

St. Patrick Cathedral General Wedding Instructions/Guidelines
VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

A letter from the Rector of St. Patrick Cathedral

Dear Friends,

Congratulations on your engagement! We are happy that you have chosen to celebrate your Catholic marriage ceremony at the Cathedral.

The information contained in this booklet is designed to assist you in your marriage preparations. We want to help you in your plans, but we must ask you to do your part to adhere to the following guidelines so as to make your wedding ceremony as beautiful, memorable, and uncomplicated a celebration as we all want it to be. We ask that you cooperate with us so that your deeply personal commitment to each other may be happily witnessed by your families and friends.

Our best wishes and prayers, and God's blessings upon you both at this important time in your life.

Sincerely,

Msgr. Anthony S. Rosaforte
Rector

Scheduling Your Marriage

If you have been previously married please contact the Cathedral priests. You will need a declaration of nullity or an annulment. This must be done immediately before a firm commitment can be made.

In keeping with the norms of the Diocese of Norwich regarding where sacramental marriages may be celebrated, you may be married at the Cathedral if you are a registered member of the Cathedral or have the consent of the Pastor of the Roman Catholic Church in which you are currently registered. He must forward a letter of permission to the Cathedral.

You must schedule your marriage at least a year in advance of the proposed date. Because of Cathedral needs, some weekend dates are not available. The following times are available for weddings:

- Weekdays at any time, if there is no parish Mass scheduled.
- Saturdays at 11:00am and 2:00 p.m. A 10:00am wedding may be scheduled if there is no 11:00 wedding scheduled.
- Marriages may not be scheduled on major holy days, particularly on Christmas or Easter, **or during Holy Week**

Wedding Coordinator

Use of the services of the Cathedral Wedding Coordinator is **mandatory** for couples being married at St. Patrick Cathedral. Once you have booked your date with the Rectory Office, you should contact the wedding coordinator, Mrs. Sunnie Robinson, immediately at stpatrickwedding@aol.com. She will guide you on the first step of completing a marriage registration form and sending in a deposit, and she will describe how the planning will continue from there.

Marriage Preparation

All Roman Catholics being married in the Cathedral are required to follow the regulations of the Diocese of Norwich. Like the other sacraments of the Church, marriage requires special preparation. The following is required:

- You must schedule your marriage at least one year in advance of the proposed date.
- You must successfully complete a Pre-Matrimonial Inquiry
- You must successfully complete a Marriage Preparation Class (e.g., Pre Cana)

Additional requirements may also exist if either person has been previously married, if you plan to bring in your parish priest, etc. Please read this guide carefully.

Documents & requirements for couples who are parishioners of St. Patrick Cathedral

The Diocese of Norwich requires certain documents to be produced in order to have a Roman Catholic marriage. You are responsible for obtaining these documents, listed below. Each, with the exception of the civil marriage license, must be completed and returned to the Cathedral at least six (6) months before the scheduled date of the ceremony. The receipt of these documents is the only way we can be sure that the marriage can be performed.

- An updated Baptismal Certificate for both the bride and the groom. This certificate must be secured not more than six months prior to the wedding and can be obtained by calling or writing the parish of your baptism. It must be stamped with the seal of the parish and dated within six months of the marriage date. If you are a baptized non-Catholic and a certificate of Baptism can be obtained, please do so.
- First Communion and Confirmation data from the parish where the sacraments were celebrated, showing the date of the reception of these sacraments. This information must be on Church stationery or certificate and stamped with the seal of the parish. A copy of the original certificate is acceptable.
- If there has been a previous marriage, a death certificate, a "Declaration of Nullity," or a lack of form must be obtained.
- A civil marriage license which must be brought to the rehearsal. The marriage license must be obtained in the city of Norwich within 65 days of the marriage date.

- A certificate, or its copy, stating that you both have attended a marriage preparation program (e.g., Pre Cana) if you have not attended the Pre Cana class at the Cathedral.
- You must complete a Pre-Matrimonial Inquiry (PMI) ~ the recording of all sacramental documents. The Cathedral Rectory will contact you one to two months prior to your wedding to schedule a time to come in to meet with the Priest.

Documents & requirements for couples who are NOT parishioners of St. Patrick Cathedral

You are responsible for successfully completing a Pre-Matrimonial Inquiry (PMI) with your Parish Priest who should be contacted to guide you on the documents you are required to provide him (typically you have the same requirements to provide updated sacramental certificates as specified in the above section for Cathedral Parishioners, but it is important you confirm this with your Parish Priest.)

Your Parish Priest must then submit the following to the Cathedral Rectory at least eight (8) weeks before the wedding:

- 1) Letter of Permission for you to be married at the Cathedral
- 2) Copy of the PMI with any necessary re-script
- 3) Dispensation form (if a mixed religion marriage)

Additionally, you are responsible for providing:

- 1) A certificate, or its copy, stating that you both have attended a marriage preparation program (e.g., Pre Cana) – directly to the Cathedral at least two (2) months before your wedding if you have not attended the Pre Cana class at the Cathedral.
- 2) A civil marriage license which must be brought to the rehearsal. The marriage license must be obtained in the city of Norwich within 65 days of the marriage.

Visiting Priests

Couples being married at the Cathedral are welcome to arrange for a Priest from their home parish or family to marry them. However, Statements of Suitability are required for all Priests and Deacons entering the Diocese of Norwich for any public ministry. These statements are to be sent by the Priest's or Deacon's ordinary to the Office of the Bishop or Vicar for Clergy, 201 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360. The Vicar for Clergy will notify the Cathedral Rectory of approval. Questions may be addressed to the Diocese of Norwich, Office of the Vicar for Clergy, 860-887-9294 or vicarclergy@norwichdiocese.net.

Cathedral Priests

Couples may request that a Cathedral Priest officiate at their wedding and such request should be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator when completing the planning worksheet. While every attempt to honor requests will be made, the on-duty Priest will be assigned.

Planning the Ceremony

As indicated earlier, use of the services of the Cathedral Wedding Coordinator is **mandatory** for couples being married at St. Patrick Cathedral. The wedding coordinator will assist you in planning the wedding liturgy. Normal items used for the wedding liturgy are provided by the church, but items such as floral decorations, programs, etc. are not provided. The wedding coordinator will provide you detailed guidelines on these types of issues, including the use of pew bows, etc.

The use of any type of alcoholic beverage in or near the Cathedral is inappropriate and is not permitted.

For safety reasons, we cannot allow rice, confetti, bird seed, flower petals, potpourri, pennies, etc. to be thrown inside or outside the Cathedral.

No one is permitted in the Sanctuary of the Cathedral other than the Bride, Groom, Best Man, Maid of Honor and the Celebrant. Readers are allowed to go to the pulpit for readings and will then return to their seats. Photographers, videographers and bridal party members are NOT permitted in the Sanctuary. Above all, remember that the Cathedral is a place of worship. We ask that you respect its sacred space.

Wedding Music Guidelines

To make arrangements for your wedding music, please contact the Cathedral Organist and Director of Music, Mr. Douglas Green at 860.886.0403 or DGGreen860@aol.com. A consultation will be arranged for you to come to the Cathedral where you will listen to and discuss the musical options available for your wedding. Please keep in mind that your wedding is a religious ceremony and only music of a sacred nature will be allowed. Secular (non-religious) music can be very meaningful and should be heard at the reception, not in the Cathedral. The music for your wedding liturgy should focus on the worship of God and the spirituality of the sacrament of marriage.

In addition to the organ, a vocalist and/or other instrumentalists (trumpet, timpani, violin, flute, etc.) can greatly enhance your wedding celebration. Mr. Green works with many professional musicians and can advise you on the best choice for your wedding. Friend, family member or other non-professional may not be the best choice. It is customary that vocalists sing all the Mass acclamations in addition to any special solos. This may be too much for a non-professional to handle. Please consult with Mr. Green before engaging your own vocalist and/or instrumentalists.

Mr. Green is the organist for all Cathedral weddings. If you wish to use another organist for your wedding, you may do so. However, you must still pay a fee (this is known as a “bench fee”) in addition to what you may be paying your own organist. This policy is in accordance with guidelines set forth by the American Guild of Organists.

The playing of audio tapes and CDs are not allowed during the wedding liturgy.

Photography/Videography

Marriage is a most sacred vocation in the Catholic Church. Rules for photography and videography are intended to permit couples to remember their wedding day with photographs while celebrating the wedding in a dignified and religious manner. **These rules are non-negotiable.** If the photographer/videographer intends to ignore them, he or she should not be engaged to work at the ceremony. The rules are non-negotiable and, if the photographer and/or videographer violates the rules during the wedding ceremony or Nuptial Mass, the ceremony will be halted and the photographer/videographer will be required to leave. These rules are for professionals and amateurs alike. The bridal couple must ensure that these rules are communicated to the official photographer(s)/videographer(s) and to family members and other guests who might desire to use their cameras – including cell phones – at the wedding. Where the words photography and photographer are used below, it pertains equally to videography and videographers.

1. The Cathedral Wedding Coordinator will bring the bride into the Cathedral approximately 10 minutes before the wedding is to begin. If the photographer wants to get a photo of her exiting the vehicle, he/she must be outside at that time. The bride is brought in immediately. Photographers are not permitted to delay her coming into the Cathedral by having her stop, by having the bridal party pose for photos, etc.
2. Movement from one side of the Cathedral to the other must be done at the cross aisle in the center of the Cathedral, not in front of the first pews or at / behind the altar.
3. Photographers are not permitted to position themselves in and/or work from a pew of the Cathedral. Pews are reserved exclusively for guests and witnesses to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrament of Matrimony.
4. Photographers are not permitted to position themselves in front of the first pews, except during the bride’s entrance – immediately after which they are to step to the side aisle beyond the pillars.
5. Photographers are not permitted to step into any part of the Sanctuary, nor are cameras allowed in any part of the Sanctuary at any time. The Sanctuary, located in the front of the church, is distinguished from the main section of the Cathedral by a step up.
6. Photographers are not permitted to lie down or sit down on the floor or crouch down in front of the first pews.

7. Photographers may walk up the center aisle to the 5th pew in order to capture the exchange of rings & vows and must immediately leave that area afterwards. Except for that period, the center aisle may not be accessed forward of the center cross aisle. Side aisles may be accessed IF the photographer remains stationary at the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd pew and does not move. The focus MUST be on the liturgy and photographers who move constantly are a distraction to worship.
8. Photographers must dress professionally for the wedding (and rehearsal, if attending) and must behave in a manner befitting a church setting.
9. Flash affixed to a camera may be used, but extra lighting may not be set up or used at any time.
10. A camera on tripod may be set up in the choir loft providing it is out of the way and at a location approved by the Organist/Music Director. Photographers may also access the loft for photos as long as they do not interfere with any of the music liturgy and depart as soon as the photo is taken.
11. Photographers must check in with the Wedding Coordinator to assure her that they are familiar with the rules.

Floral Displays

Floral arrangements and other appointments must work around the furnishings of the Cathedral. Church furnishings and liturgical decorations are not to be moved. It is typical ~ but not mandatory ~ that couples order 2 floral arrangements to be placed near the altar during their wedding and that the arrangements are left for Sunday Masses. If you and another bride are being married on the same day, you may wish to consider sharing the cost of altar flowers (e.g., two simple white arrangements) that will be delivered by the first bride's florist and remain at the altar for both weddings. If ordering flowers from a grocery store, they must be delivered **and set up** – either by the store or by someone selected by you – at least 30 minutes before your wedding begins. You are strongly urged to discuss your corsage selections with those who will wear them to avoid complaints about pins (maybe a wrist corsage would be better) or allergies. **No flowers or petals of any kind (real, silk, etc.) can be dropped in or outside the Cathedral. Flower girls may carry flowers or baskets, but may not drop anything. No rice or bird seed can be thrown outside the Cathedral because it presents a safety hazard.**

Unity Candle

If using a unity candle, you must purchase it and bring it the night of your rehearsal. You may wish to consider getting a “dripleless” center candle (tea light inserted into the top of the center candle). The 2 side candles are typically standard tall tapers. If you do not purchase a candle stand, the Cathedral stand will be used.

White carpet/aisle runner

White carpets/aisle runners are not permitted at the Cathedral because they are a safety hazard on the marble floor.

Pew bows

If using pew bows, you must purchase them through your florist or make them / purchase them on your own. If your florist provides them, verify they will both deliver them **AND SET THEM UP**. If making or purchasing them on your own, you must bring them to your rehearsal. Regardless of how they are provided, they must be able to be affixed to the pews with ribbons or rubber bands. Wire and/or tape cannot be used to attach the bows to the pews. There are 15 pews in the front half of the Cathedral (from the Sanctuary to the break) and 14 pews in the back half of the Cathedral (from the break to the rear of the Cathedral).

Parking

Parking is available in the rear of the Church or on Broadway (in front of the church) – EXCEPT directly in front of the church where orange cones will be positioned – this area is for the bride's vehicles only (e.g., limos)

Rehearsal

Couples should come prepared and on time for the marriage rehearsal, bringing along the readers, gift-bearers, ushers, and anyone else involved in the marriage ceremony. The wedding coordinator will have provided you a CHECKLIST of items to bring to the rehearsal. It's very important that everything on the list be brought.

Rehearsals are usually scheduled the Thursday or Friday before the wedding date at 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. The wedding coordinator will schedule your rehearsal when you return your completed worksheet. Times are booked in the order received. The wedding coordinator will conduct the rehearsal for your wedding party.

The bride, groom, maid of honor and best man will be asked to arrive at least 10 minutes before the rehearsal start time.

Anyone with an active role should plan to attend the rehearsal. This includes bridal party members, parents, readers and gift bearers (full Mass only), anyone with a special escort at the beginning, etc.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The wedding coordinator will arrange for a Priest to hear confessions immediately following the rehearsal for the bride, groom, bridal party, and family members. Because you are choosing to be married in the Roman Catholic Church, this is an important step in preparing for your special day.

Attire

Wedding gowns and attire worn by members of the bridal party should be tasteful and appropriate for wear in the Cathedral of St. Patrick.

Wedding day

Weddings are expected to begin on time. Two weddings may be scheduled for the same day and each wedding is allotted one and one-half hours for completion. The time begins 30 minutes before the scheduled start of your wedding and ends 2 hours later. Please allow sufficient time to “get to the church on time.” Norwich traffic is frequently problematic so please remind your limousine driver, photographer, guests, and members of the wedding party to allow plenty of time to travel to Norwich.

Tell your bridal party / family members / readers / limo driver/ etc. that the wedding **must start on time.** You reserve the Cathedral for a 2 hour period that begins 30 minutes before your wedding starts and ends 2 hours later. The time is not extended due to late arrival / late start.

Must arrive 30 minutes before the wedding start time: Groom, Best man, ushers, anyone for whom a corsage or boutonniere is being ordered (unless they are in the bride’s vehicle)

Must arrive 15 minutes before the wedding start time: Bride’s limo or vehicle

Fees

Fees for services such as wedding coordination, musicians and soloists are for time spent to enhance your wedding experience. The remembrance for Altar Servers (full Mass only) is a courtesy to express appreciation for the young people who give of their time to serve the Priest at your wedding Mass. The Cathedral fee is SOLELY to cover the costs of lighting, air conditioning/heat, cleaning, etc. If you bring a visiting Priest to the Cathedral, it is customary to give a monetary token of appreciation. If you wish to give a monetary offering to the Cathedral Priest, you may do so. **All fees must be paid in full at least **SIXTY DAYS** before your wedding, and must be accompanied by the payment sheet provided to you by the wedding coordinator.**

Guest etiquette

We recommend that you remind or familiarize your guests with proper etiquette while visiting the Cathedral. This includes a request that no drink or food be brought inside and that electronic devices be turned off. In deference to the professional photographer you have hired, and out of respect to the holy setting, **guests should be asked to refrain from taking photos of any part of the ceremony.**

After the Ceremony

Catholic marriages, duly recorded with all pertinent documents, will be formally registered at the Cathedral. In the future, if you should require any documentation regarding your wedding, please contact the Rectory Office directly at 860-889-8441. If you need a copy of your wedding license, you must contact Norwich town hall.

Marriage License Information

From the State of Connecticut - State Office of Vital Records - Marriage License and Certificate

What Do I Need To Do To Get A Marriage License?

If you are planning to marry, you and your spouse-to-be must appear **in person** at a local vital records office to apply for a marriage license. The marriage license is issued to ensure that you and your spouse-to-be are eligible to be married. You must apply for your marriage license at the vital records office of the town where the marriage is to take place. YOU MUST APPLY AT THE NORWICH CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT NORWICH CITYHALL.

You will need to complete the marriage license application, provide identification and make a sworn statement that the information that you provide is true. You no longer need to have a blood test to obtain a marriage license in Connecticut.

Your marriage license is good for 65 days. Therefore, you can obtain your license any time within the 65 calendar days preceding your wedding date.

Once the marriage ceremony takes place, the marriage officiator will submit the license to the registrar of vital records of the town where the marriage took place. The registrar will then register the license and place it on file for permanent record. Once registered, the marriage license becomes a vital record and is referred to as a marriage certificate.

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3132&q=390672>

Norwich City Clerk

City Hall, Room 215

100 Broadway

Norwich, CT 06360-4431

Phone: (860) 823-3734

Fax: (860) 823-3790

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are **NOT** to give your marriage license to the Rectory; you are to provide it to the Wedding Coordinator at your rehearsal.