

So you want to be Married at Church...

A great blessing for a Parish is the celebration in which a man and a woman marry. It is a time of joy for those who are to marry and to their family and friends. In trying to be holy in sharing your lives and love, you remind every member in the Parish to try to live out this same call to holiness in their lives. It really is a time of celebration, for you and your family and this community, and for this we ask your cooperation.

A couple planning to marry needs to share in the life of the Church, and also in the life of the priest who will be the Church and State witness to your marriage. Your regular Church attendance and support wherever you live demonstrates that you are making the Sacrament of Marriage that you request, a high priority. Wherever you decide to live, register and participate in that particular Parish Community.

The following suggestions and standards are given to you. We ask you to be familiar with this information. All of us are concerned for your marriage---your day and your life. We are certain you want to be a part of our life in assisting you in your married life: its beginning, its development, its renewal of God's life in all of us. These suggestions will be reviewed with the priest who will help you in your preparation. If there are any questions on your part, please let him know.

1. Marriage Arrangements - We ask one year notice for your marriage. This allows ample time for a sacramental marriage to be properly prepared. Any investigation needed to be conducted will take time to research. At least three meetings are necessary for the priest during this time.
2. Instructional Sessions – The Family Life Bureau of your Diocese has prepared a program to assist you in preparations, in addition to the meetings you have with the priest.
3. FOCCUS is another vital tool for your preparation **THAT WILL BE EXPLAINED AT FUTURE MEETINGS WITH YOUR PRIEST/DEACON. RESULTS OF THIS WILL BE PART OF YOUR DOCUMENTS.**
4. Documents Required – For a Catholic person, a recent certificate of baptism (within 6 months); and for a person not of the Catholic faith, a certificate or statement of baptism, or non-baptism. These are not returned.

A certificate of permission to marry is required of either party under the age of 21. This is to be signed by parents or guardian.

A Letter of Permission is also asked of a Catholic Party (Bride or Groom) who wishes to marry here but lives in another Parish.

Catholics who are not members of our parish may use our church as a destination for their wedding if:

- a. Their Catholic priest does all the necessary Pre-Cana and preparation paperwork, dispensations and submits all the required documentation to our Pastor.
 - b. Their catholic priest handles the wedding practice and performs the ceremony.
 - c. The wedding date is coordinated with our Pastor.
 - d. Church fees are paid in advance.
 - e. All the requirements and rules of our parish are met.
5. License – A New Jersey Marriage License is obtained in the town of the bride or groom if you have a residence in this State of New Jersey. All people from outside this state must obtain the license from Lower Township. The license is good for 30 days after issue. There is a fee. Bring the marriage license to the Church the night of the rehearsal. One civil certificate is filed at the city Register, another to the State, and one copy is returned to you.
6. Forms of Wedding Ceremonies – All couples are encouraged to be married at Mass. All Catholics are encouraged to receive Communion under both species. Remember there is a Eucharistic Fast for one hour from food and drink. Another form is the Marriage Ceremony which includes prayers, Scripture Readings, Exchange of Vows and Blessing. There are many beautiful options that can make this Sacramental marriage a blessed one for you.
7. Sacrament of Reconciliation – Catholics are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance before their wedding day. This can be requested the evening of the rehearsal.
8. Time of Weddings – Because of the Saturday Vigil Mass the latest Saturday afternoon time can be 1:00 PM. Other times on other days of the week are available and can be arranged. We ask that on the day of the wedding, the groom be present 30 minutes beforehand, and the bride and her party, 15 minutes before time. This shows co-operation and respect not only to the priest who is helping you, but also to the guests who have been invited.
9. Witnesses – We encourage couples to carefully select their Best Man and Maid (Matron) of Honor. They should be Catholic. Also, please try to keep the bridal party to a minimum.
10. Offering –The offering to the church is \$1,000.00 for Destination Weddings. (Any fees you agreed to for musicians and soloists are to be paid to them the night of the rehearsal in separate envelopes. As a courtesy to the priest who works with you, it is suggested that he be remembered in an offering separate from the Church offering). This \$1,000.00

payment, along with the back sheet, returned within two (2) weeks confirms your wedding date that is now tentative. Registered parishioners participating in our parish for at least two years may offer \$500.00 to the church instead of the \$1,000.00 offering for destination weddings.

11. Music – In choosing the music for your Mass or Ceremony, be sure that the words and music express a Sacramental encounter with Christ and His Church. We recommend from our Parish Personnel:

Laura Finucan at (609) 889-7729

Jim Blank at (609) 224-0005

Because of past experiences with visiting musicians tampering, resetting, and arranging our church equipment, there will be a bench fee of \$100.00 made out to St. John Neumann Parish. Laura shall represent St. John of God Church and Jim will represent St. Raymond Church. You may produce your own musicians but our representative must be in attendance.

12. Wedding Rehearsal – This time should be arranged well in advance, with the priest or deacon, and the bridal party being present. Please be prompt and properly attired. The rehearsal time is approximately 1 hour. Anyone with a reading part should also be present. No beverages at all.
13. Photography – Pictures or video tapes may be taken during Mass. We ask to have the person(s) in charge speak with the priest before the Mass or ceremony. Please, no photographers in the center aisle as the bridal party enters.
14. Flowers – We recommend that all flowers brought to the Church remain in the Church. No ceremonial candles are to be used down the center aisle, nor any runners. Nothing shall be thrown at anyone that would fall to the ground in the church or outside.
15. No alcohol on premises whatsoever (at practice or on day of wedding).
If violated the wedding is immediately cancelled.

We ask you to be well acquainted with the information in this brochure. Refer to it throughout your time of marriage preparation. May God bless you both each day of your lives together.

Sincerely,
Rev. Ernest R. Soprano
Pastor