

July 01, 2020

Dear Wedding Couples,

Our hearts go out to you as we know that the impact of COVID-19 has affected your lives in significant ways, especially in the planning of your marriage celebration. We would like to share our revised wedding guidelines which follow the directives from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

1. **Capacity.** At the present time the capacity mandated by the Archdiocese for weddings is 25% of total capacity. This does NOT include the instrumentalists/singers or presiders or photographers. If this changes before your wedding date, you will be notified by the priest or musician you are working with.
 - a. *Individual Church Capacity:* Old St. Mary – 75; St. Hedwig – 100; Saints Peter and Paul – 70; St. Casimir – 125; Holy Rosary – 60.
2. **The Wedding Liturgy.**
 - a. All weddings will be without Mass for the near future which means that there will be a Liturgy of the Word, including the readings and the homily and prayers of the faithful, the Marriage Rite (exchange of vows and rings), the Lord's Prayer, Nuptial Blessing and final blessing. No sign of peace.
 - b. This also means no communion song and no gift bearers or Eucharistic Ministers are needed. We will still do the prayer to the Blessed Mother right before the Final Blessing if you choose.
 - c. You may have friends or family do the first two readings, but the priest will read the Gospel and the Prayers of the faithful.
3. **Seating & Dismissal of Guests.**
 - a. All guests will need to be seated immediately upon entering the church – there can be no gathering in the back of church before or after Mass. Guests will be seated in every other pew.
 - b. At the end of the service, after the couple, wedding party and parents walk down the aisle, everyone else will need to leave row by row, beginning in the back. Ushers will facilitate this. Everyone must leave the church building immediately and not gather in the back of church. You may need at least 3 people to help make the seating of people before the service happen as efficiently as possible.
 - c. *The ushers will receive directions from the sacristan and/or priest ahead of time where they can seat people so they should plan on arriving at the church at least 30 minutes prior to the service.*
 - d. Your guests will be asked to take their programs with them and not to leave them in the pews/church. We are encouraging people to wear face masks.
4. **Photography.**
 - a. You may take pictures after Mass with immediate family (parents, siblings, nieces/nephews and grandparents) but no wedding party. Anyone other than the photographers and immediate family will need to leave the church immediately after the service. They may not stay to take pictures with their phones, etc. You will be allowed only 15 minutes for these pictures so be sure your photographer is aware of this ahead of time and ready to go.
5. **Rehearsals.**
 - a. In general, there will be no wedding rehearsals. You and your presiding priest will talk about this at your last meeting and confirm your plans.

Feel free to contact your priest or musician to answer any questions you may have regarding these details. We are so glad, in these trying times that you are still choosing to get married in our church. We are all working together to provide you with the most beautiful, meaningful wedding day in this most unusual time.

Sincerely,

Fr. Tim Kitzke and Fr. John Baumgardner