

ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

507 East 26th Street

Bryan, TX 77803

(979) 822-2721

GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE LITURGIES

Welcome to St. Joseph Catholic Church. We are happy to assist you in your preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Your wedding is meant to be a joyful and meaningful celebration, one that you will long remember. We offer these guidelines and instructions to help and support you, not only in getting ready for the celebration of your vows but also for a life- long commitment to God, the Church, and to each other. Share these guidelines with your future spouse and together begin your life journey.

Your initial contact at St. Joseph Catholic Church to start your marriage preparation is:

Britt Erisman at (979) 822-2721 email: berisman@stjosephbcs.org

MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- ❖ To be married in the Catholic Church one of you must be a baptized Catholic. For couples in which one is not Catholic a dispensation is needed for a mixed marriage. This will be explained to you at your initial interview with the Priest assigned for your marriage preparation. In order to receive this dispensation, the Catholic member of the couple must sign a statement that he/she intends to continue practicing the Catholic faith and to have children baptized and raised Catholic.
- ❖ If one or both of you have been married before and the spouse of any previous marriage is still living, you might need an annulment by the Catholic Church (Civil, Catholic, Protestant). This applies to both Catholics and non-Catholics. In many cases this slows down the marriage preparation process since we cannot schedule a wedding until any needed annulments have been received. If you have been married before, without exception, you must immediately bring that to the attention of Father Brian Eilers.
- ❖ The Catholic Church requires anyone preparing for the sacrament of matrimony to be well disposed and prepared. These guidelines explain how you can prepare yourself and how we will support you in this process.

GENERAL INFORMATION

WEDDING TIMES – Weddings at St. Joseph are celebrated on Saturdays at 11:00 AM or 2:00 PM. No more than TWO weddings are scheduled on a given Saturday.

PUNCTUALITY – Please make all arrangements for the ceremony so that the wedding can begin promptly. Couples who arrive late or fail to vacate the premises after the 30- minute photo session will forfeit their \$250 deposit.

REHEARSALS – Rehearsals are normally scheduled on Friday evenings (other options may be available through coordination with the Sacrament Coordinator, priest or deacon).

LENT – Weddings are discouraged during Lent because of the penitential spirit that characterizes Lent. The art and environment in the church reflect this liturgical season: solemn and bare. No flowers are permitted in the sanctuary during Lent.

COMMUNICATION -All communication and questions for your marriage preparation and wedding liturgy are to be made by you, the couple getting married.

FEES – *Parishioners* wishing to be married are asked to make a contribution of \$300. This amount helps defray the cost of church expenses, primarily upkeep and maintenance of the building. *Non-parishioners* are asked to make a \$1000 contribution to the church. A separate \$250 deposit will be paid to the church office when the date of the ceremony is booked. The entire fee must be paid at least thirty (30) days prior to the ceremony. The deposit will be forfeited if the wedding is cancelled less than three (3) months before the ceremony. Failure to follow these guidelines will also result in loss of the \$250 deposit. The \$250 deposit will be returned upon request after the ceremony, provided all guidelines have been followed.

Music – Preparation for music to be used at the church needs to be arranged by you directly. If you wish, you may contact the following St. Joseph parish music director:

- Marilyn Scamardo (979) 822-2721, mscamardo@stjosephbcs.org
- ❖ Stipends for the St. Joseph music ministers are separate and are paid directly to them. *Guest music ministers* are welcome; however, they are to communicate beforehand with the church office, regarding keys, microphones, instruments, etc. Music selected must be in accordance with liturgical norms of the Catholic Church.
 - ❖ **MODESTY** - Because of the dignity of the sacrament of marriage and the reverence with which we observe the liturgy of the Catholic Church, the bride and her attendants are asked to dress accordingly, *with modesty*, and *refrain from wearing plunging necklines and sleeveless or strapless dresses for the wedding as well as for the rehearsal*. A shawl may be used during the marriage liturgy.
 - ❖ **PROFESSIONAL WEDDING PLANNERS** - If you hire a professional wedding planner please make sure that that planner understands that he/she has no role in the rehearsal or the actual wedding. The marriage ceremony is under the guidance of the presiding priest or deacon.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION INFORMATION

NINE MONTHS TO ONE YEAR AHEAD:

Contact the church office at least nine months prior to your preferred wedding date for information and guidelines for marriage liturgies at St. Joseph Catholic Church. We will obtain basic information from you (i.e., whether you are registered at our parish, bride and groom's names, religion, contact phone numbers, and information on any prior marriages).

- ❖ Catholic's must obtain a recent copy of their baptismal certificate issued within the last six (6) months. They are to ask the church of baptism to include ***all notations*** on the certificate. Being confirmed is not a requirement but is encouraged. Father will help find adult confirmation classes, if needed. ***Non-Catholics*** are simply asked to bring information regarding their baptism: name and address of the non-Catholic church *where* she or he was baptized and the *date* of that baptism.
- ❖ If either party were married before, the Sacrament Coordinator may request that you meet with a priest or deacon to discuss the previous marriage. The following documents may be needed regarding prior marriages: copies of the marriage license, marriage certificate, final divorce decree and/or Catholic Nullity decree.
- ❖ A priest or deacon will be assigned to start the St. Joseph marriage preparation program with you. He will call you to set up the initial meeting and go over *St. Joseph Guidelines for Marriage Liturgies*. This initial meeting will be an opportunity to get to know one another, to discuss the requirements for a sacramental marriage, to complete paperwork for church records, to discuss your participation and scheduling of classes for marriage preparation, and to answer any questions you may have.
- ❖ After your meeting with the priest or deacon, and if all your paperwork is complete, you will be advised to contact the Church office to schedule a date for your marriage and reserve the church for that date. The \$250 deposit is to be paid at this time. If your marriage is to take place within the celebration of Mass, a ***priest*** must preside. A ***deacon*** may preside at a celebration of the sacrament of marriage without a Mass. We will check with the priest or deacon on their availability.

The Catholic Church requires anyone preparing for the sacrament of matrimony to be well disposed and prepared, because marriage is a permanent state in life. The following are offered to aid in this preparation:

- An initial meeting with the assigned priest for St. Joseph marriage preparation (see above);
- Attendance of an approved marriage preparation program. A local marriage preparation is available on the Church website.

FIVE MONTHS TO ONE MONTH AHEAD:

Continue and complete your marriage preparations. All preparation programs give a certificate of completion at the end of the classes or meetings. Please give a copy of this to the Sacrament Coordinator.

Select your readings and prayers from the booklet *"Together for Life."* The Sacrament Coordinator will give you this book at the initial meeting.

Determine who will participate in the marriage liturgy and make a list. You may choose readers and gift bearers. You might also know some altar servers and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who you may wish to serve at the wedding if there is to be a Mass.

ONE MONTH TO TWO WEEKS AHEAD:

A civil marriage license must be obtained 30 days to 72 hours prior to the wedding. You can apply for that at the county courthouse (any county in Texas). Call ahead to verify civil requirements and documents/identification that will be needed in order to obtain the license. ***Give the license to the priest or deacon who is to witness your vows as soon as you receive it or no later than the night of the rehearsal.*** Do not wait until the day of the wedding! The priest or deacon cannot witness a marriage without the marriage license document.

Make an appointment with the priest or deacon who will be officiating at your marriage to discuss the liturgy. Bring the license if you have it along with your liturgy plans: selection of readings, prayers, music and the names of people to be involved in the liturgy.

ONE DAY AHEAD:

On the day of the rehearsal, please ask everyone to arrive at the church at least 15 minutes ahead. Everyone who is to participate in the liturgy should be present at the rehearsal in order to avoid confusion at the wedding. The priest or deacon will conduct the rehearsal. On-the-spot suggestions from other people during the rehearsal can confuse and delay the rehearsal. You have only one hour for the rehearsal; wasted time and last-minute changes only shorten the time available for rehearsal. Food, drinks (other than water), and tobacco products are **not** allowed in church at any time. **Absolutely no alcohol-including wine, champagne, beer, or any other spirits-is permitted in the church, bride's room, or anywhere else on St. Joseph grounds before, during, or after the rehearsal and wedding.**

The church is the house of God and a place of prayer. Due respect must be shown by all in your wedding party. Everyone involved should also behave appropriately while in the church. Please be attentive in implementing good behavior among those you invited to be a part of your marriage liturgy.

At the rehearsal, please give your marriage license to the priest or deacon witnessing your vows if you have not already done so.

WEDDING DAY:

Remember that the wedding will begin on time. Please emphasize to members of your wedding party to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the time of the celebration. Failure to arrive on time results in the loss of your \$250 deposit. Only one hour is allowed for the ceremony, in addition to 30 minutes after the ceremony for taking photographs. Arriving late will force the priest or deacon to shorten the ceremony.

No food or drinks (other than water) are to be brought into the church.

We recommend that you take some quiet, private time prior to arriving at the church. It is a good idea to have a light meal prior to arriving at the church.

It is **not** a good idea to lessen nervousness by having an alcoholic beverage.

BUILDING INFORMATION

The church provides a room (on the right side when entering the church) for the bride and her attendants. It is the responsibility of the bride to appoint someone to clean the room and the bathroom immediately following the wedding.

St. Joseph is not responsible for items left in the church or the bridal room.
Dressing facilities are not available for the groom and groomsmen.

The PAC may be reserved if it is available *only after* the date of the wedding is set with the Church office after these Guidelines have been received and acknowledged, and after the deposit is made. This prevents booking conflicts. There is a rental fee and a clean-up fee for the PAC.

GUIDELINES FOR FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Furnishings and seasonal church decorations must remain in place. No flowers may be added during the season of Lent. During Advent, the Advent wreath remains in its place, and flowers are kept to a minimum. During Christmas, there are many poinsettias decorating the church; these and the Christmas Manger cannot be moved.

There are *two (2) options for flowers*:

- 1) St. Joseph Church will provide flowers *outside of Advent and Lent*. The flowers remain in the church for the weekend, and an announcement is placed in that weekend's bulletin indicating that the flowers that weekend are in honor of your wedding. This is a very economical way for you to provide flowers for your wedding and give a gift to St. Joseph Church. Call the parish office if you would like to do this.
- 2) ***You may provide your own florist.*** Your florist must follow all guidelines, and their work and time schedule must be coordinated with the Sacrament Coordinator. There is no work space provided for florists; they must bring their flower arrangements completed and ready for use.

A kneeler is provided for the bride and groom.

No flowers or arches are to obstruct the space around the altar or tabernacle. Flowers and other decorations should also not block the music minister's view of the altar.

For safety reasons, aisle runners are not permitted.

It is your responsibility to clear all decorations from the church as soon as possible following the ceremony. All decorations should be cleared within 30 minutes of ending your wedding. Another ceremony or liturgy may follow.

If you have used an outside florist, we would certainly appreciate the gift of your flowers after your wedding for our weekend Masses. Please let the church office know if you wish to donate your flowers.

Flower petals, rice, birdseed, bubbles, confetti, smoke producing devices, Silly String, or sparklers cannot be used ***inside or outside of the church*** ***There are no exceptions. Failure to comply will result in the loss of your \$250 deposit in addition to incurring the cost of any repairs as the result of damage.***

No tape or tacks may be used to attach bows or flowers to the pews. They may be attached with plastic clips that fit over the pews. Please assign someone to remove any pew bows and any wedding decorations, trash, programs, etc., immediately after the ceremony.

GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

All photographers (still and video) must check with the priest or deacon prior to the rehearsal. We want the couple to have a good remembrance of their ceremony; however, the photographers and videographers should be discreet and not distract in any way during the ceremony.

Photographers are not to interfere with the liturgy or the exchange of vows by ***excessive*** movement or flashes.

Photographers and videographers are not allowed in the sanctuary at any time during the liturgy and are to remain at a respectful distance so as not to distract the congregation.

Video cameras are allowed under the conditions stated above. All video cameras must remain stationary.

No extra camera lights may be used during the liturgy.

You and the photographer are asked to respect the sacredness of the church while giving instructions and taking pictures of the wedding party.

Photographs are normally permitted ***only after*** the ceremony.

Any photographs following the wedding should take no longer than thirty (30) minutes. The sacristans will inform the photographer when she or he has exceeded the limit. Failure to comply results in loss of the \$250 deposit. It is best that the photographer be given a list *before* the photo session so that she or he will know what photographs need to be taken (parents, grandparents, etc.). This will help assure that they complete their work in the allotted 30-minute timeframe.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Attached to these guidelines is an acknowledgement stating that the bride and groom have received and read a copy of these guidelines and that they agree to abide by the guidelines. It also serves as a receipt for the fee of using the church. This acknowledgement must be signed and given to the Sacrament Coordinator, prior to reserving the church.

Priests or deacons from other parishes who preside a wedding at St. Joseph Church are asked to remain in the church until the wedding party has left.

The couple assumes financial responsibility for:

- Repairs of any damage to the church, church property, or other facilities at St. Joseph Church at the rehearsal or before, during, and after the wedding due to negligence or vandalism associated with the wedding; and
- Replacing any items taken from the church.

If your wedding time is Saturday at 2:00 PM, everyone must be out of the church by 3:30 PM to allow for cleaning prior to confessions, which are scheduled to begin at 4:30 PM.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF
GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING LITURGIES****ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC
CHURCH**

I (we) have received and read a copy of the Guidelines for Marriage Liturgies at St. Joseph Church. By signature below, I (we) agree to abide by these Guidelines and accept responsibility for damages, as stipulated in the Guidelines, done during---

our rehearsal scheduled for:

(day/date)

and/or wedding scheduled for:

(day/date)

Bride's Signature/Date

Groom's Signature/Date

DEPOSIT

(required when booking the church)

Receipt of \$250 deposit received on: _____ by: _____

☐ Cash

☐ Check No. _____

REMAINING BALANCE

[remaining fee required at least thirty (30) days prior to the ceremony]

☐ PARISHIONER

Receipt of \$300 received on: _____ by: _____

☐ Cash

☐ Check No. _____

Parish ID# _____ Parishioner status verified by _____

☐ NON-PARISHIONER

Receipt of \$1000 received on _____ by _____

☐ Cash

☐ Check No. _____

Name of the Couple: _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone No. _____