

**Planning and Celebrating  
Your Wedding  
in St. John the Baptist Parish  
A Practical Guide**



**1488 North Country Road  
Wading River, NY 11792  
631.929-4339  
[office@sjbwr.org](mailto:office@sjbwr.org)**

At the beginning of creation,  
God made them male and female.  
They are no longer two but one flesh.

**C**ongratulations on your engagement and blessings on your preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist!

All of us in the parish joyfully extend our prayerful support on your wedding and your married life! This booklet is designed to be a practical help for you during the days ahead.

Our parish has been able to extend hospitality to couples who are from other parish communities. Should you be thinking about choosing a “venue” nearby Wading River, we will do our best to help you!

There are so many details that call for your attention, and the pages that follow will assist you in planning your church celebration of marriage.

# FOUR EASY STEPS FOR YOU!

## YOUR FIRST STEP

Your *first step* is done--the wedding interview! You have received a copy of this booklet at the end of your interview. The wedding date has been set in the parish calendar!



## YOUR SECOND STEP

You will be completing these *second steps* right after your wedding interview.

### **MARRIAGE PREPARATION: PRE-CANA:**

**PRE-CANA:** All couples are required to be prepared for marriage. This is called Pre-Cana (Jesus' first miracle was at the wedding feast in the town of Cana). We encourage you to register for the parish Pre-Cana program. The dates and registration form have been given to you during your wedding interview. St. John's parish offers a one-day marriage preparation session on a Saturday in the fall and the spring. Your parents and friends are invited to be part of the 5:00 p.m. liturgy on that evening, during which we will bless our engaged couples and their engagement rings.

Should you not be able to attend the parish session because of your schedule, you can arrange your marriage preparation through the Diocese of Rockville Centre ([www.drvc.org](http://www.drvc.org)). The diocese has different schedules (weekdays, weekends, etc.) that may suit your schedule better. The diocese will provide you with a certificate of attendance which you are to send to the parish. Your decision regarding Pre-Cana is important and is to be made as soon as possible after your wedding interview.

**NEWLY-ISSUED BAPTISM CERTIFICATES:**

Perhaps you were baptized here at St. John the Baptist parish! We will have your record of baptism in the parish baptism register and there is no need for you to obtain another one. For those baptized in another parish, you will need to contact the parish and have them send you a new baptism certificate (dated this year). (Your original certificate you can keep for family memories.) The parish where you were baptized will be happy to mail you the new certificate **OR** you can have it mailed directly to St. John's, whichever you prefer.



## **YOUR THIRD STEP**

**PLANNING THE LITURGY - PRAYER**

It is best that this is completed at least two months before your wedding. This will give you time to make your decisions, meet with people who can help you, and ensure that the wedding is celebrated as you would like. While you have many choices, all your choices are part of the way the Catholic Church celebrates the sacraments, including your marriage.



**NUPTIAL MASS OR A CEREMONY**

When two Catholics marry, the wedding Mass is the usual way the sacrament is celebrated. At the wedding Mass, the bride and groom receive from the “one bread and the one cup,” the Eucharistic sign of their unity in marriage. For special reasons, the couple may choose to have a wedding ceremony. The *Together for Life* Booklet explains the difference. When a Catholic

marries someone who is a member of another Christian denomination or another faith, the wedding is celebrated at a wedding ceremony. Should you have questions about this, your priest or deacon will be happy to help you.

### **TIMES FOR WEDDINGS**

The usual days and times for weddings are as follow: *Saturdays* at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., or 2:30 p.m. (Please note Saturday confessions are at 4:15 and Mass at 5:15.) *Sundays* 2:30 p.m., or later (to accommodate baptisms), as a Ceremony. Because there are parish Sunday masses, there are no nuptial masses on Sundays (unless you have your own priest to celebrate the nuptial mass).

### **TOGETHER FOR LIFE BOOKLET**

The booklet has a form at the back which lists all of your selections. Once you complete it, tear it out and make sure that your priest/deacon has this at least two months before your wedding. If you would like, you can contact your Officiant and go over any questions you have about the wedding liturgy.

**Readings:** There are three choices from the Scriptures that you will be making.

The **first reading** is always from the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures).

The **second reading** is from the New Testament, often from the letters of St. Paul.

The **third reading** is the Gospel. (Always read by the officiating priest or deacon.)

Readers are people who can read the Word of God and other prayers with clarity and dignity. They should understand the seriousness and importance of their role in your wedding ceremony.

### **PRAYERS**

You select the prayers and blessings you prefer from the *Together for Life* booklet which contains all the choices and also explains them.

### **TWO WITNESSES**

You choose two witnesses who are part of the wedding and sign the marriage license. There is room on the license for only the signatures of two witnesses. The bride, groom and two witnesses sit in front of the altar. All other members of the wedding party sit in the first pew behind the couple and two witnesses.

### **WHO OFFICIATES AT YOUR WEDDING?**

Usually the priest or deacon with whom you met for your interview will be the Officiant at your wedding. Should you wish to have a family member or friend who is a Catholic priest or deacon as your Officiant, please let us know so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### **WHO CAN BE PART OF THE LITURGY?**

You are welcome to have family or friends who are good readers help with the first and second reading. (The Gospel is always read by the priest or deacon.) You may also wish to have someone read the Prayer of the Faithful. Ring-bearers (with symbolic rings on the pillow) and flower girls are often younger children. It is not appropriate that they carry “signs” in the church procession. Our experience is it best that they be at least four years old and have sufficient maturity to be part of a public ceremony.



## **YOUR FOURTH STEP**

### **PLANNING YOUR MUSIC AND REHEARSAL**

The following can be done as you wish, keeping in mind that the Wedding Rehearsal is your “deadline” for most of what needs to be completed.

## **MUSIC**

Music is a basic element of our Catholic traditions and is itself, a prayer. It creates an atmosphere of prayer and joy at your wedding. The music you choose will encourage all your guests to pray and sing. The celebration of marriage is a religious event, so certain popular tunes and songs will not be appropriate for church and are best reserved for the reception.

### **MEET WITH THE MUSIC DIRECTOR**

You can make an appointment with our Music Director, Elizabeth McNeill, as soon as possible to assist you in the planning and coordinating of the music for your wedding. She is best reached at (631) 495-8913, or [emcneill@sjbwr.org](mailto:emcneill@sjbwr.org). Together you can make your selections of music for your wedding.

### **INVITING GUEST MUSICIANS**

The Organist and Cantor are part of the parish staff. Please do not make arrangements with other musicians without first speaking to the Music Director. Qualified guest musicians and soloists can be invited and are to be familiar with the order and structure of the Catholic wedding liturgy. Guest musicians follow the parish and diocesan guidelines for wedding music and are experienced at the task of leading a congregation in song. All guest musicians, soloists and programs of music are approved by the Music Director.

### **MUSIC FEES**

The fee for music is \$400. The fees are due when you meet with the Parish Music Director. If you are providing your own musicians, the music fees are still to be paid.

## **MUSIC SELECTIONS**

*There are many musical selections appropriate for your wedding liturgy. The Parish Music Director will meet with you to assist you in choosing music for your wedding. All music must be approved by the Music Director. A sampling of musical selections is listed below.*

### **PROCESSIONALS FOR BRIDE AND BRIDAL PARTY**

- Bridal Chorus (R. Wagner)
- Trumpet Tune (H. Purcell)
- Canon in D Major (J. Pachelbel)
- Rigaudon (A. Campra)
- Trumpet Voluntary (J. Clarke)

### **PSALM RESPONSE**

- Ps. 19: Lord You Have the Words (Haas)
- Ps. 98: All the Ends of the Earth (Haas)
- Ps. 128: Blest Are Those Who Love You (Haugen)
- Ps. 145: I Will Praise Your Name (Haugen)

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

- Celtic Alleluia (Walker)
- Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ (*Lent only*)

## **MUSIC SELECTIONS**

### **PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS AND UNITY CANDLE**

Ave Maria (F. Schubert)  
Blest Are They (Haas)  
When Love Is Found  
May Love Be Ours (Joncas)  
The Wedding Song (Stookey)  
Wherever You Go  
One Hand, One Heart (L. Bernstein)

### **COMMUNION**

One Bread, One Body (Foley)  
We Have Been Told (Haas)  
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (J.S.Bach)  
Panis Angelicus (C. Franck)

### **RECESSIONAL**

Wedding March (F. Mendelssohn)  
Trumpet Voluntary (J. Clarke)  
Rondeau (J. Mouret)  
Hymn to Joy (L. Von Beethoven, arr. by A. Travis)

## **THE WEDDING REHEARSAL**

### **SETTING UP YOUR REHEARSAL**

You can set the date and time of your rehearsal as soon as you would like. This can be done at any time, especially because the parish schedule could fill up the closer you get to your wedding day. Please call the Parish Center at 631-929-4339 to arrange for a convenient time for your rehearsal. Rehearsals are held on Thursdays (6:00 p.m. is the last appointment) and Fridays (between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.) Rehearsals may not be scheduled for weekends. As there are often several rehearsals or other activities in the church on any given night, it is imperative that you be on time for your rehearsal.

### **THE WEDDING MINISTRY COORDINATOR:**

The Wedding Ministry Coordinator is happy to be with you for the wedding rehearsal and on the day of your wedding. They will be available to help welcome your guests and ensure that the celebration is prayerful and organized.

### **WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR REHEARSAL:**

- ***Bring your Marriage License to the rehearsal.*** Any New York State Town Clerk will draw up the marriage license. Some local numbers are: Huntington 631.351.3206; Babylon 631.957.3000; Islip 631.224.5490; Brookhaven 631.727.3200; Smithtown 631.360.7620; Riverhead 631.451.9101; Southold 631.765.1800. By law, applicants are obligated to appear in person to obtain this license. The marriage may not be performed for twenty-four (24) hours from the issuance of the marriage license, and the license is good sixty (60) days from the date of issue.
- Programs, bubbles, etc. are all brought to the rehearsal as well.
- Prayer and reading selections for your ceremony.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **PARISH DONATION:**

St. John's parish asks registered parishioners for a donation of \$600 on the occasion of your wedding, as per the guidelines of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Donations made on the occasion of the celebration of a sacrament assist the community with maintaining the church and grounds with beauty and dignity. Should there be a financial difficulty, please speak to your priest or deacon. For couples who are from outside our parish, the donation requested is \$800. The parish donation is due two months before your wedding.

### **BANNS OF MARRIAGE**

St. John's parish will publish the banns of marriage in the church bulletin for the three weeks before your wedding. This is to allow the community to know that you are being married and is a centuries-old way of determining if there are any obstacles to your marriage. Feel free to contact your fiancé's parish and let them know the date of your wedding so that they can publish the banns in his/her bulletin.

### **CHANGING THE TIME/DATE, POSTPONING OR CANCELLING**

There is usually not a problem to make a change. Please contact the priest or deacon with whom you had your interview. He is the person responsible to make the change for you on the parish calendar

### **FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS**

Simple flower arrangements may be placed on either side of the sanctuary and on the ends of the pews. *No glass vases/containers with water are permitted on the ends of pews/aisles.* Flowers cannot be placed in front of the altar or ambo (pulpit). Flowers remain in place during the Easter Season, Thanksgiving and the Christmas Season and cannot be moved or replaced.

The florist is not permitted to move the altar, candles, etc. in the Sanctuary. In order to preserve the dignity of our church, extensive displays, such as decorative archways, aisle candelabra and balloons are not permitted. The four chairs for the

wedding couple and witnesses are left as they are. Also, to avoid the danger of the congregants slipping or falling, there is no scattering of flower petals or other materials during the wedding procession.

### **WEDDINGS DURING LENT**

Should you choose to celebrate your wedding during the Season of Lent, keep in mind that this is a Penitential Season, and that no flowers or decorations are in church.

(The bride and bridesmaids are permitted to carry flowers into church.)



### **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

It is important that you discuss these guidelines with your photographer/videographer so they are aware of our church procedures before you enter into an agreement with them. No exceptions to these procedures will be made on the day of your wedding. Remember that these professionals work for you and should abide by the parish rules and your sensibilities, not vice versa. Photographers and videographers have a special responsibility to perform their roles in a way that will not mar the dignity or the sanctity of your ceremony.

***Please note: Often the church is being used immediately after your wedding. Should you wish to return into the church for additional pictures after the ceremony, please request permission so that we can be sure there is time for you.***

### **LIVE-STREAMING THROUGH PARISH WEBSITE (IF REQUESTED)**

We have a live-stream package that we can offer you. Please contact the parish office at 631-929-4339 or email [office@sjbwr.org](mailto:office@sjbwr.org) for more information.

### **THROWING OF RICE**

We no longer permit the use of items such as rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, etc. which are dangerous, especially in wet weather and quite difficult to remove from the parish walkways and grounds. Some couples use safer items, e.g., bubbles. Please contact the parish so that permission can be granted.

## **RUNNER**

We no longer permit a runner in the main aisle of the church. Runners have shifted, slipped and torn and can be hazardous.

## **WEDDING PROGRAM**

A special program for an individual wedding is an excellent preparation aid which couples choose to include. It is the responsibility of the couple to secure all necessary copyrights. The words or music to any song may never be reprinted without written permission of the publisher. If in doubt, please ask the Music Director. The booklet can include an outline of the parts of the service and titles of songs, etc. Reprinting texts and lyrics is usually against copyright laws. Feel free to send a draft to the Parish Center before you print it so that we can make suggestions for you.



We hope that this booklet has answered all your questions. Should you have additional questions not covered here, please feel free to call the Center at 631-929-4339 or to email us at [office@sjbwr.org](mailto:office@sjbwr.org)

*Revised 11/24/20*