

Weddings at the Cathedral



*Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
Lafayette, Louisiana*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



P. Sullivan
5-V-88

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
and
DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE REQUIREMENTS

The main concern of the Church is that you understand the depth and significance of the commitment you intend to make. This commitment is based on your deep love for each other, which is a love rooted in God Himself. The question the Church asks is: "Are you ready to make this kind of God-centered commitment?" The following process of the Church exists in order to allow you the time and assistance necessary to answer that question.

- (1) You must meet with the celebrant of your marriage at least six (6) months prior to the desired wedding date. It is appropriate for the celebrant to be the priest of the bride's church parish.
- (2) If one or two of the parties wanting to be married is seeking an annulment, **Diocesan policy states that a wedding date cannot be set until the annulment has been granted.**
- (3) When you meet with the priest who will be celebrating your wedding, he should register you for one of the Diocesan marriage preparation courses or set you up with a mentoring couple. Upon completion of the marriage preparation course and Prepare and Enrich (completed within one month from this date), you will need to submit to the Cathedral office the marriage preparation certificate and Prepare and Enrich evaluation. Compatibility results (Prepare and Enrich) should be received by this office within 30 days or your deposit will be returned, and your wedding date cancelled. You should make a second appointment with the celebrant at least one month prior to the wedding. Be prepared to discuss with him why a church marriage is important to you and to talk about your understanding of the commitment you will make to each other in the Sacrament of Marriage. Scripture readings, which you have selected, should be submitted to the celebrant at this time. Also, please have available for approval a rough copy of your wedding program if you plan to have one.
- (4) Upon securing your wedding date and time with the Cathedral, you will be required to provide the Cathedral office with **recent** copies of both your **baptismal and confirmation certificates. Certificates must be dated within one year of the date of the wedding.** To obtain a recent copy of the certificates call or write the church where you received the sacraments and request that a copy be sent to you.

NOTE: If either the bride or groom is not a Roman Catholic, the non-Catholic party will need a baptismal certificate or letter from the church of baptism, stating when and where the Baptism occurred. Also, you will need an affidavit, signed by a parent or close relative, stating that you have never been married before.

- (5) In light of special circumstances, such as a pregnancy involved or if one of you is under eighteen years of age, or for other reasons as well, then both of you will be asked to go for further evaluation to help you determine your readiness for this sacrament.
- (6) The Church very strongly encourages that the bride and groom take advantage of the Sacrament of Penance prior to the wedding.

CATHEDRAL POLICIES

Weddings between Catholics and Non-Catholics

It is customary and normative for there to be **NO MASS** for a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. The reason for this is primarily because the Catholic Church does not practice inter-communion, i.e., Catholics are not allowed by the Catholic Church to receive communion in a non-Catholic church and non-Catholics may not receive communion at a Catholic Mass. Therefore, to avoid any awkwardness or embarrassment brought about by some receiving and some not receiving communion, the Catholic Church feels it is best not to have a Mass in such circumstances. **A petition for an exception may be submitted to the Bishop.**

In weddings without a Mass, the ceremony is similar to a wedding within a Mass. Such a ceremony would include the opening prayer, readings from Sacred Scripture, homily, exchange of vows and rings, nuptial blessing, and final blessing.

No Mass is allowed in a wedding between a Catholic and non-baptized person.

The Nuptial Mass: Setting the Date and Time

Please be aware that there are certain days in the Church's calendar where a wedding Mass cannot be celebrated. In this case, a wedding may take place using the Mass of the day with the inserted marriage ritual or a marriage ceremony without a Mass.

Weddings are scheduled on Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m. and on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Saturday evening weddings are reserved for active, involved and contributing parishioners who are registered 3 years prior to scheduling your wedding date. There are no weddings on Sunday. Weddings **MUST** begin promptly at the scheduled time.

No wedding can be scheduled in the afternoon of the eve of a major feast or a holy day of obligation. In addition, no wedding can be scheduled on **All Souls Day**, or **during Lent**.

Rehearsals are usually scheduled one or two days before the wedding, at 4:00, 5:00, 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. depending on the Cathedral schedule. **ONE HOUR** is allowed and **MUST** begin promptly at the scheduled time. If any member of the wedding party is not on time, the rehearsal will begin without him or her. **ONLY THE BRIDAL PARTY SHOULD ATTEND THE REHEARSAL.** Other guests of the rehearsal supper should go directly to that location.

Liturgical Norms

Liturgical norms must be followed as set down in the ritual for weddings and in the General Instructions for the Mass. All readings are selected from the New American Bible. A suggested list is provided by the Cathedral.

Conduct and Behavior

For **both the wedding rehearsal and the wedding** you are reminded that the Cathedral is a Church, a place of worship where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. It is not a museum or a rental hall. The conduct, and attire, of the wedding party and the guests should reflect the sacredness of the place. There should be no shouting, loud noise or improper conduct inside the Cathedral or on the Cathedral grounds. Eating and smoking are not allowed inside the Cathedral. **It is absolutely forbidden to bring alcoholic beverages and/or other drugs on the grounds of the Church or inside the Cathedral itself. DRUNKENNESS OR DRINKING ALCOHOL WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** If any member of the wedding party comes to the wedding or the rehearsal in any form of intoxication, **then the wedding may be postponed or cancelled.** Inebriation and the disorderly conduct that proceeds from it can ruin your wedding.

The bride and groom will be held responsible for the conduct and behavior of the wedding party inside the Cathedral and on the Cathedral grounds as outlined in the Acknowledgment Form. This also includes leaving the church and property neat and clean and free of any damage. Please make your wedding day a happy one and avoid any type of embarrassment to you and your guests.

The Cathedral has no dressing room facilities. All members of the wedding party are to arrive **fully dressed.** Arriving in robes, petticoats, or other forms of undress on the grounds of or in the Cathedral is **strictly forbidden** and is considered **indecent exposure in a church.**

Inappropriate behavior by any member of the wedding party, such as "mooning", streaking, or disturbing the peace, is **strictly forbidden.**

Maintenance Fee

If neither the bride or the groom, nor parents of either, is a member of St. John Parish, a **NON-REFUNDABLE** maintenance fee of \$1500.00 is payable when the date of the wedding is scheduled. Having received the sacraments at the Cathedral, or having attended Cathedral-Carmel School, or intending to become a member of the parish, does not exclude you from the maintenance fee. You must have been a registered, active and supporting member of the parish for **three years prior to scheduling** your wedding to be excused from this maintenance fee.

NOTE: A member of St. John parish means that you are a minor (under 18 years of age) living with your parents who are registered, active and supporting members of the parish; OR you are 18 years of age, a full time student at a university and living with your parents who are registered, active and supporting members of the parish; OR you are 18 years of age and have been a registered, active and supporting member of the parish **for three years prior to scheduling your wedding.** If either the bride or groom, or their parents, is a member of St. John parish, a \$500.00 fee is due and payable at the time the wedding is scheduled.

A parishioner must have moved within Cathedral boundaries one year prior to scheduling their wedding. In other words, joining Cathedral parish and then scheduling a wedding shortly thereafter will not be cause to waive the fee.

Lectors and Ushers

It is recommended that you choose experienced lectors who will be reading from the suggested scripture readings and responsorial psalms attached. They must be in attendance at the wedding rehearsal to practice their part in the ceremony. Ushers should attend and be given specific instructions as to what is expected of them.

Altar Servers

Altar servers are provided for weddings celebrated at the Cathedral. Whether the celebrant is Cathedral clergy or another priest, any arrangements for altar servers must be coordinated with the Cathedral staff to avoid any duplications. One altar server must be an active Cathedral server if a family altar server is involved.

Non-Parishioners

Non-parishioners must have written permission from the pastor of the bride for the wedding to take place at the Cathedral and the pastor of the groom's parish should be notified. If the bride is not a Catholic, the pastor of the groom should provide a letter of permission.

Celebrant

If the celebrant is other than a priest of the Cathedral, delegation must be obtained from the Pastor of the Cathedral.

Priority Given for Diocesan and Cathedral Decorations

If your wedding date falls during one of the major liturgical seasons (Advent, Christmas or Easter) when special decorations are already in the church, or when the Cathedral has been decorated for a Diocese of Lafayette or a parish ceremony, you will not be allowed to change or adjust these decorations for your wedding. These decorations must remain.

Decorations during Advent

Decorations for weddings during the penitential season of Advent should be minimal, i.e. nothing exceptional or extravagant. For example, one large arrangement and/or greens would be allowed.

Decorations during the Christmas Season

Because of the special nature of the Christmas season (from the week of Christmas through the Feast of Baptism of the Lord in early January), Cathedral Parish is solely responsible for decorating the church and no other decorators can obtain permission to decorate at that time. If possible, the wedding party should contribute to the Christmas decoration fund. Contributions can be made through the Cathedral Center (232-1322). Small additions to the already existing Christmas decorations, such as pew clips, are permitted.

Flowers and Other Decorations

Flowers and decorations can add much to the beauty of the ceremony. All arrangements are to be made with a **professional florist** who must submit a signed work permit at least one week before the wedding. No decorations are to be hung from the walls and columns of the Cathedral. Arches are allowed only at the back of the church. The use of an aisle runner and/or candelabra in the center aisle has been discontinued. NO unity candles; NO glitter of any type (on decorations or ribbons). The florist will be allowed one hour prior to the ceremony for decorating and one-half hour (1/2) after the ceremony to clean up. The florist must come with all manpower and equipment needed. The sacristan is available for directions only and to assist the celebrant.

Photography

Pictures are nice remembrances; however, the photographer can detract from the ceremony itself. It is recommended that you engage a licensed photographer. Only one official still photographer, with handheld camera, is allowed for the wedding. No additional equipment is allowed. Photographer must submit a signed work permit at least 1 week before the wedding. Only the official photographer is allowed to take pictures and should arrive no earlier than one hour prior to the ceremony. Photographer perimeters are delineated in the work permit. NO EXCEPTIONS. Please let your bridal party, family and guests know this to avoid embarrassment. Pictures can be taken outside the Cathedral before and after the wedding; however, if there is no time constraint, an additional 10 minutes may be used to photograph family group pictures on the steps of the sanctuary after the wedding. **The sacristan will determine if there is time, especially on Saturday evenings.**

Video Taping

If you intend to video tape your wedding, your videographer must submit a signed work permit at least 1 week before the wedding. It is recommended that you use a licensed videographer. You are allowed to have one videographer downstairs with a self-contained, battery operated shoulder camera. He should arrive no earlier than one hour prior to the ceremony. Videographer perimeters are delineated in the work permit. A stationary video on a tripod is allowed in the choir balcony. Video sessions are **NOT** allowed before the wedding inside the Cathedral but may be taken after the wedding while the photographer takes his pictures. Videos can be taken outside the Cathedral before and after the wedding.

Other Regulations

Regarding the florist, photographer and videographer; you are to inform the office of who you have contracted with to perform these services for your wedding. Should you decide at any time to change any of them, you must notify the office of the cancellation of the original service and the contracting of the new service.

The proper place for the seating of the wedding party and attendants is in the nave (i.e. four front pews). **The attendants will not be allowed to sit in the apse or sanctuary.** Attendants will join the bride and groom on the altar for exchange of vows only. All bridesmaids meet their escort at the break or the back. Bridal party should stand on the on top of steps for photo assembling during the exchange of vows.

Sanctuary furniture is not to be moved by anyone.

The use of animals and/or wildlife in the Cathedral or on the grounds is absolutely prohibited (i.e. horse drawn carriages, caged doves, family pets, or exotic animals). No bubbles, scattering of rice, flowers, birdseed, petals, etc. inside or outside the church is allowed.

Because of the age and size of the Cathedral, maintenance is ongoing; therefore, periodically scaffolding will be erected as well as pews removed. Please understand that we will do our best to make it non-obtrusive.

Music

This process begins when the Cathedral Organist, Mr. Thomas Niel contacts you to make the necessary arrangements as soon as your wedding is on the church calendar. A link for wedding music is located on our website, which can be found at saintjohncathedral.org/weddings and is available to help you with your wedding selections. Be sure to also print out the accompanying sheet that will help guide you through your selections. **It is to be understood that the Cathedral Organist is in charge of all musical arrangements and is responsible for the final approval of all musical selections.**

Experience has taught us that in order to maintain a style of music that is appropriate to a cathedral; our own musicians need to provide the music for all weddings which take place here. Therefore, organists from other parishes, family members, or friends will *not* be allowed to provide music for weddings unless approved by the Cathedral. In such rare cases where a guest organist is used, a bench fee of \$100 to the Cathedral Organist still applies. If the Cathedral Organist must be out of town on the day of your wedding, he will provide for you a substitute with proven skills.

Since weddings are an act of worship, the music chosen must necessarily foster a sense of the sacred and assist those assembled in their prayer. The documents of the Second Vatican Council have ordered that musical texts, whether vocal or instrumental, must be either biblical or sacramental in nature, free from association with secular or popular music, before, during, and after the liturgy. Sentimental favorites from movies, Broadway, or the radio are best saved for the reception where they can be heard in a better context. The acoustics of the building and its formal setting make classical sacred music (as opposed to “contemporary Christian music”) the most appropriate and ultimately the most successful choice for music at your wedding here. Only live music is permitted; “canned” music from CDs is not acceptable.

The base fee for the organist with no rehearsal is \$250.00, payable at the time of the initial interview. If a rehearsal with other musicians is needed, an additional fee will be added. Rehearsals are scheduled one hour before the wedding; no other times will be considered. Fees for elaborate music involving choirs, orchestra, etc. are negotiated on an individual basis.

Since the wedding rehearsal is designed to familiarize members of the wedding party with their respective roles during the ceremony, the organist does not attend.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

Cathedral Parish strongly encourages the couple to be married to attend the Natural Family Planning class sponsored by the Diocese of Lafayette and the Couple to Couple League. For more information or to schedule the class please call the CCL (235-1618) or the Office of Family Life of the Diocese (261-5653) or www.diolaf.org/marriageprep.

THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

The Civil Government also has some requirements. Please obtain the marriage license from the Lafayette Parish Court House. The courthouse is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the Marriage Department is located on the first floor. Both bride and groom need to appear in order to secure a marriage license, with both sets of the following documents produced. Each of you needs a certified copy of your birth certificate and a valid driver's license, or passport or military I.D. (If you are under eighteen years of age, your parents must sign their consent for you to marry.) If you have been married before, a civil decree of divorce is required; if widowed, a death certificate is required. Cash only of \$27.50 is needed to cover the fee at the court house with additional fees totaling up to \$50.00. You can go to the Lafayette Parish Clerk of Court site @ lpclerk.com for additional information.

IMPORTANT: The marriage license is valid for only thirty days from the date of issuance. There is also a seventy-two hour waiting period from the time of issuance before you can be married (unless a judge issues a waiver). Please make the clerk aware of the date and time of your upcoming wedding to assure you are within the time constraints imposed by the State of Louisiana. Please drop off the license folder and all of its contents to the Cathedral two (2) weeks prior to your wedding.

NOTE: Should you have any questions at any time please feel free to contact the Wedding Coordinator at the Cathedral Center (232-1325).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Seating capacity – 566
Length of Aisle – 96'

Policies and Procedures are subject to change without notice; however, couples will be informed of changes.

Rev. (July 2023)