding day. If at any time, you have questions or are in need of assistance or consultation, please do not hesitate to contact me and setup an appointment to meet in person.

Again, my personal thanks and congratulations as you begin making preparations for your wedding day. May the Lord Jesus whose first miracle was at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, strengthen you both with His grace and peace.

Working harder to work together to make a difference,


Father ST Sutton

It is our belief here at Saint Joseph Church, that celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony is a **sacred event**; therefore, preparation for this sacrament should be taken prayerfully, seriously and knowingly.

The ultimate goal of celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage is to enrich your faith life which is already being practiced. However, we realize that not everyone is on the “same spiritual page.” Therefore, this may be a time of grace to re-commit yourselves to the Lord and to promise to return to attending Sunday Mass regularly as a couple before your wedding day, so that when you are married in church, you are already comfortable in this place of worship and in the Lord’s House.

If you are not both Catholics, we would highly recommend that you have a wedding ceremony *without the celebration of the Mass*. This non-Eucharistic ceremony would include Readings from Holy Scripture, a short homily, the exchange of vows and rings, the Nuptial Blessing, the Lord’s Prayer, the Sign of Peace and the Final Blessing. This way your spouse, who is not Catholic, will not be omitted from sharing in the Holy Eucharist on your wedding day, which should be a day of unity, sharing and harmony.

Whether you decide to have a Nuptial Mass or a ceremony, we encourage you to choose appropriate Readings, Readers, music and musicians, in order to celebrate your wedding day with deep meaning.

The following will help you as you journey toward your wedding day.

CONFETTI, RICE BIRDSEED, BALLOONS, FLOWERS:

These are not permitted. They can become hazardous to people, causing them to fall or to animals as well. They are also hard to clean after the ceremony. Might we suggest using the tradition of bubbles or bells after the ceremony.

REHEARSAL:

The time and date should be pre-arranged with the celebrant and cleared with the Parish Secretary before approval is given. It is very important that everyone arrives **on time**. Only the people who are involved in the ceremony (*the ushers, bridesmaids, Readers and the parents of the couple*) should attend, however, all are welcome!

WEDDING FEES/STIPENDS:

To avoid any confusion, it is best to bring these amounts in three (3) separate envelopes to the rehearsal. If such fees/stipends are a financial hardship, please contact Father ST directly. The church donation goes directly to the parish community of Saint Joseph Church to continue its work of proclaiming the Gospel. If you wish to personally give a gift to the celebrant, that is your personal decision.

CHURCH STIPEND	\$500
ORGANIST FEE	\$250
CANTOR FEE	\$250

(Please note that the organist and cantor’s fee are standard. They are paid even if you bring another musician or singer. If financial ability to make a donation to the church is an issue, you can always confidentially speak directly with the pastor about this matter. No couple will ever be turned away from our church for their inability to make a donation).

You should mention your desire to have him celebrate your wedding ceremony when you meet with the parish priest and/or deacon.

FLOWER GIRLS AND RING BEARERS:

It is good to have family members share in the joy of your wedding day. However, no member of the wedding party should ever be a distraction to the prayerfulness and dignity of the celebration. We strongly encourage that flower girls and ring bearers be at least school age. Dropping of flower petals inside or outside church is not allowed.

PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEOGRAPHERS:

We are very aware and conscious of the money that you have paid for these professionals and therefore we only ask that they act professionally. Specifically this means, not interrupting the sacredness of the wedding ceremony by walking up and down the aisles during the Readings, homily, vows or Communion (if there is a Mass). The photographer and videographer can never step up into the sanctuary (that is the tiled portion around the altar area) nor may they obstruct anyone's view. Moving from side to side in the church should be done in the front near the couple or wedding party, but they should go the rear of the church.

Prior to the celebration, these professionals should introduce themselves to the celebrant to discuss any specific requests they may have.



READINGS FROM THE BIBLE:

It may be helpful to go to: www.catholicweddinghelp.com in order to choose the appropriate readings for your wedding ceremony:

- I. First Reading is taken from the Old Testament.
- II. Second Reading is taken from the New Testament.
- III. The Gospel is taken from either Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

READERS:

The people that you choose to read during your wedding ceremony should be chosen for their ability to read in public. Good friends and relatives whom you love are not always necessarily the appropriate choices. People who already read in their own churches are usually the best choices. A copy of their reading should be given to them to practice long before the wedding rehearsal. The First and Second Reading can be read by either one or two Readers. The Gospel is always proclaimed by the priest and/or deacon.

The Prayers of Intercession (*to which we usually respond "Lord, hear our prayer"*) may be given to someone to read as well. During these prayers, members of your family and friends who have died may be mentioned at the appropriate time.

PASTORAL PREPARATION: You will need to contact the priest or deacon to setup an appointment to meet with him in order to complete the necessary diocesan (Pre-Nuptial Investigation Form) and civil marriage forms.

The Diocese of Paterson's Norms for Marriage require that each couple completes the following:

- a.) **God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage Seminar**
- b.) **Marriage Preparation Life Skills Session**
(formerly known as Pre-Cana).
- c.) **FOCCUS Survey**

You may contact the Parish Secretary (973.383.1985) to learn the times and locations of fulfilling these requirements.

GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY-FILLED MARRIAGE:

Is a series of talks based on the Theology of the Body that offers an understanding of God's plan for marriage and human sexuality. You will learn about the beauty and design of Marriage and the gifts that wives and husbands can be for one another.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION LIFE SKILLS SESSION:

Formerly known as "Pre-Cana," this session offers practical insights and assistance in building a successful marriage. Topics covered include: communication, conflict resolution, family of origin, finances and more. BOTH of these sessions may be completed by contacting Saint Paul Inside the Walls at: 973.377.1004 and ask for Mrs. Eniola Honsberger, Director of the Office Family Life.

These sessions should be completed one (1) year prior to the actual date of your wedding and they will provide the necessary certificate upon completion to present to your pastor. Saint Paul Inside the Walls is located at: 205 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940.

The registration fee for both session is one hundred and seventy five dollars (\$175).



DECORATIONS:

Your wedding celebration in church is sacramental and sacred. The decorations for your wedding need to reflect the solemnity and sacredness of the occasion.

Florists are welcome to come into the church and decorate prior to the actual wedding ceremony. It is your obligation to ensure that all travel and gift boxes are disposed of after the ceremony. Leaving them in the pew or in the back of the church is not acceptable. **NO flowers or candles should be placed on the altar.** We also ask that you do not use any tape on the end of the pews as it removes the finish from the wood.

RUNNERS:

Unfortunately, the use of a "runner" or white cloth down the middle aisle is not allowed for insurance and practical reasons.

CHURCH FURNISHINGS:

The furnishings (pews, flowers, ambo, lectern, candle sticks, etc.) are not to be moved by anyone except the priest.

PRESIDING PRIEST OR DEACON:

If there is a priest or deacon in your family or a family friend, we welcome them to be part of the ceremony or to be the celebrant. However, due to recent diocesan policy changes, if this priest and/or deacon is not in the Diocese of Paterson, he must submit a "Letter of Good Standing" from his bishop or congregation (*if he is a religious*) to the pastor.

Our church has several male and female cantors to assist in singing on your wedding day. Outside vocalists are welcome; however, just as in choosing the appropriate person to do the Readings, being a good friend or being good at Karaoke does not qualify them to sing professionally in church.

The “Ordinaries” of the Mass such as the Alleluia, the Holy, Holy and the Lamb of God should be sung by professional, liturgical cantors.

You must remember that music during liturgy is prayer. For this reason, only music that is appropriate to Catholic Liturgy can be used (*that is music which uses traditional liturgical or scrip- tural texts*).



MUSIC SEMINARS:

Our Director of Liturgical Music, Mrs. Kelly Robinson will be more than glad to meet with all couples who plan on celebrating their wedding here at Saint Joseph Church. During this meeting, you will have the opportunity to listen and choose the following:

- Preludial Music (music before the ceremony)
- Processional Hymn (the opening hymn)
- Service Music (Holy, holy, Lamb of God, etc.)
- Recessional Hymn (the closing hymn)

THE FOCCUS SURVEY:

The name **FOCCUS** is an acronym for Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study. It reflects the values and ideals of marriage and the statements in the survey deal with spirituality, religion and moral values. It is taken by all couples who are preparing for marriage; we hope that you view this survey as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and your future spouse rather than just fulfilling the law.

It is a self-diagnostic inventory to help you learn more about yourself and your future spouse. It is a tool to help you name and work through possible issues before you are married and provides feedback in regard to topic areas that are important to marriage. You must contact the Parish Office as soon as possible in order to set up an appointment to meet with the parish facilitator (*This meeting will last approximately one hour*).

VISITING NON-CATHOLIC CLERGY:

If your marriage is between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, we are happy to welcome the clergy of the non-Catholic to participate in the wedding. However, this invitation should be extended by the non-Catholic party to their respective clergy and that minister should be in contact with the priest/deacon who will be the celebrant of your wedding as soon as possible.

NECESSARY CHURCH DOCUMENTS:

The following documents are needed well in advance before the wedding day and should be brought with you when you meet the priest and/or deacon:

a.) **Baptismal Certificates** of Catholic individuals (this is NOT a copy of the original certificate, but a recent original certificate) [*within 6 months*] from the church where you were baptized.

- b.) **Confirmation Certificates** of Catholic individuals (*being Confirmed is not a requirement for a Catholic marriage*).
- c.) **Baptismal Certificate of Non-Catholic** individual (*issued at anytime*).
- d.) **Certificate** of completion of both Marriage Preparation Sessions (from Saint Paul Inside the Walls).

NECESSARY CIVIL DOCUMENTS:



In addition to being married in the church, the priest and/or deacon witnesses the marriage vows for the State of New Jersey as well. As such, you must obtain a civil Marriage License from the local municipality.

The marriage license must be obtained from where either the bride or groom presently resides (this law has recently changed). If **both** the bride and groom live out of state, they must then apply in the town in which the ceremony will take place.

Before making an appointment to apply for a civil Marriage License, all other religious arrangements should be made, including making sure the date of the marriage is available with the church, priest and/or deacon.

An appointment for the civil marriage license application must be made with Newton Township's Registrar Ms. Janien Roberts within thirty (30) days of the marriage date by calling Town Hall at: **973-383-3521, Extension 255** for the date and time of the appointment. The Vital Statistics Office must hold all applications for three (3) days, so please plan accordingly.

The following information must be brought with you for your appointment:

- * Driver's license (*either the bride or the groom's must list a Newton address*). **PLEASE NOTE** that if you physically live in Andover, Hampton or another township, you have to apply to that proper town. that If neither has a license, then a deed or current lease may be used.
- * Original birth certificates. If they are not available, then a U.S. Passport or Immigration Certificate is acceptable.
- * A Social Security Card.
- * One witness over the age of eighteen (18) that speaks and understands English fluently.
- * \$28.00 fee (payable in cash, check or money order).
- * A date will be given to the couple when they may pick up their License. **PLEASE NOTE** that the license is only valid for 30 days after the issuance.

PRACTICAL CONCERNS

ART & ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

GUESTS:

Since the church wedding ceremony is the most important part of this celebration, please encourage your guests to join you in church as you make your lifelong commitments to each other.

MUSIC:

Arrangements are to be made with our Director of Liturgical Music, Mrs. Kelly Robinson at: **973-997-3307**. If you wish to have someone you know sing at your wedding, you must contact Kelly for her approval **before** the wedding day. It is expected that they work in conjunction with Kelly in preparing the appropriate liturgical music program.