

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY



SAINT MARY PARISH - 55 CATOONAH STREET - RIDGEFIELD, CT 06877
(203) 438-6538

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations and prayerful best wishes to you both on your decision to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony. We will do everything we can to make your wedding day a wonderful celebration of the holy bond of Matrimony.

Your marriage ceremony is one of the most important events in your life. As Catholics we believe that the Sacrament of Marriage celebrates more than the love of man and woman. The union of husband and wife is a sign of the covenant of God with His people. The wedding liturgy or ceremony should clearly express the faith of our Church.



SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING



We recommend scheduling your wedding 8 to 12 months in advance, providing adequate time to complete and process all marriage requirements, and we ask that all arrangements be made directly through the bride and/or groom.

WHO MAY MARRY AT SAINT MARY CHURCH?

To schedule a wedding at Saint Mary Church, the bride or groom must be a registered member of our Parish for no less than six months, living in our Parish community. Special consideration may be requested if the bride or groom has a specific connection to our Parish (i.e.: parents are Parishioners, previous Sacraments were received at Saint Mary Parish, etc.). Where neither the bride nor the groom are registered parishioners, the bride must supply Saint Mary Parish with a letter of permission from her parish of registration.

PREVIOUS MARRIAGES

In the event the bride and/or groom have been previously married, please inform our Parish Office prior to scheduling your wedding.

DATE AND TIME

Weddings may be scheduled throughout the year, as follows:

- Fridays at 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM
- Saturdays at 1:30 PM

We do not schedule weddings on Sundays, Holiday Weekends, Holy Days of Obligation, Good Friday, Christmas Day, or Thanksgiving. Other exceptions may apply based on the current Parish calendar.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is held in the Church. The date and time can be flexible but usually scheduled for the evening before the wedding at 5 PM. In attendance should be the bride and groom with their parents, wedding party and all those participating in the wedding (readers etc.)

OFFICIATING CLERGY

The officiating priest/deacon will be assigned based on availability. Requests for a particular priest/deacon will be honored when possible. Should you wish to invite a Catholic priest or deacon from outside our Parish to preside at your wedding, please ask him to contact us for the necessary delegation as required by Church law. If you would like to invite a non-Catholic clergy person to be present, please be sure to inform us.



MARRIAGE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS AND DOCUMENTATION

INITIAL INTERVIEW WITH PRIEST OR DEACON

The preparation process begins with an initial interview of the bride and groom by the presiding priest/deacon. It is at this meeting where a preliminary assessment is made as to your readiness for sacramental marriage, and the necessary documents are determined. In the case of inter-faith marriages or other special circumstances, a dispensation may be required from the Diocese of Bridgeport which takes time to process. Please contact our Parish Office to schedule your interview within 10 to 12 months of your scheduled wedding date.

The following is to be completed no later than 90 days prior to the wedding date:

PERMISSION TO MARRY

Where neither the bride nor the groom are registered parishioners, the bride must supply Saint Mary Parish with a letter of permission from her parish of registration.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM (Pre-Cana)

It is required that every couple to be married at Saint Mary Parish participate in a marriage preparation program approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Please register and do so 3 to 10 months prior to your wedding date. A certificate of completion will be issued at the end of the program which must then be submitted to our Parish Office no later than 30 days prior to your wedding date.

The Marriage Preparation program offered by the Diocese of Bridgeport is a full day of formation, dialogue among the couple, and reflection on the Church's understanding of married love and other important topics such as communication, intimacy, and married spirituality. At the end of the day, couples will appreciate the fundamental components of the human and spiritual elements of sacramental marriage and be empowered to live out that vision in the world.

To register online go to <https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/marriage-preparation/home/>.

SACRAMENTAL CERTIFICATES

From Catholics, the following documents must be submitted:

- A newly issued Baptism Certificate with notations
- First Communion Certificate
- Confirmation Certificate

From non-Catholics, if baptized, a certificate of baptism is required. Copies are accepted.

PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY

Both the bride and the groom are required to meet with a priest/deacon, usually the priest/deacon who will be presiding at your wedding, to provide basic biographical data and respond to questions concerning your freedom to marry and ability to fulfill the responsibilities and commitments of married life as understood by the Church. The interview will take approximately one hour, and all questions and topics of discussion are confidential. This inventory will take place at the initial interview with the presiding priest or deacon.

DELEGATION

Officiating priests or deacons from outside our Parish must request permission from our Pastor to preside at a wedding in our Church. Officiating priests or deacons from outside the Diocese of Bridgeport must also provide a Letter of Suitability from their own Diocese or Religious Congregation in order to obtain delegation.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

The State of Connecticut requires that a Marriage License be issued from the city or town in which the wedding is to take place. In Ridgefield, you may apply for your Marriage License at the Town Hall within the 60-day period prior to your wedding, and we ask that you bring the license to the rehearsal. To apply, you will need a certified copy of your Birth Certificates from the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the City and State of your birth. After the ceremony the civil license is signed by the clergyperson officiating, and our Parish will send it to the Ridgefield Town Clerk's Office. To obtain a license or a copy, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at (203) 431-2783.

MONETARY OFFERINGS AND FEES

There is an \$800 church offering for non-parishioners, and a \$400 offering for parishioners. This offering is appreciated at the time of scheduling. In addition, a free-will offering may be given to the presiding priest or deacon at your discretion. For music services and fees, please contact our Pastoral Associate for Music, Sarah Fox, at (203) 438-6538.



CEREMONY INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES



RECONCILIATION

Although not a requirement, we strongly recommend that the Catholic party or parties receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding rehearsal. Please consult our Church Bulletin for Confession times.

THE MASS AND/OR CEREMONY WITHOUT MASS

The priest or deacon will assist you in planning your marriage ceremony to aid in your selection of appropriate prayers and readings.

Couples should be aware that their wedding is expected to start ON TIME to avoid conflicting with other scheduled Parish Masses or activities. That will also ensure that there is enough time afterward to take photos and greet guests. It is for this reason we ask that the bride and groom arrive at the Church no later than 15 minutes prior to the ceremony.

THE WEDDING PARTY

Each couple is required by law to have two primary witnesses present at the ceremony in the role of best man and maid/matron of honor. There are no guidelines as to the number of people in the rest of the wedding party.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is held in the Church. The date and time can be flexible. However it is usually scheduled on the evening before the wedding at 5PM. In attendance should be the bride and groom, their parents, the wedding party, and any other participants in the wedding ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographers and videographers are welcome but are not allowed in the Sanctuary during the ceremony so as not to distract from the prayerful spirit and reverence of the occasion. They must speak with the priest or deacon prior to the ceremony.

FLOWERS

In accordance with good liturgical practice, flowers may be placed on the *reredos* (sometimes called the “back altar”), in front of the large gold candlesticks, on stands to the rear of the altar, or on the side altars. Flowers may not be placed on the main altar itself.

Flowers in the sanctuary have always been considered a votive offering to the honor and glory of God, and we ask that they not be removed from the Church after the wedding. With this in mind, our Altar Guild will contact you with a less expensive alternative for floral arrangements to be left in the sanctuary.

Please notify your florist that the Church will be available for setup but does not supply flower or candle holders or bows, and that all adornments for the pews must be secured with ribbon or rubber bands. If clips are used, they must be felted on the inside to prevent scratching. Tape is not allowed. Please remove all adornments on the pews after the wedding.

MUSIC

An integral part of planning your wedding ceremony is the music. It needs to be planned well in advance and approved prior to your wedding. Please discuss the music with the priest.

PARKING

Parking is available behind the Church as well as in Saint Mary School parking lot on High Ridge Avenue.

Driving directions to Saint Mary Church may be found on our website: www.smcr.org.

HANDICAPPED ACCESS

Handicapped parking and entrance ramp may be accessed from the driveway at the side of the Church. A wheelchair is available for your use, in the front vestibule.

BATHROOM FACILITIES

Bathroom facilities in the Church are located in the rear gathering space.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Our Church seats approximately 350 people with 18 pews on each side. The length of the aisle is 65 feet. For safety purposes, no runners are permitted.

The throwing of confetti, rice, birdseed, etc. is not permitted in or around the Church.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

SAINT MARY PARISH ALTAR FLOWER GUILD

Anita Barrios
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MUSIC DIRECTOR

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