

Wedding Guidelines

Revised May 2023



St. Mary's Church Ballston Spa

185 Milton Ave
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Office Hours: M-F, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Phone: (518) 885-7411

Fax: (518) 885-6863

Fr. Francis R. Vivacqua, Pastor

Days and Times

Weddings are celebrated on Fridays and Saturdays. Saturday weddings must start no later than 1:00 pm. Rehearsals are held the evening prior.

St. Mary's Parishioners

To be considered a parishioner at St. Mary's you must be registered as a parishioner for at least one year at the time of booking, raised in the parish, or have parents or grandparents who are registered parishioners. Weddings must be booked a **minimum of six months** in advance for marriage prep purposes.

Non-Parishioners

Non-parishioners of St. Mary's may request to celebrate their wedding at our church. **Weddings must be booked at least a year in advance.** You will need to **provide your own celebrant** who will be responsible for your marriage pre-requisites and pre-nuptial investigations.

Under age 21

All priests are required to follow a mandated procedure that includes interviews with both parties and their parents before a date may be determined.

Pre-Cana Program

Each couple is required to participate in a marriage preparation program provided by your diocese. Attendance is an essential and mandatory preparation for all couples before marriage. Please reach out to your diocese for more information, and send us a copy of your certificate of completion.

Fees

There is a requested church offering (\$550 for parishioners, \$1,400 for non-parishioners) which includes the fee for music. To secure the date, a deposit needs to be sent to the church, with the balance due two months prior to the wedding.

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers may be placed on either side of the altar or by the ambo. They are to be left in the church afterwards as a donation. Flowers or petals –real or fake- are **not** allowed to be thrown at any time. Runners are **not** permitted. Pew decorations must be removed immediately after your wedding.

Photography and Videography

Photographers and videographers will need to maintain a respectful distance during the marriage ceremony. Flash photography should not be used by anyone during the wedding ceremony. You may

have use of the Church for thirty minutes immediately after the ceremony for pictures.

Modesty

As Catholics, we believe in the innate dignity of every human person. Our respect for ourselves and each other is largely portrayed through modesty, both in appearance and behavior. Please refrain from sensual attire, suggestive photos, and foul language while on St. Mary's property.

Music

Music will be provided by St. Mary's Director of Music, Allison Mendenhall. All music must be sacred and classical with no exceptions. Detailed guidelines will be provided. If she is unavailable for your wedding, she will be responsible for securing her own replacement.

Wedding Planners

Wedding planners are of course welcome. We ask that while at St. Mary's they recognize that the priest/deacon runs the rehearsal. Matters pertaining to the Rite of Christian Marriage must be addressed to the priest/deacon and/or the parish Wedding Ministry Coordinator.

Cancellations

In the unfortunate event that you cancel your wedding here at St. Mary's, we require written notice by email or letter. Please specify your mailing address and the name to who the check should be written out to for your deposit reimbursement.

General Church Guidelines

We ask that you please be respectful of our beautiful church and the surrounding grounds as you celebrate your marriage sacrament.

- No decorations of any kind shall be applied to walls, glass, or doors.
- Nails, staples, and adhesives are not permitted.
- No rice, bubbles, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, or décor containing water or glitter are permitted inside or outside of the church.
- Balloons may not be released on the parish grounds.
- No one (including photographer) is allowed on the sanctuary (altar), in the choir loft, or sacristy without permission.
- The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring that Church guidelines are adhered to by all who participate and attend the wedding.
- St. Mary's is a smoke-free environment. Absolutely no smoking is permitted on the grounds.
- Absolutely no alcoholic beverages may be brought on Church property, which shares grounds with

St. Mary's Catholic School.

- All deliveries by vendors need to be coordinated with the parish wedding coordinator.

Final Note

As you enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony, you and your fiancé are uniting to start a new life together. “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” (Gen 2:24) All communication with our office to book your wedding, plan the liturgy, and coordinate vendors, etc. needs to be done by you the couple. Under no circumstances will we communicate any details with anyone else. This is to help foster the new life of responsibility you will start together as a couple, as well as respect your privacy and your decisions regarding this Sacrament you wish to receive.

If you have any questions, please contact our Wedding Ministry Coordinator:

(518) 885-7411

CONGRATULATIONS, AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU!