

St. Katharine Drexel Parish
Alton ~ Wolfeboro, N.H.

Marriage Preparation Guidelines

Congratulations on your engagement and on your decision to celebrate a commitment of life and love within the context of the Sacrament of Marriage. Weddings are a special time of joy and promise for you, and your families, and the entire parish community.

In view of the religious significance, above and beyond the legal aspects of marriage, it is understandable that celebrating this sacrament in a faith context and church setting must be entered into with prayerful planning.

As a Catholic Christian community, we want to provide you every means of assistance to plan not only a beautiful wedding day, but a happy and fulfilling lifelong sacramental marriage. Therefore these guidelines have been prepared to provide you with basic information to arrange your marriage celebration at St. Katharine Drexel Church. Please do not hesitate to call me at any time to address any questions that you may have or to let me know how I can best be of assistance to you.

Rev. Robert Cole

Who May Marry in Our Parish

First preference in choosing a date and time for a wedding is given to members of St. Katharine Drexel Parish. However, in view of our location in the lakes region and our beautiful new church facilities, we receive many requests for weddings from people from outside of our parish. We are happy to accommodate such couples, as long as they have obtained written permission from the pastor of their home parish for them to be married at St. Katharine Drexel Church. In order for any couple to be married in the church, at least one of them must be a baptized Catholic who intends to faithfully practice the Catholic faith. Hopefully the time of marriage preparation will serve as a beneficial opportunity for each person who is considering marriage in the Church to reaffirm his/her faith commitment and deepen his/her appreciation of the importance of God in every marriage and family.

Time of Weddings

Weddings may be scheduled on Friday evenings and Saturdays no later than 1:00 P.M. Weddings are not scheduled closer than two hours apart, so that there will be sufficient time not only for the ceremony, but for greeting guests afterwards and returning to the church for more photographs, if desired. Because of Saturday evening Masses, preceded by Confessions at 3:00 P.M., we cannot celebrate weddings later than 1:00 P.M. Our weekend Mass schedule does not permit us to celebrate weddings on Saturday evenings or on Sundays.

Visiting Clergy

Visiting clergy who are in good standing in their own diocese or religious order are always welcome to preside at a wedding in our church, and there is certainly no reason for a couple to feel uncomfortable about making such a request. If the visiting celebrant is not a resident of New Hampshire, he must obtain civil jurisdiction for this particular marriage from the office of the Secretary of State in Concord, N.H. It is presumed that he will adhere to the customs of the parish and will be present for the wedding rehearsal.

Details of the Ceremony

A wide variety of prayers, blessings and Scripture readings are made available to help you to make your wedding a personal celebration. The priest will give you a booklet entitled "Together for Life" to assist you in planning the ceremony, and he will meet with you personally to plan the details of your wedding.

Music

Because the wedding ceremony is a sacred event in a sacred place, all music must be religious and appropriate to the occasion. Popular and non-religious music is considered inappropriate for the service and should be reserved for the reception. Recorded music is not permitted in our parish.

Our parish organist and director of music is Robert A. Peck, who may be reached at 875-2253. He will be happy to meet with you to plan your music. He can also assist you in obtaining the services of a vocalist or other instrumentalist, such as trumpeter, violinist etc.

Wedding Rehearsal

Ordinarily the rehearsal is held on the evening before the wedding. In the event that more than one wedding is scheduled for the same day, the parties who confirmed their date first will be given preference for the rehearsal time. The rehearsal takes about a half hour. The marriage license and all fees for musicians **and the church must be given to the priest at the rehearsal.**

Flowers, Aisle Runners and Decorations

Aisle runners may be used and are obtained from the florist. Pew bows may also be used, but they may not be fastened to the pews with tape or other adhesives, elastic bands or craft clips work best for pew bows. It is customary to leave flowers in the sanctuary to provide the parish to share in the celebration of your marriage. No flower petals, rice, birdseed, or confetti is to be thrown in or around the church. It is your responsibility to inform your guests.

Photography and Videotaping

Pictures may be taken before, during and after the ceremony. Photographers are expected to be discreet and respectful, conducting themselves in a manner that befits the house of God, both before and after the ceremony. They should speak with the priest prior to the ceremony to insure collaboration during the service.

Some General Requirements

1. The prospective bride and groom should call to arrange an appointment to meet with the priest at least **six months** before the desired wedding date. At this initial meeting the process of marriage preparation will be explained.
Couples must attend the **Toward Marriage Program** or an **Engaged Encounter Weekend**.

Documents Required

1. A catholic must produce a **Baptismal Certificate** which has been issued within the past six months, as well as a **Confirmation Certificate**. These records may be obtained by contacting the parish where the sacraments were received. Our parish office can assist you in obtaining the addresses and phone numbers. Confirmation is not a requirement in order to be married in the Church but those who have not received this sacrament are encouraged to do so, and we make special provisions to assist in this process. For a non-Catholic who has been baptized in a Protestant church, the record of baptism is requested if at all possible, but it is not absolutely necessary.

2. The civil **Marriage License** is to be given to the priest no later than the wedding rehearsal. A license obtained in any New Hampshire town or city is valid for a marriage in our church. No blood test is required in New Hampshire, and the license is valid for 90 days. You both must be present to apply for the license, and there is a waiting period of three working days before you actually receive the license.

3. If either party has been previously married a **Decree of Nullity** is necessary, even when there was only a civil ceremony. This requirement applies both to Catholics and non-Catholics. A wedding date cannot be confirmed until the Decree of Nullity has been granted. The priest will assist you with the annulment process if necessary.

4. If either party is widowed, the **Death Certificate** of the deceased spouse must be presented.

5. A **Letter of Permission**, sometimes called a Letter of Delegation, from the pastor of the bride or groom must be obtained if neither party is a parishioner of St. Katharine Drexel Parish.

Marriage Preparation Outside of the Parish

Occasionally practical circumstances demand that a couple be prepared for marriage outside of St. Katharine Drexel Parish. Such arrangements may be made with the understanding that the concerned priest is willing to assist with the preparations and that he intends to fulfill his obligation to prepare the couple according to the guidelines here stated.

Punctuality

Out of consideration for all who will be using our church on a given day, every effort is made to schedule services allowing sufficient time between them.

Please be punctual so that there will be no conflicts with other scheduled events.

Offerings to the church

1. Couples who are registered members of the parish, attend Mass and support the parish regularly are asked for a nominal offering of \$100.00.

2. Those who are non-registered, or who do not attend the parish and financially support it on a regular basis are required to make an offering of \$500.00.

These fees are to be paid at the time that the church is reserved for the wedding, and the reservation will not be confirmed until the fee has been received. Any offerings for the priest or altar servers at your wedding are at the discretion of the couple.

Facilities Available

Our new church will provide an ideal setting for your wedding with a bride's room located just inside the front entrance. There are no steps to gain entrance to the building, and handicapped accessible restrooms are located off the main entrance foyer. The entire building is centrally air-conditioned. Our downstairs parish hall and kitchen facilities cannot be made available for wedding receptions, due to the many demands made upon our facilities.