



CATHOLIC PARISH
— Elm Grove —

Wedding Guidelines

St. Mary's Visitation Parish

Elm Grove, Wisconsin

Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement! It is a great joy when two people commit themselves to lifelong love and fidelity in the Sacrament of Marriage! This booklet is designed to help you as you move through your engagement and prepare to be married at St. Mary's Visitation Parish.

Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. It was instituted by Christ to convey particular graces to those who celebrate the sacrament, enabling them to live out their love for each other in mutual, lasting fidelity. Marriage is also a sacramental symbol of the love Christ has for His Church—a love which is permanent, faithful and fruitful.

You will find in this booklet most of the information you need to know about the preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, as well as for your wedding.



Scheduling your wedding

We recommend calling the parish as soon as possible to begin planning a wedding date. Scheduling the date requires coordination between the couple to be married, the priest or deacon who will witness the wedding and the schedule of the parish.

We ask that at least one member of the engaged couple be a registered member of St. Mary's Visitation Parish at least six months prior to the wedding. The Sacrament of Marriage is lived out in the context of the Church and, in particular, the community gathered as a parish.

The Parish Secretary will be your initial contact and will help you to select a tentative date and then will coordinate with the priest or deacon to see if they are available. If your wedding is to take place during a Mass, a priest will witness your marriage. If your wedding is to take place outside of a Mass a deacon will witness your marriage. As soon as the availability of a priest or deacon is confirmed, the Parish Secretary will notify you. For the date to be confirmed and placed on the wedding register a deposit fee is required. This deposit fee covers the cost of preparation at St. Mary's Visitation Parish (see "Fee Structure" on Page 9).

Note: Priests or deacons who are friends of the bride and / or groom are welcome to witness your marriage at St. Mary's Visitation Parish. Please notify the Parish Secretary if this is the case when you schedule your wedding, as proper paperwork needs to be collected and filed.

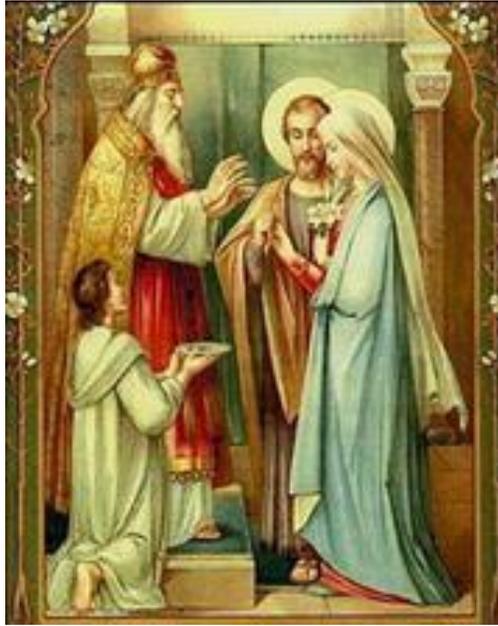
Preparation Process

After the date for your wedding is officially scheduled you should contact the parish priest to begin the preparation process which happens on both the parish and Archdiocesan level. Establishing contact with the priest and scheduling the meetings are the responsibility of the couple to be married. The following steps are involved:

Sacrament of Marriage Class – The first step to beginning preparation for your wedding is to attend one of our Marriage Preparation Classes. At this class you will learn about the Church's understanding of marriage and the preparation process will be outlined in detail. Please see our website for upcoming dates and times.

Marriage Compendium - An overview of the Sacrament of Marriage and commonly asked questions is provided by the Marriage Compendium of the State of Wisconsin. This compendium is required reading and should be completed as soon as possible. You will then discuss these materials with a member of the St. Mary's staff.

Sponsor Couple – As part of the marriage preparation process you will be assigned to a parish couple that will discuss marriage and your relationship, identifying strengths in your relationship and helping to discuss any concerns which may be present. You will meet at least twice with the couple, the first session will include the taking of the FOCCUS inventory and the further session(s) will include a discussion of the inventory.



The Wedding of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary

Engaged Enrichment Day – This day functions under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. You will be given a set of dates and locations to choose from. This day includes an overview of marriage, workshops focused on the practical dimensions of marriage, and a chance to hear from couples who will share their experiences with you.

Wrap-Up Meeting – After these steps are completed you will meet once again with the priest or the deacon who will witness your marriage. They will follow-up on any discussions from either the FOCCUS couple meetings or the Engaged Enrichment Day. They will also meet with you to plan the wedding liturgy. This meeting does not include music planning. Please see the following section, “The Wedding Liturgy” for information on music.

The Wedding Liturgy

Planning

The sacramental liturgy is an exercise of the Church and because of that involves certain things while excluding others. While the liturgy for your wedding is deeply personal, it is also the action of the entire Church. The parish Director of Music will help you to select appropriate music for the celebration of your wedding.

Your wedding is a liturgical celebration. While there are numerous secular songs that speak of love and may be important to you as a couple, they are not necessarily appropriate for the liturgy. There is, however, a broad repertoire of liturgical music from which to choose. The Director of Music will help you plan the music and prepare the orders of worship. In order to facilitate this process you will meet with the Director of Music to plan the music for your wedding.

Please contact the Director of Music through the parish offices no more than ten months before your wedding and no fewer than three months before your wedding.

Order of Worship

It is encouraged to prepare an Order of Worship for the celebration of the marriage liturgy. St. Mary's can help you prepare for this in one of two ways. The first is that the parish will prepare and provide a simple Order of Worship and printed by the parish for a small fee (please see "Fees" on Page 10). Any "special" paper needs to be provided for by the couple. The second option is for the couple to prepare their own order of worship (template will be provided) and prior to printing to send a review copy to the St. Mary's Liturgy Office for final approval.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals for your wedding will take place on the evening prior to the wedding. At the rehearsal the priest or deacon will walk you and the wedding party through the wedding ceremony itself. Be on time for the rehearsal. For the rehearsal those who are participating in the wedding should be present – this includes the bride and groom, their parents, any members of the wedding party, the ushers and readers.

We also ask that the marriage license, orders of worship, and any fees be brought to the church on the night of the rehearsal.

The Wedding Party

At a wedding there should always be a Best Man and Maid-of-Honor who serve as the official witnesses to the marriage. If you would like more couples to be in your wedding they are certainly welcome to be there. However, any wedding parties that are larger than six couples (including the Best Man and Maid-of-Honor) become difficult to manage, so we would respectfully request that there be no more than six couples.

Dress for the wedding party is also something that need to be taken into account. Dresses for either the bride or bridesmaids should be modest and becoming. Dresses that are short, strapless or excessively tight are not appropriate for Christian worship.

Flowers

Flowers add to the beauty of the celebration of the wedding liturgy and for that reason are welcome at St. Mary's Visitation Parish. Please note that flowers can be placed in the sanctuary of the church, but not on the altar nor any place that would disrupt the movements of the liturgy. Also, flowers which are already present in the sanctuary should be left in place. Flowers can be placed on the side of the pews, but must not be attached using adhesives or anything else that would cause damage to the wood. Any flowers placed on the side of the pews should be attached using either a removable hook or with wire.

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Photographer

As we are sure you would like to preserve the memories of your wedding with pictures and / or a video, photographers are welcome to be present for your wedding.

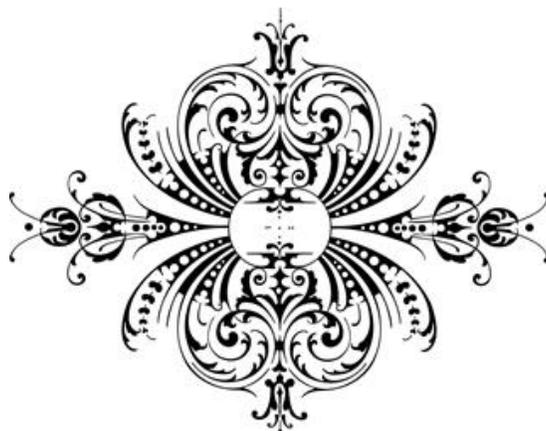
Photographers may use flash photography at the procession and the recession, but are to refrain from using flash photography at all other parts of the liturgy. Also, they should refrain from entering the sanctuary, though they may use the choir loft at the discretion of the musician who is playing for your wedding. The same guidelines apply for those who are filming a video.

The Unity Candle

Some couples desire to use a “unity” candle at a wedding liturgy. While this is allowed, it is discouraged because it is not a part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. If there is a desire to use one, please consult with the priest or deacon who will be witnessing your marriage. An appropriate place to use a unity candle would be at the wedding reception as part of the opening prayer.

Further Questions

Any questions you may have that were not answered in this booklet can be referred to the priest or deacon who will be witnessing your marriage. We are more than happy to help you to make this celebration of your wedding a day of true joy and love.



Wedding Fees

The following is a listing of fees which help to provide for the cost of the marriage preparation process as well as serve as expressions of gratitude for those ministers who help to make the celebration of your wedding special and memorable.

Wedding Preparation

\$150.00 (Made payable to St. Mary's Visitation Parish)

Paid at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

Stipend

\$75.00 (Made payable to St. Mary's Visitation Parish)

Paid at the rehearsal.

Director of Music

\$200.00 (Made payable to the Director of Music)

Paid at the rehearsal.

Cantor

\$125.00 (Made payable to the cantor)

Paid at the rehearsal.

Altar Servers (Two)

\$20.00 Each (Made payable in cash)

Paid at the rehearsal.

Orders of Worship

\$25.00/50 Copies (Made payable to St. Mary's Visitation Parish)

Paid at the rehearsal.

Please note that a gift to the priest or deacon at your wedding is customary, but not required.

Marriage Preparation Checklist

Groom: _____

Bride: _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Best Man: _____

Maid of Honor: _____

Sponsor Couple: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Documents Required:

Groom's Baptismal Certificate: _____

Bride's Baptismal Certificate: _____

Engaged Enrichment Certificate: _____

Liturgy Planning:

First Reading: _____

Second Reading: _____

Gospel: _____

Meet with Director of Music: _____

Marriage License Obtained: _____

Fees Paid: _____



Saint Mary's Visitation Parish

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2015