

**St. Teresa's Parish**  
**Guidelines for the Sacrament of Matrimony**  
**(Effective March 2013)**

The staff of St. Teresa's Parish extends congratulations to those engaged to be married. The decision to enter into marriage is a serious one, and can serve as a great sign of commitment, faith, and hope. If considering a wedding at St. Teresa's Parish, the following guidelines will help to answer many questions and assist in planning your marriage in the sight of God and before family and friends. In this sacrament spouses receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the seal of the marriage covenant.

Please read these guidelines carefully.

**Introduction**

In the eyes of the Church, marriage is a covenant in which a man and a woman establish a life-long partnership. The nature of the Sacrament of Matrimony orders the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring. A marriage between individuals who have been baptized is one that Christ the Lord has raised to the dignity of a sacrament.

The marriage of any Catholic is governed not only by divine law but also by church, or canon law, and is without prejudice to the competence of the civil authority concerning the civil effects of marriage.

**PART I: Preliminaries**

**Date and Time**

Before any other arrangements have been made, contact the parish office to check for available wedding dates and times. Weddings at St. Teresa's are usually scheduled on Fridays at 3pm and on Saturdays at 1pm or 3pm. Since we have a limited number of spaces available for weddings and some paperwork must be completed beforehand, we suggest contacting us a year in advance; at the very least six months notice is required. Wedding ceremonies do not usually occur during Lent. Before a date and time for the wedding is confirmed, couples must meet privately with one of the parish priests. **Contact the parish office at 709-579-0065.**

**For Those Previously Married**

An individual who has been previously married and is now seeking marriage in the Catholic Church must obtain a Declaration of Nullity or Freedom to Marry before a wedding date is booked. These documents are issued by an ecclesiastical Marriage Tribunal (a diocesan office). This step is necessary even if the previously married party is non-Catholic or if the previous marriage was entered into outside of the Catholic Church. This step is not necessary if the former spouse is deceased. Any questions can be answered by one of the parish priests.

## **Documentary Requirements**

An exchange of the vows of love and fidelity in the Catholic Church is a careful procedure. The Church is responsible for discerning a couple's intentions and capacities for making this promise; as a result several documents will be required.

The following is a list of such documents:

### **Prenuptial Interview**

The purpose of the prenuptial interview is to determine the couple's freedom to marry in the Catholic Church. Contact one of the parish priests to arrange an interview. Proof of identification must be brought to this interview. If both individuals, or the Catholic party, lives outside the Archdiocese of St. John's, one of the parish priests can give directions as to where and by whom the prenuptial interview and wedding file must be completed.

### **Certificate of Completion of a Marriage Preparation Course**

Marriage Preparation Courses are designed to assist the couple in building a successful marriage by deepening their understanding of each other and by addressing issues of communication, finance, psychology, faith, sexuality, and family living. Marriage Preparation courses are offered occasionally by St. Teresa's Parish and by the Archdiocese of St. John's. They may also be completed at another Catholic parish or in another diocese. Information on such courses is available at: [www.stteresa.ca](http://www.stteresa.ca) (see Marriage Ministry link) or [www.rcsj.org/family-life/marriageprep](http://www.rcsj.org/family-life/marriageprep).

### **Baptismal Certificate**

In the case of Catholics, the Baptismal Certificate should be newly issued and dated any time after the initial interview with the priest. Catholics should contact the parish where they were baptized, inform them of the upcoming marriage, and either pick up the certificate or have it sent to St. Teresa's Parish. The mailing address of the parish of baptism must be provided along with the documents. In the case of a fiancé(e) who is a non-Catholic Christian, a copy of his or her original baptismal certificate is needed. In the case of a fiancé(e) who is non-Christian, a signed letter from a person who has known that individual since childhood must vouch for their previous marital history in writing. The letter should include that he or she has never been baptized, and was not previously married; it must be dated and include contact information. These are essential documents and should be collected as early as possible and brought to the office where they will be kept in the wedding file.

### **Record of Confirmation**

When a Catholic receives the Sacrament of Confirmation, a notification is ordinarily sent back to the parish of baptism and it is recorded in their register. This should appear on the newly issued baptismal certificate. If it does not appear here, a copy of the original Confirmation certificate will suffice. Please note that a Catholic can still be married in the Church without being confirmed, but it is highly recommended that one receive the Sacrament of Confirmation before marriage occurs. Anyone seeking Confirmation is asked to contact the parish office. If approached early enough the necessary preparation can be given and the sacrament can be received.

### **Civil Marriage License**

The Civil Marriage license is a necessary civil document for your marriage. All persons marrying in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador must obtain a Marriage License. It is obtained from the Department of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, 5 Mews Place, St. John's, 709-729-3308, website: [www.gs.gov.nl.ca/birth/getting\\_married/index.html](http://www.gs.gov.nl.ca/birth/getting_married/index.html). Marriage licenses in Newfoundland are valid for 30 days from the date of issue. The fee for a marriage license is \$50.00. Applications must be made at least eight days before the anticipated date of marriage. There is a four day waiting period from the time when the application is made and when the license is issued. There is a further four day waiting period between the time the priest receives the license and when the ceremony can be performed. The priest performing the marriage is responsible for completing and returning it to the Department of Government Service Newfoundland and Labrador and so it must be brought to the parish office to be included in the wedding file.

### **Church Fees**

St. Teresa's Parish seeks to provide for the spiritual needs of its parishioners. The wedding offering assists in covering the expenses incurred by the parish in helping to celebrate the wedding day. These expenses include maintenance and upkeep of the church (including heating, lighting, cleaning and repairs), and the time needed for the priest and staff to prepare for and celebrate your wedding. The parish offering for weddings is \$200.00 (\$100.00 each for the parish and the priest). This fee does not include musicians, who have separate fees. These fees are to be paid before the wedding and should be given to the priest or delivered to the parish office. These fees may change without notice.

## **PART II: The Wedding Celebration**

### **The Ceremony**

A Nuptial Mass with Holy Communion is recommended for a Catholic marrying another Catholic. We recommend a Wedding Ceremony without Holy Communion for a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic Christian, or a Catholic marrying a person of another religion. The priest will help to determine which option is best. He will also assist in planning many other details for the ceremony.

A wedding is a joyful and exciting occasion but it is important to keep in mind that St. Teresa's Church is a sacred place for witnessing the wedding vows before God. An atmosphere of reverence and respect is to be maintained at all times.

### **Readings and Liturgical Prayers**

A booklet is provided which contains scripture readings appropriate for use at weddings, as well as a selection of prayers and blessings. Non-scriptural readings, song verses, or poems are never permitted. Couples are welcome to choose relatives and friends who are good proclaimers to proclaim the reading(s) and the General Intercessions. The priest reads the Gospel.

## **Music**

The couple, in consultation with the Music Director and Organist, Robin Williams, plans music for the wedding. He can make particular recommendations and give advice. The organist can meet with the couple to choose the music, or he can choose a programme of suitable music. There is normally an organist and cantor (singer) for every wedding. St. Teresa's Parish has several professional singers who regularly sing for weddings. It is preferable to use our singers, since they are accustomed to our liturgical practices. We also have a number of professional instrumentalists (e.g. trumpet, flute, violin, etc.) who regularly play at St. Teresa's Parish and could play for the wedding. The cantor and any other musicians are to be booked through our organist.

At a Catholic wedding the emphasis must be on liturgical music that gives honour and glory to God, whose blessings we invoke on the union of the bride and groom. As the Wedding Ritual puts it: "Music in Catholic worship must express the worship of God for the mystery of love God created and transforms in this sacrament." For this reason St. Teresa's Parish does not allow any secular music, such as popular love songs or themes from movies. Recorded music is not permitted. These points should be kept in mind when planning your wedding at St. Teresa's Parish.

Our organist is entrusted with the task of judging the suitability of musical selections within the context of a Catholic wedding; he must approve all music chosen for the ceremony.

Our organist is responsible for music at all weddings. If for some reason other musicians are permitted to provide music our organist is paid a bench fee of \$75. Payments are due at St. Teresa's Parish office before the wedding. The organist is paid \$125 and the cantor is paid \$125. Other instrumentalists (trumpet, flute, etc.) may have different fees. A meeting with Mr. Williams to plan music is an extra \$25 fee. These fees may change without notice.

The Music Director and Organist, **Robin Williams**, may be contacted at 709-334-3226, 709-746-2472(cell) or by email [robinfabianwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:robinfabianwilliams@gmail.com).

## **Rehearsal**

Rehearsals should be booked through the priest well in advance of the ceremony. They usually occur a few days before the wedding after all participants have arrived. Rehearsals last about 45 minutes. Please meet inside the main entrance of the church, and as with the ceremony itself, punctuality is presumed.

If there is to be a flower girl or ring bearer, they too should be present at the rehearsal. It is suggested that children performing these roles be at least 4 years of age.

## **Flowers/Decorations**

Floral arrangements are left to the couple's choice. Flowers and decorations are to be placed only with the approval of the priest. Please arrange for removal of decorations immediately after the ceremony.

We respectfully ask that no confetti, rice and anything similar be thrown inside or outside the church. We also ask that bubbles and flower petals not be used inside or outside the church.

**The Unity Candle**

The Unity Candle has emerged in contemporary times as an additional “symbol of unity” at weddings. It is not a part of the Roman Catholic wedding ritual. The real symbol and sacrament of unity are the vows. The rings that are exchanged as a sign of love and fidelity also symbolize the permanence of the marriage vows.

**Photographs & Video Recording**

Photographers and videographers and their assistants are welcome. Because of the sacred nature of the ceremony they must remain respectful and unobtrusive at all times. They are not to stand on the pews, nor may they enter the sanctuary (beyond the first step from the main aisle) during the ceremony. If there is a mass they are not to take photographs during that part of the ceremony. Only at the signing of the register may a designated photographer enter the sanctuary. No extra lighting equipment is to be used. Photographers and videographers should introduce themselves to the priest and consult with him before the ceremony.

**Wheelchair and Disability Access**

There is a ramp leading into the church from the parking lot on the West side. There is also an elevator that leads to the basement level where there are wheelchair accessible washrooms.

**Contact Information**

St. Teresa’s Parish  
120 Mundy Pond Road  
St. John’s NL A1E 1V1  
Telephone: 709-579-0065  
Fax: 709-579-3804  
[www.stteresa.ca](http://www.stteresa.ca)

**Parish Priest:**

Fr. Leo English, C.Ss.R.

**Associate Parish Priests:**

Fr. Tony Bidgood, C.Ss.R.

Fr. Roy Thomas, C.Ss.R.