

*St. Mark's Church  
215 Crescent Parkway  
Sea Girt, NJ 08750*



*The Sacrament of Marriage*

## **Pastor's Letter to the Engaged Couple**

Welcome to Marriage Preparation at St. Mark's.

St. Mark's is honored to walk with you as you prepare for a lifetime of love and commitment. Our mission is to support your journey, helping you grow closer to God and each other as you prepare for the sacrament of Matrimony.

Marriage is a sacred covenant—a complete gift of oneself, a promise of faithfulness, and a lifelong commitment. It forms the foundation for nurturing a family grounded in faith and love. At St. Mark's, we suggest couples spend the first six months of their engagement strengthening their relationship, and the following six months focusing on the wedding celebration.

A Roman Catholic wedding is beautifully simple and meaningful. Through your public vows and consent, you become the main participants of the day, demonstrating God's love before the Church. Your witnesses—family and friends—are reminded of God's presence and their marriage promises.

Just as every sacrament involves the entire Church, your wedding also brings grace to the whole community. The staff at St. Mark's is here to support you through every step of planning, both spiritually and practically.

We encourage you to take this time seriously—read Scripture, pray together, and nurture your spiritual connection. You will be amazed at the growth you experience. This is God's time, and we are honored to be part of your journey.

With prayerful support,

Fr Miguel Virella, SVD.

St Mark's Catholic Church

Sea Girt, NJ

## INTRODUCTION: POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Church views marriage as a sacred calling and encourages couples to celebrate this sacrament within their faith community. At St. Mark's, weddings are usually reserved for registered parishioners and their children. If you are not a parishioner, please contact the office to schedule an appointment with the pastor to discuss your wedding.

**Scheduling:** Couples must notify the pastor at least one year in advance of their preferred wedding date. This notice allows ample time for preparations, such as marriage classes and liturgical planning.

**Liturgical Expectations:** Because the wedding is a sacrament celebrated within the Church community, all liturgical customs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church must be observed. The pastor of St. Mark's is the primary officiant of the wedding ceremony, not the wedding planner or family members.

**Visiting Clergy:** Priests or deacons from outside the parish who are invited to officiate must first consult with the pastor. They are also required to submit a letter of good standing or a formal acceptance letter from their diocese, subject to the pastor's approval.

## **BEFORE THE WEDDING DATE IS SET**

Before your wedding date can be officially scheduled at St. Mark's Church, you must complete the following steps.

### **Submission of Required Forms:**

- A Marriage Request form must be fully completed.
- All required documentation must be submitted with the form.
- Meeting with the Pastor:
- Both parties need to meet with the pastor to discuss their marriage plans.
- During this meeting, the date and time of your wedding will be provisionally booked, pending the completion of the required preparation steps and documents.

### **WEDDING FEE AND PAYMENT:**

Our wedding fee for registered parishioners is \$1000.00.

Non-parishioner's wedding fee: \$2000.00

We require a non-refundable 50 percent deposit of the total fee to reserve your wedding date.

### **FOCUS Marriage Preparation Inventory:**

Schedule a follow-up meeting with the parish priest or deacon to review and discuss your completed FOCUS inventory.

Each couple will complete the FOCUS self-diagnostic instrument, a tool designed to help engaged couples reflect on their relationship and identify areas for growth and discussion.

The results will be reviewed in follow-up meetings during the marriage preparation process.

## **NEXT STEPS AFTER CONFIRMING YOUR WEDDING DATE**

The wedding is officially confirmed once you submit the documents and deposit. A wedding rehearsal will be scheduled in coordination with your celebrant. The following steps outline the preparation process, starting with the required paperwork and ending with liturgical planning.

**Sacramental Documentation: Both the bride and groom must obtain original copies of their Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation certificates.**

These documents must be recent, issued within the past six months of the wedding, and include notations of sacraments received.

**PRE-CANNA:** Complete an approved marriage preparation program, such as Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, or God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage.

**FOR THE NON-CATHOLIC PARTY:** A baptismal certificate or an affidavit is required when documentary proof is unavailable. If under age 21, the policy for Catholic couples applies.

**A death certificate is only needed if a previous marriage ended due to the death of a spouse.**

**DECLARATION OF NULLITY: Declaration of nullity or divorce when applicable.**

If the bride or the groom was previously married, a copy of divorce papers and a Declaration of Nullity is required.

**Marriage License:** How to Get a Marriage License in New Jersey: Couples must obtain a marriage license following state and local laws to legally marry in New Jersey, where St. Mark's Church is located. Please review the requirements carefully.

**Where to Apply and call:** (732) 449-9433

If the bride resides in New Jersey, she must get the marriage license from her local municipality. If the bride is not a New Jersey resident, the license must be obtained from the municipality where the groom resides. If neither the bride nor the groom lives in New Jersey, the application should be filed in the municipality where the wedding will occur, such as at St. Mark's Church.

**Application Process:**

Both the bride and groom must apply for the marriage license in person.

They must be accompanied by two witnesses, at least 18 years old, who can verify both parties' legal marriage ability.

Applicants must truthfully provide all required information and proof of identity and residency, as requested by the municipal office.

**Waiting Period and Validity:**

After applying, there is a 72-hour (three-day) waiting period before the license is issued. Once issued, the marriage license is valid for 30 days.

**Important Reminder:**

Procedures and requirements may differ slightly by municipality. Please contact your local municipal office in advance to verify the specific steps and documents needed. Once you obtain your marriage license, you must bring it to St. Mark's.

**PERMISSION FOR UNDER AGE 21:**

Permission for individuals under age 21 when applicable.

Parents or guardians must give permission when the bride or groom is under 21. If there is a parental objection to the marriage, the reasons must be discussed with the priest.

## **PLANNING NUPTIAL MASS OR CEREMONY**

Nuptial Mass or Wedding Ceremony:

At St. Mark's Church, when both the bride and groom are practicing Catholics, it is highly recommended that the wedding be conducted as a Nuptial Mass. The Eucharist is the core of Catholic life, and including it in your wedding highlights the sacredness of the sacrament of Matrimony.

### **Music Planning:**

Meet with our Director of Music to begin planning the music for your ceremony. Outside musicians or singers will not be allowed. You can email Jared Tafaro at: Tafmuspno@gmail.com.

### **Music Selection:**

#### **PROCESSIONAL OPTIONS, TRADITIONAL**

Canon in D, Pachelbel

Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring, Bach

Wagner Bridal March

Brahms Intermezzo, op. 118 no. 2

Bach double violin concerto, slow movement

Set Me As a Seal on Your Heart, Maher

When Love Is Found

In Christ Alone

Wachet Auf bwv 645 Bach-Busoni

Clair de Lune, Debussy

Bach concerto for 2 violins, bwv 1043 mvt 2 Largo ma non tanto

Halleluiah (Leonard Cohen)

## **RESPONSORIAL PSALMS SUGGESTIONS**

This Is the Day the Lord Has Made (Psalm 118)

We Are God's People (Psalm 100)

Taste and See the Goodness of the Lord (Psalm 34) Our God Is Compassion (Psalm 103)

The Lord Is Kind and Merciful (Psalm 103)

INSTRUMENTAL and/or CHORAL options (for Offertory and/or Communion)

CHORAL/Vocal options

## **OPTIONS FOR OFFERTORY AND/ COMMUNION**

When Love Is Found Where There Is Love Prayer of St. Francis

Ubi Caritas

Hear Us Now, Our God and Father Be Thou My Vision

Adoro te Devote

Eat This Bread

Lord You Have Come to the Seashore

The King of Love My Shepherd Is Come Down O Love Divine Requests: Any common hymn

Offertory (Gregorian): In Te Speravi, "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped: I said, thou art my God, my times are in thy hands." (Psalm 30:15-16)

Communion (Gregorian): Ecce Sic Benedicetur "Behold, thus shall every man be blessed that feareth the Lord: and mayest thou see thy children's children: peace upon Israel" Ps 127

## **CONTEMPORARY (for Offertory/ Communion,)**

Set Me As A Seal on Your Heart, Matt Maher

When I Say I Do, Matt West

How Beautiful, Twila Paris

Good to Me, Audrey Assad

Restless, Matt Maher

New Every Morning, Assad

Every Mother Every Father, Bruce Benedict Everything Is Yours, Audrey Assad

I Shall Not Want, Assad

Oceans, Hillsong

You Speak, Audrey Assad

Trading My Sorrows, Darrel Evans

Sparrow, Audrey Assad

How He Loves, John Mark Mcmillan

Humble, Audrey Assad

For Love of You, Audrey Assad

### **RECESSIONAL OPTIONS**

Mendelssohn Wedding March

Handel, Alla Hornpipe

Nun Danket Alle Gott, bwv 657, Bach Bach

Handel, Arrival of the Queen of Sheba Beethoven,

An Die Freude

Mozart, Overture to the Marriage of Figaro

Nun Danket Alle Gott, Karg-Ellert

Charpentier, Prelude to Te Deum

**ST. MARK' S WEDDING MUSIC CONTRACT**

Bride's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrant: \_\_\_\_\_

Nuptial Mass            or            Ceremony

(Please circle one)

You may add to your celebration with instrumentalists. Please contact Jarred Tafaro regarding music options & fees (908) 415-0212 or tafmuspno@gmail.com

**Note:** Prices are in addition to the Church fee for St. Mark's Church.

**Spiritual Preparation:**

Set aside time for shared prayer and reflection as a couple during the month before your wedding.

Along with your regular Sunday Mass, make time to pray together and invite God more fully into your relationship.

If your wedding is scheduled for the 24th of any month, we encourage you to spend time together in the church beforehand on the 24th of each month as a special form of spiritual preparation.

**Ask about Natural Planning:**

Jersey Natural Family Planning resources and instructions are available upon request from our staff.

**PLANNING LITURGY:**

The couple will collaborate with the priest assigned to witness the marriage to organize the details of the Eucharistic Liturgy, including Scripture readings, prayers, and music.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

The bride and groom are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) in the days before the wedding. This spiritual preparation helps each person to enter into the marriage covenant and to worthily receive Holy Communion at their Nuptial Mass.

**Ceremony Option:**

Couples also have the option to hold a wedding ceremony without a Mass, especially if one partner is not Catholic. This still recognizes the sacrament but does not include the Eucharist.

**Conduct on the wedding day sets the tone for a joyful and memorable celebration. Everyone's cooperation and positive attitude help create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, making the experience memorable for all involved. Remember, your kindness and patience truly make a difference in making the day perfect for everyone.**

Because the wedding is a sacred sacrament, it is important that both the bride and groom are in a proper physical and mental condition.

No one is allowed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs before the ceremony.

The priest or deacon has the pastoral responsibility and authority to postpone or cancel the ceremony if either party is found unfit to enter into the sacrament at that time.

### **Scheduling Guidelines:**

St. Mark's requests that all wedding ceremonies be scheduled on Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. to avoid conflicts with regularly scheduled parish Masses and events.

Please arrive on time out of respect for your guests, your wedding party, and the Church's liturgical schedule.

### **A Joyful Day:**

Amid all the details, remember to take a deep breath and enjoy this sacred and joyful celebration of love and faith.

### **Decoration: We provide three choices for decorating the Church:**

**1. Use our florist:** All floral arrangements must be left as a donation to the Church.

Bouquets to Remember: 123 Main St, Manasquan, NJ 08736

(732) 528-0300

**2. Use a florist of your choice.** All arrangements must remain after the ceremony. We will need to know your intent two months before your wedding date.

**3. If you don't wish to, you don't have to decorate the Church.**

Ribbons or floral arrangements on the pews: They may be placed on the pews but must be removed at the end of Mass.

**NOTE: It is not permitted to scatter flower petals in the aisle during the procession or rice outside the Church.**

### **FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS OPTIONS:**

2: one on each side of the tabernacle & 2: one on each side of the altar (not required)

Virgin Mary: 1 small bouquet (optional)



### **Photos & Video:**

Photos and videos are allowed during your wedding ceremony, but you must inform the photographer and videographer of the following:

- Maintain the dignity of the ceremony and show respect for the Church as a sacred place.
- Photographers and videographers should avoid using extra or excessive lighting.
- Photographers and videographers should not be in the sanctuary or any area of the church that obstructs the congregation's view.

**SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER  
BEFORE THE DAY OF THE WEDDING**

**Rehearsal:**

When you arrive at the rehearsal, which starts at 5:00 PM, please be on time to avoid conflicts with Music Ministry rehearsals and other church activities.

The Celebrant of your wedding sets the date of your rehearsal. The usual time is 5:00 PM the evening before the wedding.

All wedding party members should be punctual and present. The marriage license must be handed to the priest at the rehearsal.

The rehearsals aim to prepare all participants for the ceremony and address any questions.

All participants are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the rehearsal.

**The Diocese of Trenton approves many variations of the wedding procession.**

Please consult with the celebrant if you would like to change from the traditional order shown below:

- Grandparents of the Groom, Grandparents of the Bride
- Mother of the Groom, Mother of the Bride
- Groomsmen enter the Church through the side Sacristy and stand in front of the first pew
- Bridesmaids meet the groomsmen, bow, and proceed to the first pew. The flower girl and/or ring bearer, along with the Maid of Honor, follow.
- Best man and groom enter the Church from the Sacristy and stand at the center of the Altar rail
- The bride and her father walk down the aisle.

**ST. MARK 'S CATHOLIC CHURCH  
REQUEST FOR MARRIAGE FORM**

**Both the bride and groom should each have their own separate email addresses.**

**Bride's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Parishioner of St. Mark's: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_

Email:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Parishioner of St. Mark's: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_