

St. Thomas More Parish
Narragansett, Rhode Island

*Marriage & Wedding
Preparation*



St. Thomas More Church, 53 Rockland Street



St. Veronica Chapel, 1035 Boston Neck Road



Peace of Christ Jesus!

Congratulations on your engagement and decision to enter into holy marriage. At St. Thomas More, we will help you prepare for this serious and sacred step in your life, which is both holy and happy.

Spiritual preparation is a key part of this special time, and frequent participation in the sacraments, particularly weekly Mass attendance, is important. It is also strongly recommended that you bring yourself to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this time of preparation.

The engagement period can be particularly stressful at times, and the graces you receive 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

Contact Priest

As soon as you are engaged, contact the pastor via telephone or email to arrange for an in-person meeting. All inquiries must be made by the bride or groom themselves, (not parents) and no arrangements will be made prior to this meeting with the pastor. 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.

Date and Time of Wedding

For both St. Thomas More Church and St. Veronica Chapel:

- ~ Saturday weddings - *the latest scheduled time is 2:00 PM.*
- ~ Friday weddings can be scheduled at any time.
- ~ Rehearsals are typically held the day before the wedding, and the start time is flexible.

Wedding Offering

The total suggested offering for a wedding is \$950 which includes:

- ~ **Music**- the organist/vocalist. This includes an in-person meeting to review and plan musical selections for the ceremony.
Note -Fees for any additional instruments and/or vocalist(s) will be assumed by the bridal couple.
- ~ **A wedding coordinator** - The church will assign you a coordinator for both the rehearsal and the wedding day.
- ~ **Church Expenses** -This helps defray church costs of live stream recording, the sacristan, utilities and maintenance, etc.

The parish will compensate both the musician and the coordinator from this fee, aside from any additional music fees (see above).

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 the fees should be directed to the Pastor.

It is preferred that this offering be provided prior to the wedding rehearsal via:

- A check made payable to: St. Thomas More Parish
- or
- Venmo: [@StThomas-More-Parish](#)

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 at the outset, to make an appointment for this important part of preparation.

Marriage Preparation

The Marriage Preparation (or Pre-Cana) Program offered by the Diocese of Providence is taught by well-qualified professionals 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 is required to attend this program and should **register six (6) months prior** to the wedding. Registration can be found online at dioceseofprovidence.org. Upon completion of the program the couple is required to send the certificate to St. Thomas More. If a couple lives outside of Rhode Island, another Pre-Cana program in a Catholic diocese is permitted. If a couple or the priest feel 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 **six (6) months prior to the wedding**. For non-Catholics, a copy of birth certificate and, if baptized, a copy of the certificate of baptism is required.

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.

Bridal Party Modesty

The bride and bridesmaids should dress modestly and appropriately for sacred liturgy following the [catholic bride dress code](#) - please read. A wrap or shawl may be appropriate at the altar during the ceremony.

Liturgy

Marriage with a Mass and the 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 min.) before** the ceremony.

Readings

The bride and groom should select the readings.

- ~ The first reading is from the Old Testament, which is followed by a psalm sung by the musician.
- ~ The second reading is from the New Testament.
- ~ After a sung Gospel Acclamation, the third reading is proclaimed from one of the four Gospels and read by the priest.

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, which can be found at uscgb.org.

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 plan to attend the rehearsal whenever possible.

Music/Musicians

Music is an important part of the wedding ceremony and our parish is blessed with an excellent and professional music ministry. **As soon as you confirm the date** of your wedding, please contact our Music Director, found on our website staff page, to arrange a meeting to discuss your music options. Remember, this is a religious ceremony and appropriate music must be chosen.

As an interesting note: the historic Brook & Hastings pipe organ at St. Thomas More was a gift from the Bouvier family (Jacqueline Kennedy).

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.

Wedding Coordinator

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

Wedding Rehearsal

Ordinarily this takes place the night before the ceremony. 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.

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. All guests should be welcomed and seated so the ceremony can begin on time.

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 front courtyard for their reception line, in front of the Holy Family Statue.

Building Access/Handicapped Parking

Please note that there is a handicap ramp at St. Thomas More and handicapped parking spots are available at both churches.

Website Assistance /Podcasts

Please visit our website at stthomasmoreri.org to view our complete matrimony planning guidelines. All weddings will be broadcast live on livestream and archived on our website to view in the future.

Guest 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 at our parish. 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.

“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

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