

Weddings at Saint Mary's Church

Simsbury, Connecticut

This booklet provides you with information you will need to prepare for your marriage at St. Mary's. As you prepare for your meeting with the priest, please gather the following items.

1. A *recent* copy of your baptismal certificate, dated within the past six months. You may obtain this by calling the parish where you were baptized, telling the priest you are planning to be married, and asking for a new copy of your baptismal certificate.
2. Copies of your First Communion and Confirmation certificates. These do not have to be recent.

You will need to meet with the priest to fill out a premarital investigation form and prepare for the wedding ceremony. In addition to this you will be asked to:

1. Participate in an online marriage preparation program. To register, go to <https://archdioceseofhartford.org/marriage-preparation/> Select the "Marriage Preparation Program" button, then select the "Dynamic Catholic Better Together Marriage Preparation" button and click the registration button at the bottom of the page to sign up.
2. Complete and discuss the FOCCUS© marriage survey inventory. Priest will register you for this once you have completed step 1.

You will need to obtain a wedding license from the Town of Simsbury and be in contact with the Parish Music Director (*see info below*). If you live at a distance and cannot complete your marriage preparation at St. Mary's, you will have to complete all paper work in the parish where you reside. Since this takes extra time, do not delay. St. Mary's Parish cannot give you a wedding date until certain paper work is completed. Obtaining a venue for a reception does not guarantee a wedding date at St. Mary's. Below you will find other information helpful in preparing for your wedding.

Aisle/Aisle Runner

The white runner rolled out just before the bridal party approaches the altar is optional. Disposable runners can be purchased from your florist. Many florists have heavy cloth runners that can be rented. The aisle in St. Mary's Church is sixty (60) feet long.

Baptismal Certificates

All Catholics are required to present a copy of his/her baptismal certificate that is less than six months old. First Communion and Confirmation certificates are also required for Catholics. Non-Catholics are asked to provide proof of baptism if they are Christian. You also may need to provide certificates attesting to your freedom to marry. These forms will be given to you by the priest or deacon who is preparing you for your wedding if necessary.

Best Man and Maid of Honor

The Best Man and the Maid of Honor are the official ecclesiastical witnesses to your marriage. These two witnesses are required by Church Law for the validity of your marriage. Multiple Best Men or Maids/Matrons of honor is discouraged.

Bridesmaids/Ushers/Groomsmen

Usually there are an equal number of bridesmaids and groomsmen, although this isn't required. The groomsmen also function as ushers.

Booklets

Although entirely optional, you may wish to print a program for your ceremony. Please allow the priest to review a draft for accuracy before going to print.

Confetti, Rice, Birdseed, etc.

Because of the difficulty in its being removed and in some cases the danger of people slipping or falling, all such are not allowed at St. Mary's.

Communion

While we welcome all who attend your wedding regardless of their faith, Church law does not allow those who are not Catholic to receive the Eucharist. They can however, receive a blessing at Communion time. This will be announced by the priest celebrant.

Flowers

Two matching floral arrangements may be supplied by the couple to adorn the altar area. In the event of multiple weddings on the same weekend, couples may choose to share the cost of flowers, which are normally left in the church for the Sunday liturgy. Flowers are optional.

License

If you are being married at St. Mary's Church, you must obtain a marriage license from the Town of Simsbury: No marriage license, no wedding, no exceptions! You may do this once you are within 65 days of the marriage. For more info, contact the Town Clerk's office: (860) 658-3243. Please bring the marriage license as well as the fee for the wedding the Church the night of the rehearsal.

Mass

A wedding between two Catholics is generally held within the context of Mass. Other weddings are normally held in the context of the Liturgy of the Word, without the Eucharist, unless there is an overriding reason for having the wedding with a Mass.

Music

Wedding music is under the supervision of our Music Director who will make suggestions for your wedding music and let you know what is appropriate. Since wedding music should enhance the Liturgy rather than detract from it, it should focus on the mystery of marriage as a sacrament that reflects the love between Christ and

his Church. Accordingly, while secular music is appropriate for your reception, it is not appropriate for the wedding ceremony.

Under the agreement with the American Guild of Organists, our Music Director has the “Right of First Refusal.” This means that if you engage another organist, we still have to pay the church organist, even if you do not make use of her services, so there is no reduction in the church offering. Should you choose to have other musicians participate in your wedding, they should work with our music director and follow the procedures and guidelines of St. Mary's Parish. *Note: There may be additional costs for extra rehearsals and/or instrumentalists. Please discuss this in advance with our Music Director*

1. When the wedding is celebrated with Mass, the parts of the Mass are to be sung
2. The Responsorial Psalm is sung whether or not there is a Mass
3. While popular, secular music is appropriate for your reception, it is not appropriate for the wedding ceremony
4. Within the ceremony, the music should focus on the mystery of marriage as a sacrament and upon the praise and glory of God
5. The entrance of the wedding party and of the bride form a single rite and so there is only one wedding processional

These guidelines are to be followed, even if you employ guest musicians and your own celebrant. Guest musicians should let our Music director know what music they propose to play or sing, prior to printing programs. The final determination of what is appropriate and what is not will belong to the Music Director.

Contact: musicministry@stmarysimsbury.org

Offerings/Fees – \$900

The wedding offering for the church covers a donation for the church and celebrant, the fees for the organist and the soloist, as well as the costs of wedding preparation materials. The wedding offering should be made by check payable to “St. Mary’s Church” and given to the priest the night of the rehearsal along with the wedding license. *The Church offering does not include additional instrumentalists or additional music rehearsals which may be required.*

For marriages in which only the preparation is being completed at St. Mary’s with the marriage taking place elsewhere, we appreciate an offering of \$250.

Outdoor Weddings

The Archdiocese of Hartford does not permit outdoor weddings.

Permission

One member of the couple must be residing in the parish for the wedding to be licitly celebrated at St. Mary’s. If neither resides in the parish, the couple must obtain a letter of permission from the pastor of the parish in which one or both currently resides.

Pews

There are nineteen pews on either side of the main aisle. Usually the first several pews are reserved for your wedding party and immediate family. Other guests are then seated behind them. Most pews can comfortably seat eight, although the front pew has a supporting roof pillar and should probably only have four comfortably.

Pew Decorations

Small floral pieces or bows on the end of the center aisle pews can add a festive touch to a wedding. They may be attached with ribbons or elastic bands. Clips are discouraged. Tape and other adhesives damage the finish on the pews and are never to be used.

Photos/Photographers

Ask your photographer to check with the priest before the service about taking pictures of your wedding. You are, of course, welcome to take pictures in the church after the marriage ceremony.

Readers

The readings from Old Testament and the New Testament Epistles are often proclaimed by family members or friends of the wedding couple, as well as the Prayers of the Faithful (Universal Prayers). As directed by liturgical norms, these readers should be comfortable reading publically.

Readings

The wedding ceremony of the Catholic Church has three readings from Sacred Scripture.

- An Old Testament reading
- A reading from the Epistles of the New Testament
- A Gospel reading done by a priest or deacon.

The responsorial Psalm, which occurs between the first and second reading, is sung: A booklet entitled *“Together for Life”* will be given you to help you make your choices. This booklet is intended to be a guide; should you have other passages of scripture that are particularly meaningful to you, please discuss with your priest as to where in the ceremony these may be used.

Receiving Line

If you are planning to have one at the church, please discuss it with your celebrant.

Rehearsal

A wedding rehearsal may be scheduled after 4pm the day before the wedding, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Times of Ceremonies

Saturday Weddings may be scheduled anytime in the morning or in the afternoon until 2:00 PM. Weekday weddings are generally scheduled in the afternoon or early evening. (Note: If a weekday wedding occurs on a school day, start time can be no earlier than 4pm to allow time for dismissal/pick up of students in parking lot.) Per Archdiocesan policy weddings may not be celebrated on Saturday evenings or on Sundays.

Visiting Clergy

Visiting clergy may participate in your celebration. Please discuss this with the pastor. Should it be your desire to have a family member or friend who is clergy as your celebrant, please make your wishes known early in your preparation process. All priests or deacons who are not members of the Archdiocese of Hartford must have a letter of suitability from their Bishop or Religious Superior.