



# *Marriage & Wedding Preparation*

St. Thomas More Parish

St. Thomas More Church | St. Veronica Chapel  
Narragansett, Rhode Island





## **Peace of Christ Jesus!**

Congratulations on your engagement and decision to enter into holy marriage. At St. Thomas More, we will help you in your preparation to ensure that you make this serious and sacred step in your life a holy and happy one.

Spiritual preparation is a key part of this special time. Frequent participation in the sacraments during this time is important, particularly weekly Mass attendance. It is also strongly recommended that you bring yourselves to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this time of preparation. The engagement period can be particularly stressful at times, and the graces bestowed on you through Confession and weekly Mass will be a great source of strength to help keep you focused and peaceful. This spiritual direction will foster great growth and maturity for both partners.

## Requirements

- ~ A bride or groom should be registered members of our parish.
- ~ A bride or groom who has moved away but whose parents remain registered and supportive of the parish will be given due consideration.
- ~ Outside requests will be discerned at the Pastor's discretion.

## Contact Priest

The day and time of the wedding must be arranged in person by the prospective bride and groom themselves as soon as they feel called to marry. No arrangements can be made by phone or by parents. All arrangements should be made at least **one (1) year** prior to the wedding date. You should secure this date **prior** to making your reception plans.

## Priest Celebrant

Occasionally, either the bride or groom will have a relative or a friend who is a Catholic priest. If so, your priest is welcome to come celebrate your wedding. We would ask that your visiting priest plan to be present for the rehearsal to facilitate a well-conducted wedding ceremony. The paperwork can be completed by your priest or the Pastor, if he is not available in Rhode Island. The priest must provide a Certificate of Good Standing.

## Date and Time of Wedding

We try to schedule a time that will be convenient for your reception, but you must keep in mind the time of our parish Masses and confession on Saturdays.

- ~ Saturday weddings - **The latest scheduled time is 2:00PM** for both St. Thomas More Church and St. Veronica Chapel.
- ~ Sunday weddings are not allowed due to the heavy mass schedule at both churches.
- ~ Friday afternoon & evening weddings are a possibility and are encouraged.

## **Marriage Preparation**

The Marriage Preparation (or Pre-Cana) Program offered by the Diocese of Providence is taught by well-qualified professional people and married couples. Its purpose is of great importance today. It deals both with fundamental aspects of faith and the implications of the Sacrament of Matrimony. The couple needs to attend these seminars. A couple should register for these courses six (6) months prior to the wedding. Applications can be found online at [www.dioceseofprovidence.org](http://www.dioceseofprovidence.org). If a couple lives outside the RI area, another program elsewhere in a Catholic diocese is permitted. The couple needs to send a copy of the certificate received at the seminar to St. Thomas More rectory. If a couple or the priest feels they need more preparation, additional pre-marriage counseling is available and can be arranged through the Pastor.

## **Sacramental Records**

Catholics must obtain a **new copy** of their Baptismal certificate as well as certificates for First Communion and Confirmation. These records must be obtained from the church where these Sacraments were administered and should be obtained within six (6) months prior to the marriage. For non-Catholics, a copy of birth certificate and, if baptized, a copy of certificate of baptism is required.

## **Marriage Forms**

The priest will fill out the regular marriage forms. The pre-nuptial forms concern each person's freedom to marry according to civil and church laws, as well as permission for Catholic/non-Catholic weddings. You should contact the priest to make an appointment for this important part of preparation.

## **Civil Marriage License**

The bride and groom must apply for a civil marriage on their own at the Narragansett Town Hall. We recommend you begin arranging for your license at least one (1) month before the wedding. The marriage license must be given to the priest prior to the rehearsal. The witnesses will be asked to sign it in the required black ink.

## **Witnesses for the Wedding**

Witnesses for a marriage should be supportive of the Church's teachings. A non-Catholic may serve as a witness for a valid reason.

## **Wedding Coordinator**

The church will provide a wedding coordinator who will be present at your rehearsal and will assist you on the day of your wedding.

## **Wedding Rehearsal**

Ordinarily this takes place the night before the ceremony. The wedding coordinator will be present. All those who have an active role in the wedding should be present. Please allow one (1) hour for your rehearsal. Ordinarily confessions will be offered following the rehearsal and lectors will have an opportunity to practice their readings.

## **Fees**

The total fee for a wedding is either:

~ \$600 for registered parishioners or \$950 for non-parishioners:

This total fee includes:

~ \$250 for the organist/vocalist which includes a meeting for musical selections and planning the ceremony.

~ \$250 for a church offering for registered parishioners and

~ \$600 for non-parishioners.

This fee helps defray costs for the church, the sacristan and the cost of utilities.

~ \$100 stipend for the wedding coordinator.

The priest receives no remuneration as part of these fees.

Any gratuity or offering is at the couples' discretion but none is required. Any inquiries regarding this fee should be directed to the Pastor. The parish will compensate both the musician and the coordinator from this fee. Please make checks payable to *St. Thomas More Church*.

## **Website Assistance / Podcasts**

Please visit our website at [www.stthomasmore.org](http://www.stthomasmore.org) to view our complete marriage planning guidelines and to access to our online podcast of your wedding ceremony.

## Liturgy

### Marriage with a Mass/Eucharist

This is the norm for two Roman Catholics as the Eucharist is the source and summit of God's intimacy with us. In some situations a ceremony without a mass would be more appropriate. The norm for the marriage ceremony of a Catholic and non-Catholic does not include the celebration of Mass. This may be done with a special dispensation from the Bishop of Providence.

### Planning the Ceremony

The priest will work with you regarding the ceremony. This includes readings, vows, parental and family involvement, presentation of gifts, etc. and should be done several months before the wedding. The groom, best man and ushers should arrive at least one half hour (30 min.) before the start of the ceremony. The bride and bridal party should arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes before the ceremony. The wedding coordinator will be present to assist you.

### Music/Musicians

Music is an important part of the wedding ceremony. Our parish is blessed with an excellent and professional music ministry. The historic pipe organ at St. Thomas More was a gift of the Bouvier family. Please contact our Music Director Ed Rashed (organist & vocalist) by email at: [emr99@cox.net](mailto:emr99@cox.net) or 401.323.6323 **as soon as you confirm the date of your wedding.** He will meet with you after a Sunday morning Mass to discuss your music options. Remember, this is a religious ceremony and appropriate music must be chosen.

### Readings

The bride and groom should select the readings. The first is taken from the Old Testament, followed by a sung psalm, and then the second reading is from the New Testament. After a sung Gospel Acclamation, the third reading is proclaimed from one of the four Gospels. The suggested readings are on our parish website. You may choose other readings if they are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible found at [uscbb.org](http://uscbb.org).

### Unity Candle

This is not part of the Catholic mass ritual, but could be incorporated at a ceremony without a mass, the reception, or perhaps at the time of grace.

## **Readers**

The choice of readers should be limited to practicing Roman Catholics in good standing. The Word of God should not be proclaimed by someone whose lifestyle does not reflect what is being read. Anyone reading should attend the rehearsal whenever possible.

## **Ushers**

The ushers task is important before the ceremony begins. They should arrive at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the wedding. Their own dignified manner will help foster an atmosphere of reverence and respect for the sacred space. Guests should be escorted into the church when they are ready. Socializing and visiting should take place in the vestibule, not in the church. All guests should be seated so the ceremony can begin on time.

## **Flowers**

Arrangements are customarily sent by the bride and groom as a symbol of gratitude to God and should remain in the church after the wedding. Flowers should not obstruct anything on the altar. Arrangements are usually placed on each side of the tabernacle and in front of the pulpit. Pew bows or flowers are permitted using only pew clips or elastics, no tape. There should not be any flowers in front of the altar as the bride & groom will be kneeling there throughout the ceremony. Plastic runners and flower petals are not allowed as they present a safety hazard.

## **Photography & Videography**

To maintain the sacredness of the ceremony photography without flash is permitted. Videographers and photographers should remain outside the sacristy and the sanctuary, being respectful of the worship.

## **Reception Line**

Couples are encouraged to use the courtyard for their reception line, in front of the Holy Family Statue.

## **Building Access/Handicapped Parking**

Please note that we have handicapped parking spots available.

## **Podcasts**

All wedding ceremonies are podcast live and are accessible from our website at [www.stthomasmoreri.org](http://www.stthomasmoreri.org).

“This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;  
This one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of ‘her man’  
this one has been taken.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife,  
and the two of them become one body.

*Genesis (2: 18-24)*

“Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion...  
They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment,  
making a definitive decision, ‘for ever,’ because we do not know  
what tomorrow will bring. I ask you instead, to be revolutionaries,  
I ask you to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you  
to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary  
and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility,  
that believes you are incapable of true love.”

*Pope Francis*

## **St. Thomas More Parish**

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[www.stthomasmoreri.org](http://www.stthomasmoreri.org)

## **St. Thomas More Church**

53 Rockland Street, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882 | 401.789.7682

## **St. Veronica Chapel**

1035 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882