



Notre Dame de la Mer Parish

Overview of Marriage

This is an overview of the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church and a brief introduction to NDDLM parish requirements. Please see the [NDDLM WEDDING GUIDE](#) section for the complete parish wedding guidelines.

Parish Policies

Arrangements must be made with one of the parish priests at least one year in advance to allow time for proper preparation. This includes meetings, with the priest plus attendance at the diocesan approved preparation sessions (Preparing to Live in Love, Engaged Encounter or Pre-Cana). The parish secretary can check for availability of dates but cannot reserve them for either church until the couple meets with the priest for the first time. (If either the bride or the groom have been previously married and divorced an official church annulment of the prior marriage must be obtained before a date can be reserved and preparation sessions begun with the couple.

The offering for the use of either church, required paperwork, etc. follows the scale below:

Parishioner/Non-Parishioner	Offering For church
Registered, active parishioner	\$500.00
Registered, inactive parishioner	\$600.00
Not registered bringing own priest for the ceremony and doing preparation	\$1000.00
Not registered having our priest prepare and perform ceremony	\$1200.00

A **NON-REFUNDABLE \$200.00** “cooperation” deposit must be made in the parish office when the couple meets with the priest for the first time. If not meeting with our priest the deposit is expected in the parish office one week after the date of the wedding has been confirmed. For a list of all offerings and fees please see the [NDDLM WEDDING GUIDE](#).

If you are looking for additional information about preparing for marriage in the Catholic Church, the Diocese of Camden has a special section on their website discussing the process of [Marriage Preparation](#). This page will open in a new window.

Taken from USSCB.org on marriage.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” March 10: 7-9

Sacred scripture begins with the creation and union of man and woman and ends with “the wedding feast of the Lamb” (Rev 19: 7, 9). Scripture often refers to marriage, its origin and purpose, the meaning God gave to it, and its renewal in the covenant made by Jesus with his Church.

God created man and woman out of love and commanded them to imitate his love in their relations with each other. Man and woman were created for each other. “It is not good the man should be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him . . . The two of them become one body” (Gn2: 18; 24). Woman and man are equal in human dignity, and in marriage both are united in an unbreakable bond.

Jesus brought to full awareness the divine plan for marriage. In John’s Gospel, Christ’s first miracle occurs at the wedding in Cana. “The Church attaches great importance to Jesus’ presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ’s presence” (CCC, no. 1613).

By their marriage, the couple witnesses Christ’s spousal love for the Church. One of the Nuptial Blessings in the liturgical celebration of marriage refers to this in saying, “Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church.”

The Sacrament of Marriage is a covenant, which is more than a contract. Covenant always expresses a relationship between persons. The marriage covenant refers to the relationship between the husband and wife, a permanent union of persons capable of knowing and loving each other and God. The celebration of marriage is also a liturgical act, appropriately held in a public liturgy at church. Catholics are urged to celebrate their marriage within the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Procedures

Preparation

In the Catholic Church marriage is a sacrament and a life-long commitment. The common policy of the Diocese of New Jersey is to require a preparation period of not less than six months from the proposed date for the wedding ceremony. At NDDLML we ask for a preparation period of one year due to scheduling here at the parish.

Meetings

You will need to meet with a priest at least four times. The first of these meetings will give you a chance to meet the priest who will witness your marriage, to discuss your desire to be married in the Church and provides an opportunity for the exchange of information and programs you will need to sign up for as preparation for marriage. Between the first and second meeting, you are expected to complete a FOCCUS pre-marital inventory. At your second meeting the priest will review your FOCCUS results and introduce you to the theology of marriage. Your third meeting will review your Marriage Preparation Program experience (Pre-Canva, Preparing to Live in Love or Engaged Encounter). Your third meeting will review your Marriage Preparation experience and tie up any loose ends. Your final meeting serves to answer any remaining questions. Please note that if additional meetings are noted by the priest or you they will be scheduled. All meetings are to be completed at least six weeks prior to your scheduled wedding date.

Setting the Date

Only the parish priests in connection with the parish wedding coordinator can schedule the date and time of your wedding. Other parish staff may be able to give general wedding information about a date availability but they are not able to save, confirm or hold a date for your wedding. This booking must be done with a parish priest and the parish wedding coordinator.

Weddings may be scheduled for any convenient time on a weekday, including Friday evenings, Saturday mornings and afternoons and Sunday afternoons throughout the year. **Saturday and Sunday evenings are not available. Weddings cannot be scheduled for Christmas Day or Eve, New Year's Eve or Day and the days of Holy Week or Easter. (Please note that weddings during Lent are highly not suggested.)**

The latest a wedding may begin on Saturday is **1:00** p.m. due to our regular weekend mass schedule. Please note that you are allotted a time period not to exceed 90 minutes. A nuptial Mass generally takes about an hour of that time. There it is **imperative that the ceremony begins on time**. If you arrive late, portions of the ceremony may be eliminated, as well as use of the Church for pictures afterwards.

Celebrant of the Wedding

You may request a priest of Notre Dame de la Mer Parish to conduct your wedding liturgy but this will be subject to availability.

You are welcome to invite any validly ordained priest or deacon (e.g. a relative or family friend) to conduct your wedding liturgy. However, he is required to contact the parish office directly to arrange the date and time for both rehearsal and wedding, conduct the preparation sessions with you and submit the required forms.

Additional priests and deacons are always welcome to concelebrate your wedding liturgy. We also welcome participation of clergy from other religious denominations. However, arrangements for these must be discussed with the priest who will conduct your ceremony in advance.

Liturgical Considerations

Church Decorations

Please coordinate the colors of your flowers with the seasons of the church year. (Please note that when bringing offerings of flowers or items to the altar of God they are to be left at the altar as a gift to God and not removed or taken back.) All flowers put on the altar should remain at the church after the ceremony.

The Procession

Since the celebration of marriage is a rite of the Church, we encourage the practice of a true liturgical procession at the beginning of the ceremony. This includes the altar servers and presiding priest, the members of the wedding party, the bride and groom and their parents. Readers who are not members of the wedding party also could participate in the procession, as well as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (if they are needed).

Readers

Members of the wedding party or other guests may be chosen to proclaim the Scripture readings and Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful) chosen for the celebration. Trained Readers or public speakers are preferable, but those who are not must be sufficiently rehearsed. Up to three persons may be selected for this ministry.

Tribute to the Blessed Mother

The custom of placing a flower or a bouquet before the statue of the Blessed Mother at the end of the ceremony is optional.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is to be scheduled with Sister Rosaline. All members of the wedding party, and any others who will participate (e.g. readers). The time and the date of the rehearsal must be coordinated with the parish wedding coordinator who will arrange for the rehearsal. (Please see the list attached for all items that need to be brought to the rehearsal.)

Music Selection

Music is an integral part of the wedding celebration. As it is a sacred celebration only *approved liturgical music is permitted before, during and after your wedding liturgy in the church.*

All music for your wedding must be submitted to the parish Music Director, Mr. Jonathan Delgado for approval. If bringing your own musician, organist for the ceremony you must still submit the music to Mr. Delgado for approval.

Cantors and accompanists are required to have at least some training in Catholic liturgical music. The Music Director will be happy to help you in finding local soloists and instrumentalists that will be able to be at your wedding.

Photographer and Videographer

Photographers and videographers are never permitted in the sanctuary (raised area around the altar) at any time or the stairs around it. They are also asked to be respectful of the liturgy that is taking place when taking pictures and of the couple that is being married. (The photographer or videographer may call the parish office for more information.)

Dos and Don'ts

Do.....

- Have a blessed day for your wedding
- Use bubbles outside of church and away from the stairs as a sign of JOY and BLESSINGS
- Invite the Lord into all you do on your wedding day and married life
- Notify your family, friends and guests of the don'ts listed below for your wedding day so everyone is happy
- **Clear the pews of all booklets after the service**
- **Remove all pew markers/bows and or tape from the pews**
- Have the photographers follow the parish policies

Don't.....

- Throw bird seed
- Throw flower petals
- Throw rice
- Throw confetti
- Release balloons into the atmosphere
- Use a runner for the aisle (insurance policy does not allow)
- Use alcoholic beverages in the church at any time (insurance policy does not allow)
- Have photographers stage themselves on or near the altar or in the sanctuary