

Important Information and Options in the Rite of Marriage

The Rite of Marriage allows for the possibility of many options. Some of these are noted here for your consideration.

Respect for Our Place of Worship

The church building is the place where the community gathers to worship God; it is the place where the sacraments of the church are celebrated. The wedding party and guests should respect the nature of the church, parish facilities and grounds. Appropriate respect will be expected at all times. Likewise, food and drink may not be brought into parish buildings at any time. Alcohol is prohibited; evidence of alcohol or other substance use can cause a marriage to be declared invalid and could cause cancellation of the wedding itself.

Scheduling a Time

Weddings can be celebrated on Friday afternoon or evening at almost any time, depending on the parish calendar. Saturday weddings can be scheduled no later than 2:00 PM because of the parish weekend schedule. A confirmed date is determined by the desire of the couple, the parish calendar and the calendar of the deacon or priest.

Availability of the Church Building

The church and related areas will ordinarily be available to the wedding party for 1½ hours before the scheduled time of the wedding until 30 minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony. The arrival of the wedding party, photographer, flowers, etc., should be arranged for that time period. Receiving lines at the church are not allowed; the time taken for a receiving line will reduce or eliminate the opportunity for photographs after the wedding.

Rehearsal and Wedding Times

Rehearsals are usually scheduled for the day before the wedding at or around 5:00 p.m.

Weddings are scheduled for Friday evenings between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Saturday weddings are scheduled between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

As a matter of courtesy to guests, the wedding party and the parish staff, both the rehearsal and wedding must begin on time. The wedding party and other participants in the liturgy should make the necessary allowances for distance and traffic to be present at the scheduled times.

Flowers

Flowers for the church are optional. If provided, flowers or plants should be real (never plastic or silk); they should be simple and tasteful and should be left in church following the wedding. Arrangements are placed on the sanctuary platform; never on the altar. The parish does not provide stands for flower arrangements. Flower petals may not be sprinkled in the aisle during the procession into church.

The wedding coordinator will assist you with the planning of the flowers for the church so that the parish plant and flower policy is followed.

Runners

Runners are not permitted for safety reasons.

Pew Bows

Pew bows may be used as long as they are fixed to the ends of the pews with a loop of ribbon, a rubber band or a plastic pew hook. No type of tape may ever be used. Someone should be designated to remove the bows at the end of the service.

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A Gathering Place

The wedding party and family are welcome to arrive no sooner than 1 ½ hours before the time of the wedding. A parish wedding hostess will greet you and be available for assistance as required.

The parish social hall is usually reserved for the gathering of the wedding party before the wedding.

The bride and her attendants may prepare in the brides room in the southwest corner of the social hall. It is equipped with a full-length mirror and is convenient to the restrooms.

The groom and his attendants may prepare in the vesting sacristy at the end of the gathering space where there is a private restroom available or the working sacristy located through the exit door behind the choir area. Further discussion with the wedding coordinator will determine the best location for the groom and his attendants to prepare.

After a Friday wedding or rehearsal, the church itself is to be vacated no later than 7:15 p.m. and the social hall and building is to be cleaned of all items brought in by family and friends by 7:35 p.m. to accommodate a weekly parish meeting.

After a Saturday wedding, the church itself is to be vacated no later than 3:30 p.m. The social hall is to be cleaned of all items brought in by the family and friends by 4:00 p.m. Parishioners begin to arrive for 5:00 p.m. Mass at 4:00 p.m.

Entrance Procession

The entrance of the liturgical ministers and members of the wedding party can be arranged in a number of ways. Attendants (bridesmaids and groomsmen) may walk in singly or as couples. Both parents may walk in with the bride, just as the parents of the groom may walk in with him. The bride and groom, as ministers of the sacrament of marriage, are encouraged to walk into the church as a couple; as a couple, they may also welcome their guests in the gathering space before the liturgy begins. One of these options, or some variation thereof, may be an appropriate alternative in certain family circumstances.

Unity Candle

The lighting of a unity candle is not a part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage but may be included. If so, the couple may provide just the unity candle (a pillar candle), or may provide all three candles (a pillar candle, two tapers, and holders for all three). The lighting of the unity candle takes place after the blessing and exchange of rings. The unity candle must be brought to the rehearsal.

Flowers to Our Lady

The presentation of flowers at the image of the Blessed Mother is not a part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage but may be included if one or both members of the couple have a particular devotion to Our Lady. The couple provides the flowers and they are presented following the prayer after communion during Mass or after the vows during the wedding ceremony with a Liturgy of the Word.

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Photographs

During the ceremony, photographers should remain behind the last pew of guests or no closer than the third pew from the back of each pew section and keep their movements to a minimum; flash photographs may not be taken during the liturgy. Group photos may ordinarily be taken before and after the ceremony depending on the parish schedule. Buildings and grounds are usually available to the wedding party for 1½ hours before the liturgy begins and for 30 minutes after the conclusion of the liturgy. Photographers may not bring screens or backdrops into the church or gathering space for formal, posed pictures.

Please inform your guests that flash photography is not permitted and that they are not to stand in the aisles. They are to respect the Sacrament of Marriage and the Rites of the Church.

Videotaping

There is one position from which a wedding ceremony may be videotaped; at the third pew from the back of each pew section. Once chosen and in place, the video equipment and operator must remain stationery. No portable lights may be used during the liturgy. Only parish microphones and microphones which are a permanent part of the video equipment may be used. No microphone may be attached to any person, including the wedding party.

[Questions regarding the policy for photographs and videotaping should be addressed to the parish well in advance of the wedding day. The couple to be married is responsible for informing the photographer and video operator well in advance of the wedding day.]

Rice, Birdseed, Balloons, Bubbles, Flower Petals, etc.

These items and any similar are not permitted.

Donations

While the Catholic Church does not charge for Sacraments, there are costs associated with the running and upkeep of the parish as well as providing for the marriage preparation. A suggested offering of 5% of the hall/catering costs (\$350.00 minimum) seems reasonable. If a couple is not able to afford the minimum donation, they should speak to the pastor for reconsideration. Donations go toward the general parish fund.

A gift to the deacon or priest is neither necessary nor expected. If a personal gift is made, it should be placed in an individual envelope with the name of the priest or deacon written on it. Fees for the director of music or other musicians are negotiated with them individually. If a parish Altar Server is present at the wedding, a gift of \$25.00 is suggested.