

## **CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR UPCOMING MARRIAGE** **AT ST. MARY PARISH**

We are excited to journey with you in preparation for your wedding! This packet provides some background information and guidelines about the sacrament of Matrimony and outlines the wedding procedures at St. Mary Parish.

**All weddings must be scheduled at least six months in advance. To begin the process, please call our Parish Office (708-326-9305) to tentatively schedule a date. Your wedding date will not be secured until you meet with a priest and complete the Prenuptial Questionnaire.**

If you have been previously married in any religious or civil ceremony, please contact Deacon Pete Manning at [deaconpete@aol.com](mailto:deaconpete@aol.com) to discuss whether an annulment is required. If an annulment is needed, a wedding date cannot be scheduled until the annulment is obtained.

Wedding times are Friday at 3:30 p.m. and Saturday at 12:00 p.m., 1:30 p.m. or 2:00 p.m. Rehearsals are typically at 6:00 p.m. the evening prior to the wedding, unless there are other previously scheduled events. Anyone participating in the wedding is expected to attend the rehearsal, especially the bridal party and the parents of the bride and groom. All weddings are expected to start at the announced time. (Note: Any delay in starting will lessen the amount of time for pictures afterwards.) Saturday weddings must vacate the church by 3:15 p.m. Usually the parish wedding coordinators or a deacon will assist in facilitating the wedding rehearsal. **If you have a visiting priest, he will be required to facilitate the rehearsal.**

### **Reconciliation**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is strongly encouraged for the Catholic members of the wedding party at least one week prior to the wedding. The Sacrament will restore your relationship with God, thus allowing you to receive more of the graces that God bestows upon you through the Sacrament of Marriage. Confession is available by appointment, and is offered regularly on Saturdays at most parishes prior to the evening Mass. At St. Mary Parish, Confession is offered from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. every Saturday and from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on the First Saturday of every month.

### **Preparation**

*Please refer to the checklist on the last page of this packet for quick reference.*

- Please schedule an appointment with one of our priests or deacons for you and your fiancé(e) to complete a prenuptial questionnaire. This will take about thirty to sixty minutes to complete. This should be completed first.
- All engaged couples must attend a Pre-Cana Session. Classes are offered for free at St. Mary Parish, but can be taken at any parish in the Diocese. There is also an option of taking an Engaged Encounter weekend at the Portiuncula in Frankfort. To book your weekend, go to [www.jolietee.org](http://www.jolietee.org) or call 815-277-1112. Additionally, there is a 1-hour paid virtual option via Zoom with a Pre-Cana Facilitator. Please call Sister Maryann Talian to register 815-436-5796.
- All engaged couples must take a FOCCUS survey. This survey helps couples understand practical issues (finance, children, communication skills, etc.) that they will deal with on a daily basis once married. It takes approximately one hour to complete the survey. You must take the survey independently from your fiancé(e). A link to the survey will be emailed to you. There is a \$25.00 fee to complete the FOCCUS Questionnaire; the first person to log into his/her account will be asked to input a credit/debit card number. Within a few weeks of taking FOCCUS, you will be contacted to schedule a time to review the results with a trained FOCCUS couple. If you have any questions regarding FOCCUS please call St. Mary Parish at 708-326-9305.
- Two affidavits for the bride and two affidavits for the groom are needed (four total). These affidavits are interviews with family members (preferably parents or siblings) testifying that you were never married and that you are free from major problems that could be impediments to marriage. This interview typically takes 10-20 minutes for each individual interview. If the family members live at a distance, the affidavits can be completed by any Catholic priest or deacon at the relative's home parish. In that case, the affidavit must be mailed to the St. Mary Parish Office to the attention of "Marriage Prep". Please contact the Parish Office to set up an appointment with one of our priests or deacons to complete these affidavits.
- **Please provide a NEWLY issued copy of your Baptismal certificate that is dated within six months of your wedding date.** You may obtain a copy of the original certificate by contacting the church where you were baptized. Please ask them to send you a copy or ask them to mail it directly to St. Mary Parish at 19515 S. 115th Avenue, Mokena, IL 60448 (Attention: Marriage Prep).
- **A WILL COUNTY Marriage License issued by the Will County Clerk's Office will be required. Please send this in one month before or bring it with you to the liturgy planning meeting with Father or Deacon.** For information, please call the Will County Clerk's Office in Joliet (815) 740 - 4615.

- All engaged couples must attend an introductory course to Natural Family Planning (NFP). Natural Family Planning, also known as Fertility Awareness, offers couples a Church-approved, effective, and safe alternative to contraceptives. There are various methods a couple can learn, but each method is designed to help couples avoid or achieve pregnancy in a natural way. Please see the options for introductory courses below, and turn in your certificate once completed.
  - **FREE:** Once a quarter via a video conference call. Available through [simplynfp.com](http://simplynfp.com) from certified Marquette Method instructors Annie Norton and Meg Murray, parishioners of St. Mary Parish. Contact Annie at [annie@simplynfp.com](mailto:annie@simplynfp.com) or 815-953-9067 or Meg at [megmkay@yahoo.com](mailto:megmkay@yahoo.com).
  - Every third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Register here: <https://www.vitaefertility.com/nfp-talk-marriage-prep/>.
  - Online sessions that are scheduled at various dates and times. Upcoming sessions are listed on the website: <https://www.insightfertility.com/education-program>.
- St. Mary Parish encourages couples to learn an NFP method in-depth, so that you might practice NFP effectively in your marriage. There are several successful models of NFP: the Creighton Method, the Marquette Method, and the Billings Ovulation Method are the most common ones.
  - **Marquette Method:** SimplyNFP (information above) offer full classes for NFP, in addition to their free introductory courses. Please visit [simplynfp.com](http://simplynfp.com) for information on classes.
  - **Class times for the Billings Ovulation Method in the Diocese of Joliet:**
    - The Joliet Diocesan Natural Family Planning Program teaches the Billings Ovulation Method (BOMA) of NFP. These two-session classes in English and Spanish are offered for a fee of \$50 per couple. Classes are held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Blanchette Center in Crest Hill. To register or for information, contact Lupita Sorich at (815-735-8439) or Pat Spain at 815-838-5334.
    - St. Dominic Parish, Bolingbrook: Two-session classes in Spanish are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
    - Presence St. Mary Hospital, Kankakee: Classes in English are held on the second Friday of each month from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The second session is arranged individually. Classes are offered in Spanish by appointment.

- St. Joseph Church, Addison: Two-session classes in English are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Two-session classes in Spanish are by appointment. For class times, to register, or for information, contact Edna Pasillas at (630-279-6553 x101) or email [rpasillas5@gmail.com](mailto:rpasillas5@gmail.com).
- You may also take “The Billings Ovulation Method” class online [www.Learnnfponline.com](http://www.Learnnfponline.com). Classes are \$49, and a certificate will be printed upon completion.
- **Creighton Model:** Individual appointments can be made with Creighton Model Practitioner, Michelle Sullivan. The Creighton Method is taught over the course of a year with 3-6 meetings that can be in person or via video conference call. You can successfully practice this method after the first instructional meeting. However, to ensure confidence, follow up meetings are held. For more information or to set up an appointment, contact Michelle at 815-464-6557 or at [pgsully@att.net](mailto:pgsully@att.net).

## Music

All engaged couples must fill out the Music Selections packet. This packet should be submitted to our Director of Sacred Music, Joseph Berardi. He can be reached at the office at 708-326-9302 or via email at [jberardi@stmarymokena.org](mailto:jberardi@stmarymokena.org). The minimum stipend for wedding musicians is typically \$400.00 and is due at least one week prior to your wedding. This package includes an organist/pianist and a cantor. Please contact Joseph for confirmation on payment amount and method.

St. Mary Parish has excellent cantors and additional musicians (flautists, violinists, etc.) who are trained in liturgical music for weddings. These musicians and cantors are available upon request for an additional fee, to be determined based upon service type and rehearsal requirements.

When considering musical choices for your wedding liturgy, please understand that music within the liturgy must be of religious context. A list of suggested musical selections is available from our Music Office. All outside musicians and cantors must be approved by the Director of Sacred Music.

## Visiting Clergy and Out-of-Town Weddings

If a visiting priest is celebrating the wedding, it is preferred that he be responsible for collecting the necessary paperwork and meet with you to complete the prenuptial questionnaire in preparation for your wedding.

A priest or deacon coming into the Joliet Diocese for a wedding is to have his home Diocese mail a Letter of Suitability to the Chancellor (for priests) or to the Office of the Diaconate (for deacons). Please do not send the letter directly to St. Mary Parish. Letters can be mailed to the addresses below:

**Letters for Priests:**

David Salvato  
Diocese of Joliet  
Chancery Office  
16555 Weber Rd  
Crest Hill, IL 60403

**Letters for Deacons:**

Diocese of Joliet  
Office of the Diaconate  
16555 Weber Rd  
Crest Hill, IL 60403

It is a requirement for the visiting priest or deacon celebrating the wedding to lead the wedding rehearsal.

If your wedding will be celebrated at a different parish (i.e., not St. Mary's), please let us know. You can complete the preparation for marriage and paperwork at St. Mary Parish. After you have completed the necessary preparations, we will send your wedding file to the Diocese of Joliet. They will review and send it to the Parish/Diocese where your wedding will take place.

If you plan to marry at St. Mary Parish, but live out of the area, please contact the pastor at your local church. Preparation for marriage and paperwork can be completed at your home parish. After you have completed the necessary preparations, have the pastor send a letter and your wedding file to the Diocese of Joliet, Attention: Tribunal, 16555 Weber Road, Crest Hill, IL 60403. Please take into consideration adequate time for the file to be mailed, the Diocese to review the file, and send it to our parish. Files are typically mailed to the Diocese of Joliet at least one month in advance.

## **Environment and Safety**

Photography and videography are allowed. Photographers and videographers can be anywhere in the church, except the Sanctuary (the raised space in the front of the church where the altar and ambo are located) and the steps leading up to the Sanctuary. Please inform your photographers and videographers that the church is a sacred space. The photographers and videographers should make themselves as inconspicuous as possible.

Rose petals (real or silk), confetti, etc. are **NOT** allowed to be strewn on the floor. Rice and bird seed are **NOT** allowed outside the church because of hygienic and safety issues. Due to safety reasons, aisle runners are **NOT** allowed.

There are 16 pews on each side of the main aisle. Do **NOT** use tape or metal hooks to secure decorations to the pews. Plastic bow clips for pews are recommended.

Couples are asked to designate a person to pick up any items after the ceremony (bows on pews, empty flower boxes, programs, etc.). Large garbage cans are located in the church hall (the lower level of the church). Please be sure to inform this person what items they will be picking up on your behalf, so that St. Mary property is not inadvertently packed away with your items.

**The church is decorated according to the liturgical season. These decorations are not to be removed or rearranged in any way.** If placing floral arrangements in the front of the church, do not place anything on the top step of the Sanctuary, or at any spot directly between the front kneelers/chairs and the altar. If placing decorative items on the steps leading to the Sanctuary, please be careful with the placement. The steps are made of marble and will crack easily.

In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, the consumption of alcoholic beverages anywhere on parish grounds is not allowed. Alcohol must **not** be consumed prior to the rehearsal or the wedding. Smoking is not permitted within the parish buildings or on parish grounds.

**We strongly discourage weddings during Lent** because Lent is a season of repentance and reflection. If a wedding is scheduled during Lent, there can be no decorations added to the altar, pews, or anywhere else in the church.

## **Fees/Donations**

As of February 1, 2024, the Parish asks for a stipend offering of \$500.00 to help defray the costs incurred (heating, air conditioning, sanitizing, lighting, records, etc.). Checks can be made payable to "St. Mary Parish." Payment will be due during the liturgy planning meeting, but no later than a week prior to the wedding.

Couples who prepare for Marriage through St. Mary Parish only, but whose weddings will be taking place at a different parish, will be asked to provide a stipend of \$200.00.

**Please note that altar servers are not currently being assigned to weddings.** In the event that anyone does serve at your wedding, it is common practice to give each altar server a stipend of \$20.00. Typically, there are two servers assigned to a wedding.

If a couple has difficulty in paying the parish any stipend, they are asked to discuss the matter with our pastor.

## **Marriage Preparation Checklist**

*The following due dates for the listed requirements are strongly recommended.  
Some items can be completed sooner than the recommended time frame.*

### **Please complete 7-12 months prior to the wedding:**

- Complete Wedding Intake Form with the Parish Office.
- Complete your Prenuptial Questionnaire with a priest or deacon.
- Take an introductory course to a Natural Family Planning Method (NFP)
- Complete your FOCCUS Inventory and Review

### **Please complete 6 months prior to the wedding:**

- Obtain newly issued copies of your Baptismal Certificates (no more than 6 months out from the date of the wedding)
- Attend Pre-Cana Session(s)
- Have your witnesses complete their affidavits (two for the bride and two for the groom)

### **Please complete 2-4 months prior to the wedding:**

- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) (*strongly encouraged*)
- Learn a method of Natural Family Planning (NFP) (*strongly encouraged*)

### **Please complete 1 month prior to the wedding:**

- Meet with St. Mary's Sacred Music Office to plan the Wedding Music
- Drop off the original copy of your Will County Marriage License at the Parish Office no later than 1 week prior to the wedding
- Drop off stipends at St. Mary Parish Office no later than 1 week prior to the wedding