

**ST. ANN CHURCH  
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St. Ann Parish Marriage Guidelines for Registered Members of St. Ann, St. Patrick and St. Vincent de Paul Parishes  
- Revised Oct. 2016



Dear Engaged Couple,

These Marriage Guidelines have been compiled by the pastor and deacons here at St. Ann Parish, with the hope of making your wedding preparations easier. The following information should answer “**the most asked questions**” and be a time saver for both you and your wedding party.

Best wishes,

- Rev. Msgr. John J. Bonzagni, Pastor
- Deacon John Zick
- Deacon Dan Romanello

**PLEASE KNOW THAT BOTH PARTIES, CATHOLIC OR NOT CATHOLIC, MUST BE FREE TO MARRY PRIOR TO THE ST. ANN SECRETARY BOOKING ANY WEDDING. IF AN ANNULMENT IS PENDING, NO WEDDING DATE CAN BE BOOKED UNTIL THE ANNULMENT IS FORMALLY GRANTED AND THE ANNULMENT PAPER WORK IS RECEIVED BY ST. ANN’S PASTOR. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

1. To be considered eligible to be married in one of our three parishes, the prospective bride or groom must be registered or have registered family members at St. Ann, St. Vincent de Paul or St. Patrick parish. A “registered family” is defined as having been registered at one of these three parishes for 5 years or longer. The couple should contact the Pastor at least one year in advance of the wedding. The church date must be set **FIRST** – before making any other arrangements. This way the church date is secure and this eliminates conflicts for everyone involved.
2. **THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE:** Ideally, couples should be practicing Catholics. If yours is an inter-faith marriage, the religion of the other person is **greatly respected.** When two Catholics marry, the Sacrament of Marriage is usually celebrated within a

Mass. In the case of an inter-faith marriage, the Mass is optional. There is a difference between a Nuptial Mass and a Nuptial Service, so let me explain this in detail. In the Roman Catholic Church a **Nuptial Mass** is normally celebrated and within the Nuptial Mass the wedding vows are exchanged. In a **Nuptial Service**, which is often celebrated between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, the wedding vows are also exchanged but the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is omitted. The Nuptial Mass and the Nuptial Service are ***BOTH A CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE***. In our Catholic tradition, however, because the Eucharist is so central to our faith, it is highly encouraged that you exchange your vows within a Nuptial Mass. Please speak to the celebrant or deacon about your choice in this matter.

3. **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:** The couple needs to fill out the PRE-MARITAL INVESTIGATION FORM with the priest or deacon first. A Catholic needs copies of his/her Baptismal, First Communion and Confirmation records, **DATED WITHIN THE LAST SIX (6) MONTHS**. If the prospective bride or groom was not baptized at St. Ann, St. Vincent de Paul or St. Patrick parish, a baptismal certificate with the **full address of the church of record**, must be given to the priest or deacon celebrating the marriage. Normally, a Catholic getting married has already made the Sacrament of Confirmation. If you are a Catholic and have *not* made your Confirmation, would you please speak to the priest or deacon and perhaps consider joining our next class of adults who will be making their Confirmation in the spring – we'd love to have you join us and complete your Sacraments of Initiation. Please ask the priest or deacon about this. A non-Catholic needs a copy of his/her Birth Certificate and Baptismal record if available.
4. **PRE-CANA:** Pre-Cana or some other MARRIAGE PREPARATIONAL OPPORTUNITY (for example: Heart-to-Heart, Engaged Encounter Weekend, etc.), is **REQUIRED BY THIS DIOCESE** (as in most!). Please ask the priest or deacon about pre-Cana in this area of the Diocese. Following the Pre-Cana session of your choice, you will receive a Certificate of Attendance and this needs to be given to the priest or deacon by the couple, to add to your file.
5. **MUSIC:** The couple is responsible for making **all the arrangements for the music**. Music, of course, is extremely important for any wedding and it is expected that your church music which lends an air of “sanctity” and “mutual love” to your very special day. **All couples must** contact our music director, Mr. Ron Ramsay at 413-344-6988 or roneramsay@gmail.com. If you are questioning whether you need a vocalist or not, our pastor highly suggests that you hire one. It is our pastor’s opinion that having a singer/organist accompany an organist is well worth your money. **You are responsible for contacting Ron and it would be prudent to call him as soon as possible.**
6. **DECORATIONS:** The couple shall take care of arranging for all of their wedding decorations (for ex. bows and flowers). PLEASE ADVISE YOUR FLORIST TO USE CLIPS, RIBBONS OR RUBBER BANDS to secure any bows to the pews. **ABSOLUTELY NO TAPE IS ALLOWED DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT REMOVES VARNISH FROM THE PEWS!!!** St. Ann Parish does allow aisle runners, but from past experience, they are not encouraged due to the possibility of your wedding guests tripping on them. If you choose to use an aisle runner, you must inform your florist and they will make the necessary arrangements. It is the florist job to properly fasten the runner to the carpet well in advance of the beginning of the celebration. Our aisle is 110 feet from altar to the main doors of the church.

7. Please inform the priest or deacon at the rehearsal if you plan on using an aisle runner. Finally, ABSOLUTELY NO RICE, CONFETTI, ROSE PEDALS, OR BIRDSEED IS ALLOWED TO BE THROWN AT ST. ANN CHURCH. Thank you for your understanding in this matter. There are 29 pews on each side of the church.
8. **PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO:** Camera's (both flash and videotape) are allowed. Those taking the pictures or video are kindly asked to speak to the priest or deacon before the ceremony in order to get specific instructions as to where cameras/videos ARE and ARE NOT allowed. If your photographer will be taking pictures in the church following your Saturday afternoon wedding, photographs must be completed by 2:30 p.m. so that the church can be prepared for confessions which begin at 3 p.m.
9. **REHEARSAL DATE AND TIME:** Make sure to set up the rehearsal date and time with the priest or deacon. The rehearsal is usually the evening before the wedding.
10. During the last few months before the wedding, the priest or deacon will review with you the Marriage Planner entitled: *TOGETHER FOR LIFE*. The couple is kindly asked to bring the completed LAST PAGE of this planner to the rehearsal so that the priest or deacon can properly make the final preparations needed for the wedding.
11. **MARRIAGE LICENSE:** Please arrange with the Town Clerk's Office for your Marriage License. Couples MUST apply for their License *TOGETHER*. A three-day (3) waiting period will then follow. Only one of you is required to pick up your license after the 3-day waiting period and it is valid for up to 60 days from the day you apply. Massachusetts does not require couples have a blood test as of Feb. 2005. A \$10 fee is charged at the Lenox Town Hall Clerk's Office. **It is VERY IMPORTANT that couples bring this license to the rehearsal the night before the wedding and HAND IT TO THE PRIEST OR DEACON.** This is important because he then must sign it and mail it into the Clerk's Office. Without the license, the priest or deacon CANNOT perform the ceremony. A valid marriage license may be obtained from any city or town hall in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
12. **CHURCH OFFERING:** As a registered member at St. Ann, St. Vincent de Paul or St. Patrick parishes, there is no mandatory offering asked from the couple for use of the church. As registered parishioners, it is up to the couple to determine what amount of a gift they wish to make to the parish on the occasion of their wedding. (If you choose to give an offering to the church, please place it in a white envelope marked "Church Offering" and hand it to the priest or deacon at the rehearsal). It is often asked, "What is the appropriate amount to give as a gift?" Although this is a free will donation, an amount no less than \$50 is very much appreciated.
13. **CELEBRANT FEE:** Given the fact that the priest or deacon meets with the couple at least four or five times before the wedding, and is present at the rehearsal, a fee of \$200 has been deemed appropriate. The fee should be placed in an envelope and given to the priest or deacon, along with the marriage license, at the time of the rehearsal. This offering is separate from the church offering and should be made payable to the priest/deacon himself.)
14. **CUSTODIAL SERVICES:** Our custodian will be present immediately following your wedding. \$25.00 is required for his services. Please place this fee in an envelope marked "Custodian" and also give this to the priest or deacon at the time of your rehearsal.
15. **SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION:** Since God is the "author of Marriage," it is a sacred celebration. We make many, many external preparations for this day; it is

important that you as a couple prepare yourselves spiritually as well. An honest and good confession would be a perfect way to prepare you for this wonderful “new beginning.” Whether you made your last confession two months ago or twenty years ago does not matter – what matters is your desire NOW to begin this marriage spiritually ready. Please think this through and know that the priest is more than happy and honored to celebrate this sacrament with you and your wedding party. Confession will be available after the wedding rehearsal if you wish. If you desire this sacrament, please inform the priest prior to the rehearsal.

16. **PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY (PMI):** The couple is required by the Diocese to take the **PMI** Profile. This will be explained to you by the priest or deacon. The PMI is designed to help you examine your thoughts and expectations about entering into marriage. **THIS IS NOT A TEST!!** You cannot pass or fail it! It is a **TOOL** to help you and your partner explore your relationship more. When the results (which are ready in about 10 business days) are back, the priest or deacon and the couple will set up an appointment to sit down and review the results.

17. **WEDDING TIMES:** Normal times for weddings at St. Ann are as follows:

Friday: Afternoons and evenings

Saturday: between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Absolutely no weddings are allowed after 1p.m.

due to confessions at 3 p.m.

(A 1 p.m. wedding normally will end at approximately 2 p.m. If photographs are being taken in church following a 1 p.m. wedding, they must conclude at 2:30 in order to prepare the church for confessions at 3 p.m.)

Saturday evening: The pastor does not celebrate Saturday evening weddings due to the fact that he celebrates Mass at 5:30 in Lenox Dale. Saturday evening weddings are only allowed if the engaged couple makes arrangements with an outside priest or deacon to officiate.

**SUNDAY WEDDINGS ARE NOT HELD HERE.**

18 **WEDDING TIMES AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL AND ST. PATRICK**

**CHURCHES:** If you are considering a wedding at St. Vincent de Paul or St. Patrick, please discuss possible times with the secretary who will discuss your possibilities with the pastor.

19 **PARISH REGISTRATION:** An important question concerning you and your spouse **AFTER** your wedding day is: As a married couple, will you remain in the parish of St. Ann (or St. Patrick or St. Vincent de Paul) or will you be joining another parish family? If you remain in one of these three parishes, please know that you need to register as a **new family**. As a new family, where will you be living? What is your new phone number? What is your new address? - These questions, as well as a few others, need to be answered as a new family. You may talk to the priest or deacon about this or contact the parish office at your church with this information in order to fill out a registration form. It only takes a few minutes over the phone.

Finally, these Marriage Guidelines were prepared to answer your marriage questions. If you still have questions, however, please feel free to call the priest or one of our deacons and they will be more than happy to answer any questions for you.

**God Bless you both as you prepare for your special day!!**

**Rev. Msgr. John J. Bonzagni, Pastor  
Deacon John Zick and Deacon Dan Romanello**

