

ST. MARY STAR OF THE SEA/HOLY SAVIOR CATHOLIC CHURCH



WEDDING BOOKLET

Dear Bride/Groom to be:

Welcome to St. Mary Star of the Sea/Holy Savior Catholic Church! We are happy to do all that we can to help you to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. Marriage is a most serious and sacred commitment. We, at St. Mary Star of the Sea/Holy Savior Catholic Church, are delighted you have chosen to bring your commitment before God and His people by having a Church wedding. We wish to help you prepare not only for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, but also for a permanent, joyful, and faith-filled married life.

Our marriage policy is intended to offer an overview and to clarify any questions you might have concerning the Sacrament of Marriage and how it is celebrated at St. Mary Star of the Sea/Holy Savior Catholic Church. Please take the time to review this policy. After you have reviewed it, please contact the Parish Office to set up a time to meet with me and we can begin the process, including confirming the date and time of your wedding.

Finally, be assured of our prayers that God's abundant blessings will be with you as you prepare for this most holy Sacrament of Marriage.

Sincerely Yours in Christ and His Blessed Mother,

Fr. Solomon

Pastor

# St. Mary Star of the Sea/Holy Savior Catholic Church

## Marriage Policy

“AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION, GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE; FOR THIS REASON, A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME AS ONE. THEY ARE NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE FLESH. THEREFORE, LET NO MAN SEPARATE WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER.” MK 10:6-9

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In these words, the Gospel of St. Mark summarizes the teachings of Jesus concerning marriage. Jesus not only insisted that the original design of His Heavenly Father for marriage be preserved, but He sanctified marriage for His followers by giving them the Sacrament of Matrimony. The love of man and woman is made holy in Christian marriage. St. Paul tells us that the love of a Christian husband and wife reflects the love of Christ for the Church. Christian marriage has an added dimension, the sharing of the supernatural life which is first received in baptism.

The Church has consistently taught that marriage is a personal relationship involving a lifelong commitment to a shared life that is both intimate and faithful. A relationship lacking these qualities is not considered a true marriage. But once a true sacramental marriage has been established, only death can sever the marriage bond. It should be noted that annulments granted by the Church do not terminate truly sacramental marriages, but rather declare that marriages presumed to be sacramental were never true and binding due to some impediment that existed from the beginning of the union.

In accordance with the aforementioned teaching of the Church and in support of the marriage preparation policy currently in effect in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wilmington,

St. Mary Star of the Sea/Holy Savior Catholic Church issues the following policy for marriage preparation and enrichment:

1) **Timeline** – Engaged couples should contact their parish priest or deacon at least one year prior to the anticipated wedding date. A meeting will be set up; only after this first session can a date be confirmed for the wedding.

2) **Freedom to Marry** – Anyone under the age of 18 years of age must have prior permission from the Bishop before setting a marriage date. In addition, the consent of the parent(s) or guardian(s) must be obtained. Parties who are eighteen or over must give testimony before a priest or deacon concerning your freedom to marry. **If this is not a first marriage for one or both of you, a decree of Church nullity for all previous marriages is required.** Please consult the priest or deacon immediately if there is any question in this regard.

3) **Nature of Marriage** – The couple must be psychologically mature and capable of consenting to the marriage; and they must understand the nature of Catholic marriage (i.e., exclusive, permanent, and open to having children).

4) **Religion of the parties** – At least one party must profess the Catholic religion. Profession of faith implies some practice of religion such as prayer, attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments. Since Christian marriage is a sacrament, it is the responsibility of the priest or deacon to ascertain that the parties are properly disposed to receive the sacrament.

A written letter from the pastor of the bride's or groom's church parish, or from the Catholic party's parish (mixed religion), is required for parties who reside outside of the Parish.

Marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic is permitted by the Church with proper dispensation. In order to obtain dispensation, the Catholic party is required to promise that he or she will continue living his or her faith in the Catholic Church and will do all in his or her power to have the children baptized and reared as Catholics. Special permission to celebrate the wedding ceremony of a mixed-

religion couple within the context of the Mass must be obtained by the priest or deacon preparing the couple for marriage.

5) **License** – Your marriage license can be obtained at the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Snow Hill, MD. Additional information is available at: <http://www.co.worcester.md.us/departments/drp/permit/marriagefaq>.

6) **Marriage Preparation** – A considerable amount of time and effort is spent preparing to appropriately celebrate your wedding. The Diocese of Wilmington has designed a three-part, year-long process to assist couples in the preparation which includes:

1. Meetings with the priest/deacon
2. Pre-Cana class
3. Meetings with a married couple

Information about this process will be provided by the priest or deacon preparing you for sacramental marriage.

4) **Baptismal certificate** – Also, a **new** copy of your (Catholic) baptismal certificate is needed. This is obtained at the parish office where you were baptized. Please contact that church and have them send a recent copy, with notations, here to the Parish. For non-Catholic Christians, any copy of your baptismal certificate suffices.

5) **Celebrant** – The priest or deacon assigned to the parish would be the usual celebrant of your wedding. **If you desire to have a priest or deacon from outside the parish be the celebrant, he would be expected to do the pre-nuptial**

**paperwork pertaining to the marriage.** Also, the guest priest or deacon must have the clearance from the Diocese in which he is incardinated.

6) **Choice of Ritual** – The Catholic Marriage Rite provides a rich selection of Scripture readings and prayers. The priest or deacon will provide you with a book which contains the readings from which you may choose. Please take the time to consider prayerfully your choices so that your wedding may have a deeper meaning for you and for all present.

6) **Dates** – Weddings can be scheduled throughout the year **except** Holy Saturday and any Holy Days of Obligation, Christmas Eve or New Year’s Eve that falls on a Saturday. Ocean City has many events on weekends that can significantly impact traffic and parking. Please check <https://ococean.com> for more information.

7) **Time** – Generally, weddings are scheduled at 12 noon and 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Weddings during the week or on Sunday will depend on the parish schedule. Two hours are allotted between ceremonies to allow time for pictures, etc.

8) **Rehearsal** – The rehearsal should be arranged the day or evening before the wedding at a time convenient for both the wedding party and the priest or deacon. One hour is allotted for the wedding rehearsal. The wedding party and those who will be reading Scriptures are asked to attend the rehearsal. Please inform those involved to arrive in advance of the scheduled time, allowing for traffic conditions and the like. Since there could be two rehearsals scheduled for the same evening, please be prompt in arriving at the church.

9) **Wedding Coordinator** – Beth Riley is our wedding coordinator. She coordinates with the couple on logistical details, including the florist, and will

assist the priest or deacon in making sure the rehearsal and wedding go smoothly. Please contact her after your first meeting with the priest or deacon.

10) **Music** – Most weddings are two-fold celebrations: the church ceremony and the reception that follows. One is liturgical; the other, secular. The music for the Church service **must** be liturgically appropriate for the celebration of the sacrament. It is the community's prayer and praise to God for this joyous occasion. Three guidelines are offered here to help in selecting music, namely;

1. **Connection to the sacred.** The music you choose should embody high standards of quality and the texts should reflect the praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for his church as the foundation and the model for love and fidelity in marriage, and the invocation of God's presence and blessing. Songs from the entertainment world, while worthwhile in themselves, are inappropriate to the liturgy and not allowed.
2. **Familiarity.** Look for sacred music that the congregation, friends, and family may know.
3. **Invitation to sing.** The music for the wedding liturgy is intended to draw the congregation into a common prayer of thanksgiving and blessing. It assumes that the assembly takes an active part in the singing of the psalms, hymns, and acclamations. For this reason, a Parish organist and cantor are required to lead the assembly in the singing. If you wish to have a family member or friend participate or have an Instrumentalist (trumpet, violin, flute, harp, etc.), please contact the Music Director. The use of prerecorded music not permitted.

All musical arrangements for the wedding ceremony must be made with our Director of Liturgical Music/Organist, Mr. Stewart Seiple, who should be contacted immediately after your date is set. He will meet with couples individually and

assist with the selection of appropriate instrumental and vocal music, including the necessary responses and acclamations.

**The fee for the Organist is \$200 and \$150 for the Cantor.**

11) **Wedding Program** – Wedding programs must be approved by the priest or deacon. We have sample wedding programs to serve as guidelines that outline the Marriage Rite, especially helpful with non-Catholic guests.

12) **Photography** – Photographs and videos may be taken discreetly and unobtrusively, without flash, during the ceremony. Photographers are asked not to enter the sanctuary and should consult with the priest or deacon before the wedding begins. Following the liturgy, photographs in front of the altar should not last over 30 minutes. Keep in mind that at Holy Savior Church, arrivals for Saturday confessions begin at 4:00 p.m. with Mass at 5:15 p.m.

13) **Decorations & Flowers** – As you prepare to celebrate your wedding, we ask that you keep in mind that the setting is for sacred worship. Please note these restrictions:

- no kind of adhesive is to be used on the pews or any church furnishings
- any candles must have protective glass around them; unity candles are not allowed
- no aisle runner
- please, no artificial flowers
- rice, flowers, confetti, bird seed, etc. are prohibited for maintenance and safety reasons
- **You must have your flowers approved by the Wedding Coordinator** (while this may sound strange, there have been inappropriate floral arrangements before).



It is not necessary to leave flowers in church, but if you wish to do so, your offering is greatly appreciated. The cost of these arrangements can be shared by other wedding parties of that day. **Please do NOT remove or change any of the existing decorations without prior permission from the priest or deacon.**

14) **Bride's Rooms** – Both churches have rooms for the bridal party to prepare for the ceremony and easy access to a restroom. St. Mary's has a covered walkway to the doors of the church while Holy Savior does not. Please follow up with the Wedding Coordinator for more information.

15) **Decorum** – All wedding party members, guests, friends and relatives should be reminded that this is a church – a sacred place of worship. It is expected that the church and its property be treated with respect. Chewing gum is not permitted in the church under any circumstances.

*Alcoholic beverages or controlled substances are NOT PERMITTED, in, around, or near the church premises or grounds. There is also no smoking in the church vestibule, sacristy, or worship space.* The bride and groom will be asked to speak with any guest disregarding these rules.

The parish reserves the right to dismiss anyone who displays a lack of respect and mars the occasion by such activities. In addition, civil and Church law forbid the exchange of wedding vows should the bride or groom – or the official witnesses – be under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance or a hangover.

16) **Receiving Line** – Because of the small vestibule at our churches, we suggest this be done at the reception site.

18) **Fee** – There is no fee to be married at St. Mary Star of the Sea/Holy Savior. If you desire to make a donation to the parish, which is appreciated, a good point of reference is to look at the amount spent on flowers.

Additionally, if you desire to give a stipend/donation for the priest or deacon, that is also welcome. If you have arranged for other than a parish priest or deacon, you may wish to reimburse him for travel costs, accommodations, etc.

19) **Miscellaneous** – If you have other questions or concerns, you may reach the parish office, Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. by phone (410-289-0652), fax (410-289-1026), or e-mail ([office@stmaryholysavior.com](mailto:office@stmaryholysavior.com)).

20) **A Final Note** – A wedding ceremony is liturgy, a way of praising God, and we are dedicated to preserving the sacred nature of each marriage. We are concerned about your needs and suggestions, but please be aware that we stand within an ancient and honored tradition that maintains its own dignity and has its own requirements. We will be glad to discuss your ideas but know that if there is a conflict between your request and liturgical tradition, we will tend to respect the community's spiritual traditions over an individual's preference.

We hope a long, loving, and grace-filled life for you both. With the support of your family, friends, and Church, may your expectations for a happy and holy married life be realized. With all best wishes, I am,

Sincerely Yours in Christ and His Blessed Mother,

Fr. Solomon

Pastor

**Parish Office**

1705 Philadelphia Avenue, Ocean City, MD 21842

Phone: 410-289-0652 Fax: 410-289-1026

E-mail: [office@stmaryholysavior.com](mailto:office@stmaryholysavior.com)

Website: [www.stmarystaroftheseaocmd.com](http://www.stmarystaroftheseaocmd.com)

**St. Mary Star of the Sea Church**

200 Baltimore Avenue, Ocean City, MD 21842

**Holy Savior Church**

1705 Philadelphia Avenue Ocean City, MD 21842

**Pastor**

Fr. Solomon

Phone: 410-289-0652

Email: [pastor@stmaryholysavior.com](mailto:pastor@stmaryholysavior.com)

**Music Director**

Mr. Stewart Seiple

Phone: 216-375-0833

E-mail: [music@stmaryholysavior.com](mailto:music@stmaryholysavior.com)

**Wedding Liturgy Coordinator**

Mrs. Beth Riley

Cell: 443-880-0511 (texting is fine)

E-mail: [bethwhipleriley@hotmail.com](mailto:bethwhipleriley@hotmail.com)

***Congratulations on your upcoming Marriage!***

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