

St. Joseph Church Wedding Guidelines

Beautiful indeed is the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in hope, and one in love, one in the manner in which they live, one in the religion they keep. It is to these Christ gives His peace.

Meeting with the Priest/Deacon

The couple is expected to contact the priest/deacon at least six(6) months prior to the proposed date of their wedding. This allows time to prepare well for such a sacred commitment. Only in rare circumstances will exceptions be permitted.

This first meeting (at least 6 months prior to the date of the wedding) deals with information concerning basic family and faith history. Dates for the wedding and rehearsal will be tentatively confirmed. The pre - marriage preparation process will also be discussed.

Scheduling the Wedding

Weddings during Lent: During Lent, the altar is not to be decorated with flowers, and musical instruments are to be played only to give support to the singing. Couples are reminded that wedding plans should respect the special nature of this liturgical season and refrain from too much pomp or display.

Saturday weddings: No weddings are allowed on Saturday after 1:30 P.M., with or without a Mass. The community celebration of the Sunday Liturgy (including the Saturday Vigil) takes precedence.

Important: The scheduling of the wedding with the parish takes place after the prenuptial inquiry during the initial meeting with the priest or the deacon and after the couple questionnaire (Prepare-Enrich) is completed and reviewed. (Father reserves the right to postpone the wedding date if he sees fit due to preparation progress).

Weddings for parties providing visiting clergy will not be scheduled until confirmation is received from the visiting priest or deacon who is overseeing preparation and officiating the wedding ceremony.

Wedding Ceremony

Couples are encouraged to celebrate their marriage in the context of the mass, which gives full expression to our Catholic faith, but also may prefer a simple wedding rite. According to diocesan policy, weddings between a Catholic and non-Catholic may not be celebrated within a nuptial Mass. Also, couples who are presently cohabitating should not celebrate a nuptial Mass and will be married according to the simple wedding rite.

Special Circumstances

Marriage between Catholic and Non-Catholic

Marriages between a Catholic and non-Catholic are possible with special permission, however, the wedding ceremony may not take place in the context of the Mass.

Previous Marriage

If either party (whether Catholic or not) had entered into a previous marriage, steps must be taken immediately to prove the eligibility of remarriage. As this can delay the process, no plans for the second marriage can be made until both parties are free to marry.

Time of Wedding

Weddings should be scheduled as follows:

- Friday, 7:00 pm
- Saturday, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm
- Sunday, No weddings
- Weddings cannot be scheduled on the afternoon of the eve of a religious feast (e.g. January 1, December 8, Christmas) or a holy day of obligation. Weddings cannot be scheduled on All Soul's Day, Ash Wednesday or during Holy Week.



Time of Rehearsal

Rehearsals for Friday night weddings are preferably scheduled on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 or 7:00 P.M. Rehearsals for Saturday weddings are preferably scheduled on Thursday evenings at 6:30 or 7:00 P.M. This leaves Fridays open for scheduling other weddings. Please confirm the exact time with the priest or deacon to reserve the church.

Documents Needed and Other Requirements

The following documents and requirements must be presented or complied with before the marriage ceremony takes place:

- 1) Current/updated Baptismal Certificate of the bride and groom (Catholic and non-Catholic). Be sure to inform the parish where you were baptized that this is for marriage. There are notations to be filled on the back of the certificate which include 1st Communion, Confirmation and Marriage information. Certificates may not be more than 6 months old at the time of the wedding as they provide certification of freedom to marry. We ask you to request the certificates within six months.
- 2) Non – Baptized Persons: A copy of the birth certificate is required.
- 3) If one or both have previously married, divorce papers (or death certificate) and Catholic Declaration of Nullity is required.

- 4) Parties not from St. Joseph Parish need written permission (Letter of Release) from their home parish pastor to marry outside of their church parish. Please bring this with you to give the priest at your initial meeting.
- 5) A Pre-Nuptial questionnaire is filled out by the priest/deacon and couple on your personal status and convictions.
- 6) In an interfaith marriage between a Catholic and a Christian of another church, or a non Christian, the Catholic party promises to live the faith and to encourage baptism and education of the children according to the Roman Catholic tradition. There will be no Mass celebrated in an interfaith marriage per the Bishop's request.
- 7) Before final arrangements, the couple must attend pre- marriage preparation process as indicated by the Pastor or Deacon. You will receive a certificate which should be brought to the office prior to the wedding or at your final meeting with the priest. It is a requirement for us to place this in the parish file for your wedding records.
- 8) Marriage licenses may be obtained at the office of the Clerk of Court at the parish courthouse. At least one of the persons must be a resident of the parish where the license is purchased.
 - There is a 72 hour waiting period from the time of issuance before you can be married.
 - The marriage license is valid for only 30 days from the date of issuance.

IMPORTANT: Bring the marriage license to the wedding rehearsal. The license will be signed at the rehearsal or prior to the ceremony, but not during the ceremony. The wedding cannot proceed if the marriage license is not presented at the rehearsal.

Music

Because a church wedding is a service of worship, the music is to proclaim and exemplify the Christian understanding of marriage. A marriage is a Sacrament of the Church. Therefore, musical selections should be appropriate. Genre's of Country, Pop, Rhythm and Blues, etc. are not allowed. All selections should be made in consultation with the Pastor, Deacon or musician appointed by the Pastor. Musical selections must be discussed with the priest/deacon.

Our music policy is as follows:

- You may select any vocalist you wish.
- Our choir director Ms. Julia Boudreaux plays the organ for all weddings occurring at St. Joseph's Church. You should contact her once you have reserved the Church. Her phone number is (337) 255-6956. Her fee is \$200 to play the organ. The couple may hire her as a vocalist as well or provide their own vocalist.
- There will be no recorded music played over our sound system.

Place of the Wedding

Usually the marriage is contracted in the church parish of the bride or groom. Garden or home weddings are never permitted. If either the bride or the groom is a member of another church, permission may be obtained for the wedding to be celebrated in that church. It is permissible to have a priest (family friend or relative) from another parish officiate in our church. A delegation letter will be sent to that particular priest from our parish office.

Attendants

All we require are two Christian witnesses, the maid of honor and best man. We are willing to allow six adult couples (which includes the maid of honor and the best man), and two children (required age – at least 5 years old) to be in the wedding party. As Christian witnesses, all in the wedding party should be practicing their faith and models of disciples of Jesus.

The bride, groom, and all attendants must wear formal attire and dress shoes that are appropriate to the solemn nature of a wedding. If anyone in the wedding party consumes drugs or alcohol prior to the wedding, they will immediately be removed from the wedding party.

Altar Servers

We recommend that you arrange to have at least one altar server. If you need to have a server appointed, please contact the parish.



Lectors

Lectors read the Scriptures readings chosen for the nuptial ceremony. Up to three (3) lectors may be chosen for this duty. Friends or family members of the bride and/or groom may serve as lectors.

Lectors must be practicing Roman Catholics. Church law does not permit a non-Catholic to participate in the Liturgy as a lector. It is recommended that you select experienced lectors, if possible. They should be in attendance at the wedding rehearsal to practice their part in the ceremony.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion distribute the Body of Christ to the faithful when there is Holy Communion. You may request that a friend or family member serve in this capacity.

Gift Bearers

Gift bearers bring to the sanctuary the bread and wine to be consecrated at the Nuptial Mass. Two to four (2-4) persons may be chosen for this duty.

Floral and Decoration Guidelines

Flowers and decorations can add much to the beauty of the ceremony. However, care must be taken in preparation and in clean up after the wedding.

1. Normally one or two large arrangements are sufficient for a wedding ceremony. Placement on the Sanctuary floor is as follows:
 - a) Pulpit area
 - b) In front of the altar.Nothing in the path of the officiant (priest), or altar servers, or the lectors as they approach the pulpit.
2. Pew bows/flowers must be attached with tape.
3. Candles are not permissible.
4. There will be no unity candles allowed.
5. The use of an aisle runner or archway is prohibited as there is a possibility of tripping and or falling causing personal injury.
6. The use of rice and or flower petals as part of the ceremony on church premises is prohibited.
7. Placement of flowers, plants and arrangements for your wedding may be brought after the final mass or church service of the day of your wedding. Our current weekday Mass times are as follows: Wednesday and Fridays at 6:30 A.M. However, our church may be used for various other reasons other than regularly scheduled Masses. You will need to check with the secretary to find out what has been scheduled on the day of your wedding.

Photographers and Videographers

Photographers are free to move around with limited distraction to the congregation. The sanctuary is a limited area and photographers are to consult with the pastor for details.

Use of the Church

A donation for the following amount is requested for the use of the Church. This is used to pay the utilities and wedding coordinator. Please turn in this donation to parish secretary prior to three months before the date of the wedding.

- Parishioners – \$250.00
- Non Parishioners - \$550.00/Church

The non-parishioner fee is assessed unless the bride, groom, or either of their parents meet the following qualifications:

- A) They are presently and have been registered parishioners of St. Joseph Church for at least one (1) year.
 - B) They regularly attend a weekend Mass at St. Joseph Church.
 - C) Their regular financial contribution to St. Joseph Church can be documented from offering information on file in the parish office.
- The wedding fee for the Church must be paid by at the time of booking to the wedding.

Registering with St. Joseph

If you decide that after you are married, you would like to be parishioners of St. Joseph Church Parish, please fill out a registration form. Forms are located in the church, on our website at www.stjosephcecilia.com or feel free to come by the parish office. If you are currently registered under a maiden name and/or as a single man, you will still need to fill out the registration form for us to update the records.