

Decoration Suggestions and Restrictions for Wedding Liturgies

IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHARE THIS PAGE WITH YOUR FLORIST IN ADVANCE. *Copies of this page are available from the parish office and at www.stmarygr.org/WeddingDecor. You're responsible for making sure they receive these guidelines.*

The church will usually be open no sooner than 2½ hours before the scheduled wedding time. After a wedding, please have the church clean and empty of any rented items within 1½ hours after the end of the liturgy. It's very important to plan floral deliveries and pickups accordingly!

Because of the style of our church building, we encourage those responsible for flowers and decorations at weddings to strive for beauty in **simple rather than extravagant** ways. The church is ornate and does not require much for decorations to achieve the desired effect. One should be able to sense something special (and nothing trivial) in everything that is seen, heard, touched, smelled and tasted in our liturgy so that it's experienced as a prayer, not as a show.

The church is the place where the parish faith community gathers for prayer. As a guest of our parish, do not move any existing flowers, furnishings, candles, plants, seasonal decorations, etc. without explicit permission from our staff. The church environment—especially during the Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter seasons—takes priority over decorations for a wedding.

Decorations or arrangements may not be placed on the altar. (The *altar* is the sacramental table, not to be confused with the *sanctuary*, which is the raised area at the front of the church.)

Decorations may not be so large as to **obstruct the view** of the sanctuary furnishings from anyone in the church, nor should they ever **hinder any ritual movement** and action. Specifically, no decorations in the sanctuary should be taller than 40" (the height of the altar). Decorations on the main floor level should be no taller than 60". Plant stands may be used to raise smaller decorations within the height limits. The use of arches, decorative fencing and/or extra candelabra are not allowed. (As a general rule, anything artificial is less than appropriate for worship, including artificial flowers.)

Aisle runners are a safety hazard and are not allowed.

Possible **decorations placed on the pews** (flowers or bows, for example) should be used to offer hospitality to the entire assembly, not to emphasize the aisle or to set apart special seating. If used, flowers or bows used on the center ends of the pews may also be matched by decorations on the outside ends of the pews. There are 25 pews on each side of the main aisle, although placing decorations on each and every pew appears excessive in our space. **No tape, glue or tacks are to be used.** Ribbons or chenille wire stems/pipe cleaners are suggested.

St. Mary's has a wedding (unity) candelabra which you may use. It is adjustable in height and holds two tapers and a 3" pillar candle. The candles are not provided by the parish. A photo of the candelabra is available upon request.

For reasons of safety and cleanliness, we cannot allow balloon launches or allow flower petals (fresh or artificial), rice, birdseed or confetti to be thrown or scattered, inside or outside the church. These all cause special problems.