



SALVE REGINA  
UNIVERSITY

# Catholic Wedding Handbook



Our Lady of Mercy Chapel

[catholicweddings@salve.edu](mailto:catholicweddings@salve.edu)

401-341-3153

# Congratulations on your engagement!

It is our hope and prayer that through your journey of preparation, you will acquire a deeper understanding of God's plan for your marriage, and that you will learn the truths and virtues you will need to live out your vocation as husband and wife.



## Eligibility to Marry at Our Lady of Mercy Chapel

- Either the bride *or* the groom is a registered parishioner of a Catholic Church.
- The proposed wedding date is at least 8 months away.
- You have a Catholic priest to oversee your preparation.
- You have a Catholic priest or deacon to officiate your wedding. (This does not need to be the same priest that prepares you.)

## How to Reserve a Wedding Date

1. Contact: Michaela Cannon, Sacramental Coordinator (401.341.3153 or [catholicweddings@salve.edu](mailto:catholicweddings@salve.edu)) when you have a date in mind. (It may or may not be available, so have a few alternate dates.)
2. Place a 30-day hold on an available date and time.
3. Within 30 days, mail the following:
  - a. **Completed Chapel Reservation Form** (found at the end of this handbook)
  - b. **Letter from your parish priest** (either bride or groom) **granting permission for you to marry at Our Lady of Mercy Chapel.**
  - c. **Non-refundable check for the appropriate amount. \***

To:

Michaela Cannon  
Sacramental Coordinator  
100 Ochre Point Avenue  
Newport, RI 02840

### \*Fees for Chapel Reservation

**\$700** for Salve Regina Affiliates: current full-time students, graduates, faculty & staff.  
(This is not applicable to *relatives* of students, graduates, faculty & staff.)

**\$3000** for all others

(Your fee includes the use of Our Lady of Mercy Chapel and Chapel grounds, as well as a day-of Ceremony Coordinator to run your rehearsal and ceremony.)

# Preparing for your Catholic Marriage

Like the other sacraments of the Church, marriage requires special preparation. We will guide and support you throughout your journey to the altar, but you and your priest (or deacon) will be responsible for completing all the necessary requirements. *Gathering the paperwork and completing a Marriage Prep class can be time-consuming, so it's important to start well in advance of your wedding date.*

## Timeline for Fulfilling the Sacramental Requirements to Marry at Our Lady of Mercy Chapel:

**10-12 months** prior to your wedding date:

*Meet with the priest (or deacon) who will prepare you for the sacrament of marriage.*

He will assist you in compiling your Marriage Data File (MDF) which consists of:

1. Pre-Marital Investigation (interview) conducted by your priest
2. Baptismal & other Sacramental Certificates for bride and groom
  - ❖ For Catholics: Simply call the church where you were baptized, explain that you are preparing for marriage, and request a **current** copy of your records (not the original certificate) with notations regarding other sacraments on the reverse side.
  - ❖ For non-Catholics:
    - Copy of birth certificate
    - Baptismal certificate
    - 2 letters of “Free Status” from family members or close friends stating you have never been married.
3. Certificate of Completion of Pre-Cana/Marriage Prep program
4. Letter of Good Standing for the priest/deacon who will officiate (only if he is outside the Diocese of Providence)

**8-9 months** prior to your wedding date:

*Schedule a pre-Cana or Marriage Prep Class.*

**5 months** prior to your wedding date:

*Ensure that all necessary documents have been compiled, and your MDF is complete. Ensure that your priest submits the MDF to your home diocese (if outside of RI.)*

**3 months** prior to your wedding date:

*Verify that your MDF has been approved and forwarded to Our Lady of Mercy Chapel.*

**1-3 months** prior to your wedding:

*Obtain a Marriage License.*

If you currently live in Rhode Island

- If both parties live in RI, you may apply for a marriage license at the city or town hall where either party has legal residency.
- If only one person lives in RI, you must apply for a marriage license from the city or town hall where the RI resident lives.

If you currently live outside of Rhode Island

- You must book an appointment to apply for a marriage license in person at Newport City Hall 43 Broadway. (Book well in advance as appointments fill quickly.)

A RI State marriage license is valid for 90 days after issue. The priest has no legal authority to marry a couple who have not obtained a license, nor can he legally marry a couple with an expired license.

# Policies for Use of Our Lady of Mercy Chapel

*You and your guests will be expected to show proper reverence (in attire and behavior) for the sacred space and solemnity of the Sacrament of Marriage at both the rehearsal and the ceremony.*

## Communications

Because of the volume of correspondence in planning for the Sacrament of Marriage, and the number of weddings we have here at Our Lady of Mercy Chapel, we respectfully request that **all communications & requests come from the bride and groom only.**

## Decorations

Floral arrangements must work around the furnishings and seasonal liturgical decorations of Our Lady of Mercy Chapel.

Flowers are not allowed on the altar table itself, and displays should not exceed the height of the altar.

Pew bows or floral decorations must be affixed with ribbon.

Aisle runners are not permitted.

The only candles permitted are the Chapel altar candles.

Flower petals, confetti, rice, seeds and bubbles are not permitted in or on Chapel grounds.

The Chapel will be open 1 hour prior to your ceremony for your florist to set up, and all arrangements should be removed promptly following the ceremony.

## Flower Girls/Ring Bearers

Young members of the bridal party need to walk or be carried down the aisle. Wagons and strollers are not permitted.

## Photography

Your photographer (and/or videographer) should meet with both your celebrant and our Ceremony Coordinator before the ceremony to discuss parameters. In general, they should be as inconspicuous as possible, are not allowed in the sanctuary area, shouldn't obstruct or delay any part of the ceremony, and are asked to be seated during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

## Stipends

Stipends for musicians and soloists will be determined in advance and paid prior to the wedding ceremony. The priest's stipend of \$500 is to be paid at the rehearsal.

## Wedding Planners

Wedding Planners are welcome to attend the rehearsal and ceremony to help and provide moral support, but they should **not** be involved in the *planning* or *rehearsing* of your wedding ceremony.

## Alcohol

Alcohol is not allowed in or on Chapel grounds. On your wedding day, the *entire* bridal party is required to abstain from alcohol before arriving at the Chapel.

## Directions

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel shares its address with Salve Regina University's main administrative building (100 Ochre Point Avenue, Newport RI 02840.) GPS directions will bring your guests *very* close to the Chapel which is located at the intersection of LeRoy Avenue and Ochre Point Avenue.

## Traffic

Please inform your guests that they may encounter significant travel delays because of traffic and ongoing road construction projects which are typical for Newport (especially in peak season.)

## Parking

Your guests may park on the street or in any parking lot on campus (even if they are designated for students, faculty, and staff only) since parking for your wedding is pre-arranged with security.

## Handicap Accessibility

Handicap access to Our Lady of Mercy Chapel is available through the rear door of the Chapel located off McAuley Circle. The Chapel bathroom is also handicap accessible.

# Planning Your Ceremony

## Liturgy

We encourage you to prioritize the *ceremony* itself over all other aspects of your wedding celebration. You will be given a booklet called “Together for Life” when you attend your Pre-Cana or Marriage Prep class (also available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)) which contains all the prayers, readings, blessings and vows available for your ceremony. Your priest will assist you in planning your wedding liturgy.

## Music

Your wedding is a Catholic liturgy, and all musical texts must be sacred. Secular or popular music is not appropriate. Your organist and/or musicians will provide a list of selections from which to choose, and your priest should review and approve the music before final decisions are made.

## Musicians

Please contact us for a current list of musicians and cantors.

## Programs

Programs can help your guests better understand and enjoy your ceremony, but they are not mandatory. We do not provide programs; that is the responsibility of the couple.



# Rehearsal

You will be sent a Ceremony Details Form three weeks before your wedding date. That will help us plan for your rehearsal.

Your wedding rehearsal is typically reserved for 5pm on the evening before your wedding (other arrangements can be made if needed) and lasts no longer than 1 hour. It is preferred that your officiating priest attends, as well as *all* who will have a role in the ceremony.

**Our Lady of Mercy Chapel has a *Ceremony Coordinator on staff*** who will conduct the rehearsal and be present at your ceremony to ensure that all runs smoothly. Wedding planners and day-of coordinators may *only* assist or provide support.

On the evening of your rehearsal, *please arrive on time.*

You will need to bring:

- marriage license
- readings
- any stipends that are due
- programs
- signs (if any)

## Wedding Day

The chapel will be open 1 hour before your ceremony and will remain open for 1 hour following.

The groom and groomsmen should arrive no later than 45 minutes before the ceremony to greet and seat guests.

The bride and her attendants should arrive at the Chapel *10 minutes before the scheduled start of the ceremony* and await the signal from our Ceremony Coordinator to enter the Chapel waiting area.

Please come dressed and ready, as we have no area for getting ready and don't allow hairspray, curling irons, etc. in the Chapel.

Following your ceremony, your priest will sign your marriage certificate, and your Ceremony Coordinator will mail it to Newport City Hall before leaving campus.

### Photographs at Ochre Court

If you'd like to have wedding photos taken at Ochre Court there is a fee associated. Please contact Laura Barth, *Salve Wedding & External Events Coordinator*, at [laura.barth@salve.edu](mailto:laura.barth@salve.edu) or 401.341.7011 no sooner than 30 days before your wedding to enquire about reservations. You cannot take photos at Ochre Court without prior permission.

## After Your Wedding Day

Copies of your marriage certificate can be requested in-person, by mail or online from Vital Records at Newport City Hall. <https://www.cityofnewport.com/>

Your Sacrament of Matrimony will be officially registered at

**St Mary's Church  
12 William Street  
Newport RI 02840**



SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

# Catholic Wedding • Chapel Reservation Form

SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Wedding  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Day of the week: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month (spelled in full), Day, Year Day (spelled in full),

Rehearsal  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Day of the week: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: 5:00  
Month (spelled in full), Day, Year Day (spelled in full),

Year of SRU graduation: Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ and/or Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ No affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Or Explain SRU affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**BRIDE:** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

If Bride is Catholic: Name and address of the Church where she is currently a parishioner:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**GROOM:** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

If Groom is Catholic: Name and address of the Church where he is currently a parishioner:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**MARRIAGE STATEMENT: I hereby attest that I have never been previously married and that we agree to the policies stated in the handbook.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bride's signature (or electronic signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Groom's signature (or electronic signature)

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- **CATHOLIC PRIEST/ DEACON INFORMATION**

Information of your local priest / deacon interviewing & collecting the paperwork for your Wedding Data File:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Information of the priest/deacon officiating at your wedding ceremony:

If same as above, write SAME. Do not leave blank.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



By signing this document you agree to Our Lady of Mercy policies and procedures. We reserve the right to amend our policies and procedures at any time and we are not obligated to send notice of change.

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- **Check these boxes to indicate that your payment and permission to marry are enclosed.**



Payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed with this reservation contract. Payment is Non-Refundable. If you cancel for any reason your payment will be forfeited.



Permission from your Pastor to marry outside your parish is enclosed.

**WE HAVE READ THE CATHOLIC WEDDING HANDBOOK AND UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

**please initial each box:**

We must meet with our local priest preparing our documentation to conduct the Pre-marital Interview (also known as the Pre-marital Investigation). We must provide this priest with the following documentation:

- Recent copy Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation certificates (dated within the last six months with the official parish seal);
- Two letters of free status for a non-Catholic.
- Annulment documentation if necessary.
- We are aware that our paperwork is due at Our Lady of Mercy Chapel two months prior to our wedding.

We must participate in a Marriage Preparation Program (Pre-Cana), *this is in addition to the Pre-marital investigation.*

We must make arrangements for a Roman Catholic priest or deacon to officiate at our ceremony. We understand that Salve Regina University does to provide a priest or deacon.

A RHODE ISLAND WEDDING LICENSE must be attained no earlier than 90 days before our wedding.

**PROTOCOLS AT OUR LADY OF MERCY CHAPEL:**

- Reservations are made in three-hour blocks: first hour for setup and arrival, second hour for the ceremony, and third hour for receiving lines and pictures. Please be on time.
- Respect for the Catholic nature of our property – please remove your trash including all programs, and flowers boxes, please watch your language, please behave graciously.
- We cannot guarantee that there will not be another wedding or university event in other areas of the campus. Please be respectful of other events.
- No food or beverages (except water) in the chapel before, during and after the rehearsal or wedding ceremony. –No Alcohol allowed!
- We do not have a bridal prep area. Please arrive prepared. No curling irons, flat irons or hairspray allowed. Please have makeup prepared (including touch-ups) before entering the chapel.



We have read, in its entirety, the **Catholic Wedding Handbook** and we are accountable for following through with our responsibilities in a timely fashion and agree follow policies of OLM chapel. We understand that we are responsible for the behavior of our guests while they are on Salve Regina University property including damage they may cause.

Return via Mail to:  
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Sacramental Coordinator  
100 Ochre Point Avenue  
Newport RI 02840