

# **Policy for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage**

## **Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cape May, NJ**

### ***Greetings in the Lord!***

#### **CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT!**

Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish extends our prayerful best wishes on the occasion of your engagement. Undoubtedly you have many questions concerning your marriage preparation and wedding arrangements.

The Diocese of Camden recommends that you begin marriage preparation a year prior to the date of your wedding. Please visit [www.camdendiocese.org/marriage](http://www.camdendiocese.org/marriage) to find helpful information about marriage and marriage preparation.

If either one of you have been previously married, no wedding date can be established, until it is determined that you are free to enter into marriage in the Catholic Church. This is true of a Catholic or a non-Catholic who has been previously married civilly or in a religious ceremony. Please speak to one of the parish priest about this.

**It is important to contact the parish priest/deacon as soon as possible after your decision to enter the Sacrament of Marriage. This will ensure that you will have your choice of date and time for the celebration of this sacrament. Please do not secure a wedding venue until you check with our parish schedule. Often, we are not able to honor your request if you do not give us optional dates.**

#### **Parishioners of Our Lady Star of the Sea**

The Parish priests/deacons are happy to prepare couples for the Sacrament of Marriage and to officiate at the wedding of those whose families are active registered members of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish.

If you wish to have a visiting priest/deacon officiate, please ask him to call the parish priest/deacon to coordinate the wedding preparation at least six months prior to the wedding. A visiting priest/deacon must provide a Letter of Suitability from his diocese or religious order and agree to be present at the wedding rehearsal.

#### **Non Parishioners Seeking to be Married at Our Lady Star of the Sea**

Traditionally the Sacrament of Marriage is celebrated in the parish of either the bride or groom. The parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea seeks to be accommodating but Our Lady Star of the Sea should not be considered a destination wedding site.

Permission may be obtained to be married at Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish provided the following requirements are met:

- **Your parish priest or a priest who is a relative or family friend is expected to prepare**

**you for marriage, including completing the necessary documentation required by the Church.**

- **Also your parish priest or a priest relative or family friend is ordinarily expected to officiate at the wedding.**

Please know that the wedding date cannot be finalized until we have the information concerning the priest who is preparing you and officiating and he has been contacted by the pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea.

### **SETTING A TIME AND DATE**

Saturday weddings at Our Lady Star of the Sea may be scheduled beginning at **11:00 AM** and no later than **1:30 PM** depending on other events scheduled in our facility. Weddings may also be celebrated on most Friday afternoon and evenings. The Church is reserved for one hour before the wedding and one half hour after.

Weddings at St Agnes, Cape May Point, have additional times available on Friday and Saturday mornings and afternoons.

### **THE RITE OF MARRIAGE**

**The Catholic Church celebrates the Sacrament of Marriage in two beautiful rites: The Celebration of Matrimony within Mass and the Celebration of Matrimony outside of Mass**

If the bride and groom are both Catholic, it is recommended that the Rite of Marriage take place within Mass.

If either the bride or groom is not a Catholic, the Rite of Marriage takes place within a Liturgy of the Word without Holy Communion.

### **PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Your preparation for marriage calls on you to deepen your relationship by sharing with one another your thoughts and feelings, your beliefs and doubts, your strengths and weaknesses about key aspects of married life.

The following will assist you in understanding the process of Marriage Preparation in the Diocese of Camden.

**The Pre-Nuptial Investigation (PNI):** In an initial meeting with the priest/deacon the couple will complete a short questionnaire which includes background information and helps the priest/deacon assess whether there are any impediments to marriage.

**FOCCUS (Facilitation Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study):** The couple will answer a number of questions to raise issues pertinent to marriage such as religion, finance, communication, sexuality and parenting. The engaged couple will meet with a married couple from the marriage preparation team to discuss the engaged couple's compatibility.

## **DIOCESAN PREPARATION PROGRAM (ALSO KNOWN AS PRE CANA)**

Marriage Preparation or pre-Cana programs are designed to provide quality time for you as a couple to listen, reflect and discuss the important aspects of Christian marriage. The programs offer practical advice and assistance to help you build a successful marriage. Various formats are available to fit the engaged couples' schedules. All the programs used address:

- communication and adjustments in marriage,
- conflict resolution, money management,
- understanding your family of origin,
- sexuality and intimacy,
- sacramentality and spirituality,
- moral decision-making,
- responsible family planning, stewardship and family goals.

There is a Saturday pre-Cana Program presented at Our Lady of the Angels in Cape May Court House . The priest/deacon with whom you make your wedding arrangements will give you information on this program. This one day pre-Cana is offered in four Saturdays throughout a calendar year. We recommend that you make reservations as soon as possible to ensure that you can attend the program of your choice.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

The following documents are required as part of marriage preparation. These must be given to the priest/deacon as soon as possible but no later than 30 days prior to the wedding:

### **1. Baptismal certificates** - You must submit your baptismal certificate.

- For a baptized non-Catholic, a copy/original baptismal certificate is required.
- For a baptized Catholic, the certificate with notations of other sacraments received is required. The certificates must be dated from the church of baptism **within the six month period immediately before the marriage** is to be celebrated. If the certificate does not include notations, separate certificates may be required. The parish priest/deacons will be happy to assist you with any complications or difficulties regarding baptismal certificates.

### **2. Confirmation Certificate**

- If your Confirmation record has not been included on the back of your Baptismal Certificate, a proof of Confirmation must be obtained from the parish in which your

Confirmation occurred.

- **Catholics who have not been confirmed are expected to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation before entering the Sacrament of Marriage.**

Our Lady Star of the Sea welcomes you to consider participation in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults if you wish to prepare for the reception of Catholic sacraments before or even after your marriage. If interested contact the parish office.

As an engaged couple about to enter into the important Sacrament of Marriage you are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) before your wedding day.

### **3. Certificate of Attendance from your Diocesan Preparation Program.**

- When you attend a Pre Cana such as the one offered at Our Lady of the Angels, Cape May Courthouse you will receive a certificate of attendance. Please give a copy of that certificate to the priest or deacon who is preparing you for the Sacrament of Marriage.

### **4. Affidavits of Free Status to Marry**

- The priest or deacon preparing you for marriage will provide both the bride and groom with a simple form for the testimony of two witnesses testifying of your freedom to enter into marriage. These forms are completed by parents, relatives, or someone who has known the bride or groom most of his or her life.

### **5. Civil Marriage License**

- Without a valid Marriage New Jersey License no marriage can take place.
- A resident of New Jersey must obtain the license from the Registrar in the municipality in which he or she resides.
- If both the bride and groom are **non-residents of New Jersey, the license must be obtain from the Registrar of the municipality in which the marriage is to take place.**
- For weddings at Our Lady Star of the Sea, non-residents must obtain the license from the Registrar at City Hall in Cape May.
- For weddings at St Agnes, non-residents of New Jersey must obtain the license from the Registrar at Cape May Point Borough Office.

### **INTERFAITH MARRIAGE**

A marriage between a Catholic and another Christian is viewed as a sacrament. Their marriage is rooted in the Christian faith through their Baptism.

A marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person though not a sacrament both parties

benefit from God's love and help through their good lives and beliefs.

The Church requires that in an interfaith marriage a permission or dispensation be obtained from the Bishop.

### **PLANNING YOUR WEDDING LITURGY**

Our Lady Star of the Sea has wedding ministers to help you plan the celebration. You are encouraged to select the scripture readings, prayers and blessings to be used in the liturgy. It is our hope that you will invite family members and friends to participate in the liturgy as readers and gift bearers. The book **Together for Life** contains the selections for readings and prayers for either a Nuptial Mass or a Wedding Ceremony. Some couples choose to provide a worship aid or program for their guests.

### **MUSICIANS**

Music at the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage serves the words and actions of the rite to help one express more effectively the faith celebrated in the liturgy. Music does more than simply provide a "nice touch" to the liturgy. Sacred music invites all present to actively join in the celebration by raising their voices in prayer through song.

All music used in the celebration of the sacrament must express the Catholic faith and be liturgically appropriate. Therefore, all selections are to be truly religious compositions and not contemporary romantic songs from stage, screen or pop sources.

Once couples have set the order of their ceremony they should contact our Liturgical Musician's, Art and Jil Ciancaglini (1-609-886-7585) to set an appointment— day and time to choose music. Ordinarily, only the OLSOS organist and cantor are to be used.

### **REHEARSAL**

Our wedding ministers will conduct the rehearsals. The times for the rehearsals are 4:00 PM and 5:30 PM on Thursday/Friday preceding the wedding. This depends on the availability of the Church.

All persons participating in the ceremony must be present. This includes the wedding party, parents, readers, and gift bearers. Should you have a visiting priest/deacon, it is expected that he be present at the rehearsal.

The rehearsal must start on time. If you are stuck in traffic, please call a relative/friend at the church to let them know you are on the way. If you do not call or arrive within one half hour for reasons that are not beyond your control, the rehearsal/wedding will have to be postponed. The organist and cantor will usually be present for the rehearsal.

## **ALCOHOL**

Please know that drinking is not allowed on church property, either at the rehearsal or at the wedding. To marry one must be able to exercise full consent of the will. Drinking would impair the person's ability to consent and might invalidate the marriage itself. Therefore if a person is intoxicated for either the rehearsal or the actual ceremony, the marriage will NOT take place. Please do not disappoint your future spouse, families, and friends by having your special day postponed.

## **DECORATIONS**

You are certainly welcome to provide floral arrangements in front of the altar. With the exception of Advent and Lent there are always two floral arrangements already in place next to the tabernacle. In the church, pew bows may be used but cannot be taped to the pews. Please use the plastic clips

The church environment is not movable. Therefore you cannot change the altar cloth. Nor may you take down any banners or move the piano, organ or podium.

## **PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER**

Please choose an approved photographer/videographer who knows how to be unobtrusive and has a sense of decorum and dignity. They may not be a source of distraction.

You will have a ½ hour after the ceremony to take pictures. You will be brought back into the church to begin once your guests have exited. Pictures of those participating in the actual wedding ceremony are permitted. Pictures taken after the ceremony must be appropriate for a church setting.

The videographer may set up to one side of the sanctuary or behind where guests are seated and must remain stationary throughout the wedding.

## **CHURCH DONATIONS AND FEES —**

PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE FOR THIS INFORMATION

- THE CHURCH FEE
- ORGANISTS AND CANTOR
- ALTAR SERVERS (IF THERE IS A MASS)
- WEDDING MINISTERS
- HONORARIUM FOR PRIEST/DEACON

### **OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA POLICIES**

The following policies have been adopted to ensure your safety and the safety of your guests and out of respect for our church and those who work and worship here. These policies are non-negotiable.

- Please advise your guests that NO RICE, BIRDSEED, FLOWERS, OR CONFETTI are to be thrown. This is out of respect for the sacredness of church property and out of concern for the safety of church visitors.
- AISLE RUNNERS ARE PROHIBITED. They become unattractive as soon as the bridal party has walked down the aisle. Our insurance company has warned us of the hazard since they are dangerous underfoot, particularly for guests with disabilities and during the procession for communion. Therefore, we prohibit the use of an aisle runner.
- NOTHING MAY BE THROWN OR DROPPED ON THE AISLE. The flower girl may not throw petals.
- ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL is permitted within the Church or in the parking lot. You must be sober for the wedding to take place. We must insist that you remind your drivers, ushers, etc. that we will not tolerate alcoholic beverages on or near church property. This also applies to your rehearsal night.
- Due to time constraints and other events scheduled on weekends, RECEIVING LINES ARE NOT ALLOWED.

*May this be a blessed time in your lives  
as you prepare to Celebrate your love in the  
Sacrament of Matrimony*