

Handbook and Guidelines for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony



"If a man and woman marry in order to be companions on the journey from earth to heaven, then their union will bring great joy to themselves and to others." ~ St. John Chrysostom

Saint Philip Church – Greenville, RI

20 November 2020

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ and entrusted to His Church. On the day of your wedding, in this sacrament, God will bless you with a strengthening of your love, the creation of an indissoluble union with your spouse, and the grace to help each other grow in holiness, as well as the welcoming of and education of children (CCC 1641).

Holy Matrimony is only the beginning of a life-long Christian vocation, and must be undertaken with the love and commitment needed to live out married life as God created and intended it to be. This presupposes a Catholic living out their Catholic faith to the full, meaning attendance at Holy Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, as well as regular reception of the Sacrament of Confession. Holy Mass and Confession will also be indispensable to helping you and your future spouse to prepare for a happy and holy marriage! This type of commitment must be made evident to the priest preparing you for marriage.

Requirements for Holy Matrimony at Saint Philip

- ❖ Either the bride or the groom must be a registered member of Saint Philip Parish.
- ❖ Any wedding taking place on a Sunday must include Mass.

Considerations for the use of Saint Philip Church

Schedule

- ❖ The date and time of the wedding should be set as soon as possible. This should be done at least 12 months before the proposed wedding date.
- ❖ Weddings taking place on Saturday must not be scheduled any later than 2:00 PM.
- ❖ The date and time of the wedding rehearsal should be established at the same time as the date and time of the wedding.
- ❖ You may invite another priest to assist at your wedding, but the rule is that he will also do the paperwork and rehearsal. Ask him to please call one of the priests at Saint Philip Rectory (401-949-1500) at some point before the wedding.

Decorations

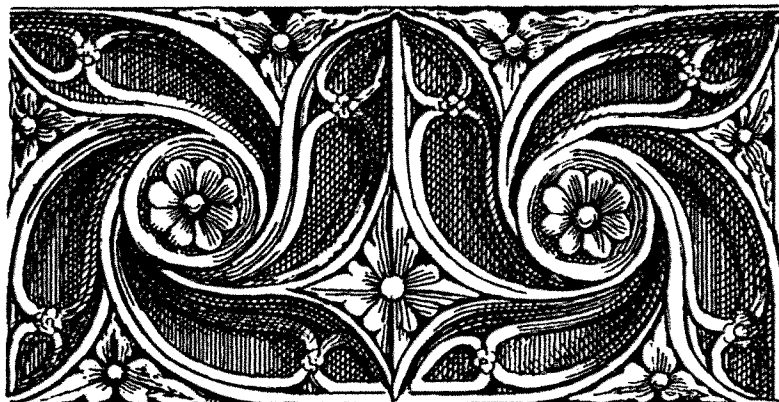
- ❖ All floral arrangements will be placed in the Sanctuary of the church. After the wedding, you may either take the flowers with you or leave them in the church for our weekend Masses.
- ❖ All floral arrangements should be discussed with the priest celebrating the wedding.
- ❖ If your wedding is taking place during the season of Lent, flowers are not permitted in the church, due to the solemn and penitential nature of Lent.
- ❖ Nothing may be taped or tacked to the pews. Please use elastic bands or hooks only.

Photography/Videography

- ❖ Photography and videography are most welcome during your wedding. Any photographer and videographer must check in with the priest before the wedding Mass.
- ❖ The photographer or videographer may not go into or set up anything in the Sanctuary, to respect the sacred nature of the wedding Mass.
- ❖ If any equipment used by the videographer interferes with the church sound system, it cannot be used.

Miscellaneous

- ❖ The practice of throwing rice, confetti, rose petals, or any other material is not permitted in the church or on the church grounds.
- ❖ Consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of any substances is never permitted on church property either before or after the wedding Mass.
- ❖ Unity candles are not a part of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony and therefore are not permitted.



Financial Arrangements

The offering for the church is \$350.00. This money does not go to the priest but to the parish. A check should be written out to “Saint Philip Church” and given at the rehearsal. It is customary to give a donation to the priest.

The fee for our parish organist, Ken Camara, is \$250.00, which includes the consultation meeting. A separate check is made out to the organist. If another musician is employed in place of our organist, he is still paid a bench fee of \$150.00.

It is customary to give to the two altar servers serving the wedding Mass a gift of \$20.00 each. This is usually done by the best man.

Marriage Preparation Weekend

- ❖ Each couple is required by the Diocese of Providence to attend an *Engaged Encounter Weekend*, offered at one of the parishes here in the Diocese.
- ❖ Saint Philip offers this retreat twice a year, on a Friday evening and a Saturday in March and October.
- ❖ Please call the Marriage Preparation Office at 401-278-4576 or go to the diocesan website at www.dioceseofprovidence.org to register.

Music

Music is a beautiful and integral part of the wedding Mass and should reflect the sacred nature appropriate for worship to God. Therefore, only sacred and liturgical music can be used during the Mass. There are no exceptions.

Couples should contact our parish organist, Ken Camara, as soon as possible to arrange the music for their wedding. He may be reached at 401-808-9409. The use of other musicians in addition to/in place of Ken Camara is not prohibited; however it must be first approved by the Pastor of Saint Philip. As was stated previously, our organist would still be paid a bench fee.



Marriage Paperwork

The following paperwork is required from the couple. The priest conducting the wedding will assist the couple with this:

- ❖ A baptismal certificate for the bride and the groom. It must be issued within **6 months** of the projected wedding date. It is obtained from the church where you were baptized.
- ❖ **For non-Catholics or non-baptized persons only**, a copy of your birth certificate.
- ❖ **For non-Catholics or non-baptized persons only**, two “Free-Status” declarations, which are completed by two people who know the bride or groom well. This is completed in the presence of the priest.
- ❖ First Holy Communion and Confirmation certificates issued from the church where you received these sacraments.
- ❖ Marriage Preparation certificate of completion.

Civil Arrangements

- ❖ The couple must obtain a civil marriage license from the city or town where either the bride or groom resides. It is valid for 90 days.
- ❖ The civil license is brought to the wedding rehearsal and given to the priest. The priest takes care of returning the license to the town hall after the wedding.
- ❖ The best man and maid/matron of honor are the witnesses who sign the civil license. Civil law requires they need to be at least 18 years old.

The Wedding Rehearsal

- ❖ The rehearsal is generally held the evening before the wedding. Anyone who has a role in the wedding: wedding party, readers, and gift bearers must be present and on time. In waiting for the beginning of the rehearsal, while in the church, please maintain a level of reverent silence, out of respect for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, present in the church.
- ❖ Those proclaiming the readings at the wedding must be Roman Catholics in good standing.
- ❖ Please bring to the rehearsal: civil marriage license, as well as checks for the church and the organist.

- ❖ It is most highly recommended that the couple goes to the Sacrament of Confession on the evening before their wedding. To receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony worthily, one must be in a state of grace (meaning not having any mortal or serious sin on your soul). Please speak to the priest conducting the rehearsal about this necessary matter.

The Wedding Day

The groom, best man, and groomsmen should arrive to the church at least 30 minutes before the wedding. The groom and the best man will go to the back sacristy and wait there until the beginning of the wedding.

- ❖ The groomsmen serve as greeters, hand out the wedding programs, and escort guests to their pews. Unless they are in the procession, the groomsmen will take their places before the procession begins.
- ❖ The bride should arrive at least 10 minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin. Punctuality is imperative, especially on a Saturday wedding, since our parish has Confessions at 3:00 PM and it is not fair to those people who will have to wait.
- ❖ Those in the wedding party should assemble in the front vestibule of the church and prepare for the procession. Please maintain a reverent silence.
- ❖ After the Mass, someone should be in charge of cleaning up. The church should be left in the standing condition after as before the wedding.

