



“Goin’ to the Chapel and We’re Gonna get Married. . .”

As your special day approaches, we at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church want to do everything possible to help you celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony with as little stress as possible. Here are a few pointers:

We’ll start with some of the fixed policies and procedures and get them out of the way.

- ✚ Plan ahead. Book ahead. As soon as you decide on a date for your wedding, contact the parish office to be certain that the church is available before and after the service. When a date is confirmed, submit your fee to guarantee the space.
- ✚ The Parish Activity Center is available for your reception. The fee for rental of the facility is \$350. This covers all utilities and “finishing touch” cleaning following the reception (trash, food and beverage removal and putting away all tables and chairs are required of the wedding party). In addition, by Diocesan requirement, a \$95.00 insurance rider fee is required at time of booking and is mandatory for any event with more than 50 persons in attendance. Music, dress code and behavior of all in attendance must be in good taste and must not disturb neighbors, nor jeopardize the safety or security of sacred church grounds. All public safety laws must be adhered to at all times.
- ✚ Have a back-up plan. Although very rare, there may be a time when Father is unexpectedly called away on the date reserved for your wedding. In such situations, Father will attempt to find a priest who will provide the same service, with much the same delivery. However, if you have a relationship with a priest, it is always a good idea to contact him to see if the same date is available should you need him.
- ✚ No female who stands on the altar is to have shoulders or bosom exposed. All who serve in an official capacity as members of the wedding party should be dressed conservatively to show reverence and respect in the presence of Our Lord in the Tabernacle. Brides should present pictures or drawings of attendants’ dresses to Father well before items are complete to be certain that they are appropriate for a Wedding Mass. “Spaghetti straps” or strapless dresses are not permitted on the altar. This policy is not an individual choice of the pastor but is handed down from the Holy See in Rome. Therefore, there can be no exceptions.
- ✚ Lectors must be familiar with the Liturgical Mandates as dictated by the Holy See in Rome. This includes knowing when to approach the altar, bowing and genuflecting, and how to properly recite the readings. Anytime that anyone approaches the altar, he or she is to stand at the center, bow or genuflect, then proceed to the Ambo (lecturn/pulpit). When leaving the altar the Lector again stops at the center of the altar, bows or genuflects, and returns to his or her position in the sanctuary.
 - Unless the Responsorial Psalm is sung, the First Lector is to read the Response.
 - The First Lector returns to the altar on Father’s queue to recite the Prayers of the Faithful
 - Lectors must be in proper attire; women are to wear dresses or suits that do not reveal shoulders or bosom; men must wear sport coat, blazer or suit coat.
- ✚ If you use cantors, organists, vocalists and/or other musicians, they must be familiar with the Liturgical Mandates as dictated by the Holy See in Rome. They must be thoroughly familiar with the order of the Catholic Mass, including knowledge of all Mass parts (i.e., the Responsorial Psalm (if sung), the Allelulia, Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen, etc.)

- Some of the Mass parts may be spoken, as decided by Father Bayhi in discussion with the bride and groom.
- The Alleluia is *always to be sung*.
- All musicians and vocalists *must stand during the Gospel Reading and during the Great Amen*.
- ✚ If the bride and groom are both Catholic, you should consider a full Mass, including Holy Communion
 - If you expect a large Catholic crowd, there may be a need for additional Eucharistic Ministers to assist Father Bayhi with distribution of the Precious Body. If so, you can elect to call upon Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who are part of the St. John's Parish Family. If you choose to call upon family members or friends, they *must be familiar with the Liturgical Mandates as dictated by the Holy See in Rome*. This includes knowing when to approach the altar, bowing or genuflecting, and must produce a letter of suitability from their home parish.
- ✚ Protect life. All life. As is the case with most weddings, we ask that you *never* throw the traditional rice at the bride and groom as they leave for their honeymoon. Instead, we ask you to substitute birdseed. This way, anything remaining on the ground will provide food for our beautiful birds. It is also important that someone in the wedding group be assigned to collect all bags, wrappers, ties, etc. before leaving church grounds, as this is not covered by either the church fee or the clean-up fee for the Parish Activity Center.
- ✚ Deliveries *must be scheduled* through the parish office. This can be done through the Wedding Coordinator or you can call the parish office directly at 225.654.5778. Deliveries of flowers, instruments, photography/videography equipment, food and/or beverages must be scheduled to occur at reasonable times (within 2-4 hours of the ceremony) and must not interfere with any other function on church grounds, especially Masses and/or prayer services.

Things You Want to Know About but May be Afraid to Ask

- ✚ Fees, Stipends and/or Gratuities. While every member of the parish staff is here to serve you and to help you get closer to God through the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, stipends/gratuities are certainly appreciated but are not required. Laypersons and volunteers from the parish family, however, are asked to give of their time offering their services and expertise to make your special day memorable. We do recommend some type of formal acknowledgement of gratitude to show your appreciation. Below are some recommendations, *based on averages only*, and are by no means meant to be fixed and, should not create financial hardship, should that be a concern (note: in many cases, a small gift is acceptable):
 - The fee for the use of our church sanctuary is required to cover utility and clean-up costs-\$150
 - The stipend for Father to officiate over the ceremony is completely at your discretion.
 - Gratuities for altar servers and/or cross bearers average \$5-\$20
 - The organist and lead vocalists are *paid positions*. These individuals offer their talents for a living, therefore, they should be compensated appropriately. The organist/pianist fees range from \$75-\$150, depending on the entire music package as agreed upon by the bride and groom.
 - Our Cantor(s) are usually paid an average of \$75.00. All additional choir members, if requested, are there as volunteers who offer their talents as part of their ministry to the church and, therefore do not need compensation unless you wish to acknowledge them individually at your discretion.
 - The Wedding Coordinator is a volunteer member of the parish family and is there to offer her services as part of her ministry to the church. We know you will agree when all is said and done, that she works very hard to make your special day a happy, memorable one so remuneration is certainly appreciated. Gratuities for the Wedding Coordinator average \$50-\$125.
 - Ushers, greeters, and/or those who distribute programs or related memorabilia, again, offer this service as their ministry, however, should you wish to compensate them, a gift is sufficient, and gratuities average \$10-25.
 - Additional offerings of thanksgiving to the church are always appreciated but are not required. In some cases, families choose to make contributions to the St. John's Love Fund, which

provides assistance to individuals/families in need, or to the Office of Religious Education and Youth Ministry. In other cases, you may wish to make a contribution to the charity of your choice, in Thanksgiving for Our Lord brining the two of you together.

Wedding Ceremony Checklist

- ✚ **Readings.** Typically, there are three readings led by lay persons (Father, of course, will read the Gospel). Please make arrangements with the parish office at least one month prior to your wedding to select these reading and be certain your lectors a) are completely familiar with the Liturgical process of the Mass and b) are well-spoken and have rehearsed the readings so that they flow smoothly.
 - The First Reading (from the Old Testament)
 - The Responsorial Psalm (unless sung, this is read by the first lector)
 - The Second Reading (from the New Testament)Note: Unless otherwise discussed with Father, the Responsorial Psalm and the Prayers of the Faithful (just before the gifts are presented for the Offertory) are read by the first lector.
- ✚ **Mass Stewards.** Anyone else who serves on the altar, including altar servers, Eucharistic Ministers, cross bearers, should be selected and their names should be submitted to the parish office at least one month prior to your wedding. Again, all participants must be familiar with the Liturgy.
- ✚ **Music.** All music must be Liturgically correct and must be approved by Father, therefore, a complete list of all music to be included before and during the Wedding Mass should be submitted to the parish office at least one month prior to your wedding.
- ✚ **Rehearsal.** Please contact the parish office at least two months prior to your wedding to be certain the church is reserved for the day/night before your wedding so you and the entire wedding party can rehearse the ceremony and discuss all the details. In many instances, the church is being used for any number of unrelated events so it is important to prevent any scheduling conflicts well in advance.
- ✚ **Nursery/Cry Room.** If you feel that there will be a significant number of very young children attending your wedding, it may be in your best interest to utilize the cry room (the vestibule of the church), so as not to interfere with the ceremony that is for the two of you! Please let us know if you would like to utilize this space, or if you wish to have a nursery set up in one of our adjacent classrooms. There is no charge for this service, however, it will be necessary for you to appoint a member of the wedding group to oversee any childcare for the duration.
- ✚ Did you obtain your marriage license through the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court? This is law in the state of Louisiana. Please allow enough time to properly secure all the permissions and documents required; marriage licenses are reviewed and signed on the night of the rehearsal.