

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (Mt. 19:3-6)



WEDDING GUIDELINES

St. Joseph Co-Cathedral
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Who can have a wedding at the Co-Cathedral?

Roman Catholics in good standing who are (1) members of the Co-Cathedral Church Parish or (2) members of other church parishes can have their weddings celebrated at here.

Membership at the Co-Cathedral

One or both parties are considered “members of the Co-Cathedral Church Parish” if they are (1) living within the territorial boundaries or if outside the boundaries, are (2) registered for at least two full years prior to the wedding date. Membership means one or both couple (not family members) ARE actually residing within our territory and/or are active churchgoers per registration.

Non-members of the Co-Cathedral Parish are those who live outside our territorial boundaries and even outside the diocese who are not registered members.

When can a wedding be booked?

Wedding arrangements at the Co-Cathedral must be made no less than NINE MONTHS in advance of the anticipated date of the wedding. The Officiating Priest or Deacon need to call the Church Office to confirm the requested wedding date.

Wedding days and times at the Co-Cathedral

Weddings can be held on Friday evening at 7 PM; Saturday morning at 11 AM or 1 PM.

A special dispensation is granted for church parish members to have a Saturday evening weddings after 6 PM, the wedding couple must speak to the Officiating Priest or Deacon first.

No weddings are allowed on Holy Days of Obligation, during the Lenten Season, on other Special Liturgical Days and on all Major Civic Holidays.

Fees and Donations

The Co-Cathedral fees for weddings at the Co-Cathedral are:

- For members of the church parish = \$150.00
- For non-members of the Church parish = \$600.00

Active church members are presumed to support the Co-Cathedral church through their weekend contributions throughout the year which helps with the expensive operational costs of maintaining this beautiful church.

Non-members wedding fee is for the use of the facilities and to defray the cost (use of electricity, lights, HVAC System, etc.)

The wedding fee is due at the church office before the wedding rehearsal.

Donation and/or stipend for the officiating Priest or Deacon is personal and voluntary and given to them personally by the wedding couple.

Officiating Priest or Deacon

Church parishioners of the Co-Cathedral can ask one of the priests or deacons of the Co-Cathedral to officiate at their wedding. Those who belong to other church parishes MUST ask their own priest or deacon to preside at their wedding.

The wedding couple is reminded that each officiating Priest or Deacon would have his own style of conducting weddings. Their personal styles DO NOT necessarily mean that they are in accord with this Guideline and/or will be adopted by other priests or deacons.

Priests and Deacons from other church parishes within and outside the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux MUST request first (1) the required canonical delegation and (2) permission to Officiate at a wedding here at the Co-Cathedral when he confirms the wedding date. The priests and deacons can obtain these two requirements from the Priests of the Co-Cathedral.

Priests and Deacons who belong to other arch/dioceses other than Houma-Thibodaux, MUST also present the required Letter of Suitability for Ministry from their home arch/dioceses in addition to the above requirements.

In accordance with the Revised “*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*” (2016), the Officiating Priest or Deacon is responsible for completing the wedding preparations required by the diocese and adhering to this Wedding Guidelines. The Officiating Clergy is also responsible for conducting the wedding rehearsal (scheduled in advance), and the gathering and submission of the required documents. The Canonical Delegation and Permission will only be granted ONCE the Prenuptial Inquiry, containing all the required documents, is submitted to the Church Office a week before the wedding!

Wedding Preparations

Couples are requested to meet with their Officiating Priest/Deacon who will explain to them the diocesan wedding requirements that include (a) taking the FOCCUS test and result evaluation with Counselors, (b) attendance at the Diocesan Marriage Preparation Day (Pre-Cana retreat). The Officiating Priest/Deacon will facilitate the required FOCCUS test. If the Officiant needs a FOCCUS Couple Counselor, he must contact the church office (985) 446-1387 for assistance. The Officiating Priest/Deacon will have the information regarding the Pre-Cana Retreat.

Required Documents

The Officiating Priest/Deacon is required to gather and compile the following documents for submission to the Church office a week before the wedding.

1. Completed Prenuptial Inquiry form
2. Recent copies of the Baptismal Certificates of both parties
3. FOCCUS Results and Counselor’s Evaluation
4. Pre-Cana Retreat Certificate
5. Dispensations (or permissions) if needed
6. Marriage Civil License from Lafourche Clerk of Court’s Office, State of Louisiana

Wedding Ceremony and Liturgy

The wedding liturgy and ceremony must follow the Revised “*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*” (2016) of the Roman Catholic Church, this Wedding Guidelines and in accord with the *Guidelines for Weddings* issued by the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux. Anything contrary must be avoided.

The wedding ritual, readings and prayers for the wedding celebration are taken from the above-mentioned “Order” and from “Together for Life,” the booklet the wedding couple purchased or received from the Pre-Cana retreat.

The use of Unity Candle is **NOT** part of the rite and ritual of the “*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*” in the Roman Catholic Church and, therefore, its use is NOT allowed at the Co-Cathedral. This same prohibition applies to all other rituals, symbolic actions and practices whose origins are pop-practices, secular or profane.

Music for the wedding celebration MUST be appropriate for the liturgical celebration.

- It is recommended that the wedding couple only hire experienced musicians who have done weddings at Catholic churches or are familiar with our church rituals and liturgy.
- Secular or popular music (even though they appear or “sound religious”) are NOT allowed during the wedding celebration.
- Always check with your officiating priest or deacon when in doubt when choosing Musicians or music.
- The wedding couple is responsible for contacting and contracting with their musicians.
- Organists wishing to use the Pipe Organ must contact the church office in advance during office hours.

Attendants and Wedding Party

ONLY the Bride, Groom, Maid of Honor and Best Man will be in the Sanctuary (up and in front of the Altar). The rest of the Wedding Party (and attendants) will sit on the first pews facing the Altar.

It is preferred that the wedding party only have ten (10) pairs of bridesmaids and groomsmen not counting the flower girl and ring-bearer who must be of kindergarten age.

NO food, beverages or chewing gums are allowed in the church.

NO alcohol is allowed in the church premises.

The consumption of alcohol and INTOXICATION of any members of the wedding party would result in the delay (if the Bride and Groom are involved, postponement) of the wedding celebration.

Photography

1. The use of cameras WITHOUT FLASH (still and video) are allowed during the wedding celebration provided that they do not become a distraction during the celebration. Camera operators are not allowed in the Sanctuary.
2. Cameras and all equipment used must have their own stands. Drones are NOT allowed in the church.
3. The wedding party is allowed fifteen minutes for pictures inside the church after the ceremonies.

Flowers and Decorations

1. Due to our Friday evening Mass at 5:30 PM, decorating and the placement of floral arrangements are NOT allowed until after this Mass (around 6:15 PM).
2. Floral arrangements are only allowed at the high altar(Tabernacle) and not anywhere else. Floral arrangements placed at the high altar must be left there after the wedding.
3. NO KIND OF ADHESIVE (tape of any kind) or any devices are to be used on the pews, furnishings or any part of the church building (walls and door frames). The wedding couple will be responsible for all the expenses incurred in repairing, repainting and restoring from the damages caused by these adhesives and devices.
4. The Wedding Party IS RESPONSIBLE for removing all and everything they have used to decorate for the wedding (pews, etc.) immediately after the wedding.
5. Pews or Aisles cannot be blocked or cordoned-off in any way at any time. Aisle runners are NOT allowed.
6. The throwing or showering of rice, flowers, confetti, birdseed, or any other kinds ARE NOT allowed in and outside of the church property (including the front steps). Wedding couples will be responsible for the cleaning fees.
7. The use of sparklers (or any kind of pyrotechnics) IS NOT ALLOWED in and outside of the church property (including the front steps).
8. Liturgical decorations (plants and all others) and church fixtures (candle-holders, etc.) that are already in place MUST NOT BE moved.