

Parish Wedding Policies

INTRODUCTION

“The Liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life, and from it flows the Church’s power and strength because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross” (Sacrosanctum Concilium, Vatican Council II)

The Wedding liturgy is a sacred rite invoking God’s witness and blessing upon the words and commitment made by the bride and groom. In the midst of all the obvious joy and excitement, your wedding remains a moment of utmost, profound worship celebrated by you and your families and friends. It is an expression of your personal faith within the context of your faith community.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Because the sacredness of the wedding ritual, and out of respect for God and the house of worship which is the church building, a few things need to be explicitly understood. **You are agreeing to all parish wedding policies as presented in this booklet by choosing to be married at Blessed Sacrament.**

- Blessed Sacrament is not a ‘venue’ as are reception halls or restaurants, it is not rented; it is a house of worship and a community of faith to which you belong, and which you are specifically asking to witness your promises. As a result, there are specific policies and requirements that ensure the appropriate conduct of weddings within our parish.
- Respect, decorum and dignified behavior will be maintained and observed at all times by you, your wedding party, and all your guests in regards to the church property.
- Punctuality for your rehearsal and ceremony is of the utmost importance.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS

- **The wedding rehearsal** is an important part of the preparation for the ceremony. It allows members of the immediate wedding party to become familiar with the environment of our church building and with the public roles they will assume as part of the liturgy. The parish wedding coordinator will conduct the rehearsal and will give a brief overview of the liturgy to help all concerned understand the prayerful nature of the celebration. (Only those directly involved in the ceremony should be invited to the actual rehearsal in church — others should be directed to meet you at the rehearsal dinner site). Those who should be present at your rehearsal in church include the bride and groom, both sets of parents, step parents, etc., grandparents (optional), bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, and gift bearers. At the rehearsal a responsible adult must accompany any children who are in the wedding party. We ask that all these members of your wedding party be present for the rehearsal, and kindly remind them they **must arrive on time**. We suggest that you ask everyone to arrive 20 minutes before the scheduled time. Rehearsals that begin late risk losing adequate rehearsal time.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS (CON'T)

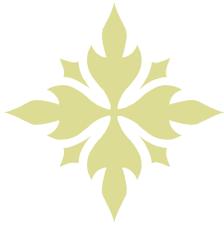
- **Alcohol** consumption during the rehearsal or prior to the ceremony on your wedding day potentially jeopardizes the validity of the marriage, and *will not be tolerated*.
- **Outside professional wedding consultants or coordinators** you retain operate solely within the permission and instructions of the parish wedding coordinator, who has complete supervision of the rehearsal, ceremony, sanctuary and celebration of your wedding at Blessed Sacrament. If you have contracted someone else to help with your wedding, please understand that *this person's responsibilities do not pertain to the liturgy and that they are not to interfere in any way with the responsibilities of the Blessed Sacrament wedding staff, which includes the preparation, rehearsal and celebration of the liturgy*. Keep in mind that our parish staff coordinates many weddings each year and are well experienced with the specifics pertaining wedding liturgies as celebrated at Blessed Sacrament.
- **Photographers and Videographers** and their assistants will respect the sacredness of the religious event, and the church as a house of worship. They are asked to act and behave discreetly and reverently (taking care not to damage furniture and environment by standing on pews or with their equipment). They will be held accountable for any damage caused. Please give all photographers and videographers a copy of the **Guidelines for Photographers and Videographers** (located on page 22 of this book). Please also advise them that they must meet with our wedding coordinator before the ceremony to review our procedures, with these principles in mind:

During the Ceremony

- Flash photographs may not be taken, or any extra lighting equipment used while the liturgy is in progress.
- No one may be situated in the main aisle during the wedding processional.
- Photographers and equipment in the raised sanctuary area of the church are prohibited.

After the Ceremony

- The wedding party may return for pictures.
- A late start to your wedding will result in shortened or no photographic opportunities, so as not to delay the next scheduled liturgy.
- Flash and other lighting equipment may be used at this time.



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SPECIFIC CONCERNS (CON'T)

- **Flowers and decorations** for the church should be discreet and complementary to the building's architecture and artwork. Please give your florist a copy of **Guidelines for Wedding Florists and Decorators** on page 23 of this booklet.

General Guidelines for you and your florist:

- Arrangements may be placed low and in front of the altar — never upon the altar itself (which is a symbol of Christ himself and a permanent reminder of his self-sacrifice for our salvation).
- If stands are used, they must be placed only toward the back corners of the raised sanctuary area to preserve necessary sightlines between priest, cantor, lectors and congregation.
- Your florist is to provide any stands or pedestals used.
- Church decorations, flowers or arrangements already present for a particular liturgical season *may not be moved or removed* for any reason.
- Altar candles proper to the church may not be moved or removed, and for safety reasons, no additional candle stands are permitted.
- Flowers, rose petals, rice, etc. may not be thrown on the center aisle or anywhere on church property at any time.

Pew-end decorations may be used.

- Pews must never be blocked by ribbons, cords, strings, etc.
- Pinning, gluing, nailing, tacking, taping, stapling are not permitted to attach pew decorations — elastic bands, plastic pew clips or ribbons must be used instead.

Aisle-runners are not permitted.

- **Rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, sparklers, balloons, birds, butterflies, bubbles, animals, etc.,** are not permitted inside or around the church campus due to safety, maintenance, and time concerns.

GUESTS

- **Parking** is available in the church lot.
- **Changing rooms** are not available, so please arrive already dressed in wedding attire, but no more than 30 minutes before your ceremony:

Brides and bridesmaids gather in the Day Chapel.

Groom and groomsmen gather in the front sacristy of the church.

- **Wheelchair and disability access** is available at every entrance to the church.
- **Receiving lines and guest books** should be reserved for the reception. In their joy, many of your guests will rightfully want to have a “few” words with you. Please keep in mind your time constraints here at the church, and at the reception venue. Taking too much time can forfeit adequate time for post-ceremony picture taking.