



# Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church

708 East Main St • Ville Platte, LA 70586

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Weddings in the Catholic Church are part of the public worship of the Church. This community idea does not mean that you, as a couple, will be unable to make this celebration “your own.” In addition to choosing the members of your wedding party, you are encouraged to select Bible readings, choose appropriate music, and also decide who will participate as ministers in your celebration.

These guidelines are meant to help you prepare for your wedding. Since marriage is a public act, both Church and State have certain requirements.

We ask that you read over this policy. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call us for clarification (337-363-2989).

## **CIVIL REQUIREMENTS**

Louisiana Law requires that a marriage license be obtained from the Clerk of Court’s office no earlier than 30 days before the wedding and at least 72 hours before the wedding begins. Please bring it to the church office as soon as you get it along with any other certificates of requirements completed. The ceremony and marriage license must be witnessed and signed by the celebrant, the bride and groom, and two witnesses at the wedding.

Please contact the Clerk of Court’s office for other information on civil requirements for marriage.

## **DIOCESAN REQUIREMENTS**

You should make an appointment to see a priest concerning your wedding at least 6 months prior to the wedding date you have in mind. Come earlier to get the date you want.

At the initial appointment it would be helpful to have new copies of your baptism certificate. The first interview will deal with basic family and faith history information. Dates for the wedding and rehearsal will be set. You will receive further information concerning diocesan requirements at this initial interview. The parish requires the Natural Family Planning classes. The Diocese requires a marriage retreat and the Prepare/Enrich evaluation.

## FLOWERS AND OTHER DECORATIONS

The Sacrament of Marriage is a sign of God's love and faithfulness. We encourage simplicity in decor and restraint in spending. The beauty of the wedding is your love. Let that be what stands out.

1. Florists appreciate being notified at least 1 month before the wedding. Your florist should check with the Parish Office before the wedding to find out when the Church will be available for decorating. The families are responsible for the Church being cleaned up immediately after the ceremony. If there is no professional florist being paid to clean up, then someone must be responsible.
2. During the Liturgical Seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Easter the wedding decorations must take into account the liturgical decorations already in Church. There are no weddings during Lent.
3. If candelabra are used, chase candle tubes or globes must also be used. Open, uncovered candles are not allowed because they present both a fire hazard and they drip wax on the floor and nearby furnishings.
4. The use of trellises, arches, and garlands is not permitted.
5. The use of an "Aisle-runner" is not permitted; it is useless and only clutters the church aisle. Also, this plastic runner on top of the terrazzo floor makes for a safety hazard (slipping easily happens). A cloth runner pleats and presents a safety hazard as well.
6. There will be no throwing of anything inside or outside of the church.
7. While the use of a Professional Wedding Consultant may prove helpful in some instances, his/her responsibility ceases at the Church door and are picked up again at the reception. The priest or his designate alone is responsible for working with you on the wedding rehearsal and liturgy.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

One or two still-photographers and one videographer are allowed during the wedding ceremony. A second videographer may remain in the choir loft during the ceremony. Have them check with the priest at the rehearsal or prior to the wedding for further instructions and directions.

All camera equipment, film packaging, etc...is to be removed as soon as the ceremony is over.

Please be respectful of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament when taking photos before and after the service. No photos during the Consecration!

## MUSIC

Music adds solemnity and joy to your wedding. It's primary purpose is to help make your wedding a truly prayerful experience for all present.

1. A vocal soloist is usually hired to sing at the appropriate times. These times are: the seating of mothers, the entrance of the wedding party, the entrance of the bride, a true responsorial psalm from the approved texts after the first reading, offertory song, communion song if applicable (which should be about the Holy Eucharist), presentation of flowers, and recessional.
2. Only religious or classical music is allowed.

## WEDDING WITH MASS/WITHOUT MASS

The obligation of the church's ministers (priests and deacons) is to witness the marriages of those couples who have fulfilled all canonical requirements. Their obligation does not mean that Mass must be celebrated with the wedding ceremony. Therefore, all couples who wish to marry in this church parish will have the Mass celebrated with their wedding ceremony **ONLY** if they have shown that the Eucharist is an important part of their lives by regular Sunday attendance at Mass. The priest or deacon will make the final determination as to whether Mass will be celebrated or not! Couples living together will not have the Mass unless they split up upon their first meeting with the priest. We do allow wedding Masses on Saturday nights, if the couple fits the requirements.

For those couples who are entering into a "mixed marriage," the Mass will not be celebrated to accommodate the non-Catholic party.

## WEDDING TIMES

1. Friday evening weddings are scheduled for 6:30 p.m.
2. Saturday weddings are scheduled for either 12:00 noon or 6:30 p.m.
3. Rehearsals are scheduled on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m., with the exceptions of the third Thursday of the month (6:45 p.m.). If within 5 months of your wedding date no weddings are scheduled on the Friday before your Saturday wedding, then your rehearsal may be moved to the Friday night. Check with the priest doing your wedding and with the secretary here.

## DRESS CODE

The church is a sacred place and dress should reflect that. For bridesmaids—shoulders should be covered with a shawl--- no low cut necklines, nor high slits, and of course---dresses should be well below the knee. The bride should be modestly dressed as well.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

1. There is no set fee required or expected by the Church for a marriage for those persons who are actively supporting parishioners. (However, any violation of the policy will result in a \$150 penalty – the pastor will make the final decision). If you want to make a donation you should feel free to do so. If you are not an actively supporting parishioner, a \$150 donation is appropriate to help defer the utility costs of the Church. All couples are asked to give a \$100 fee to the rehearsal coordinator/sacristan. Pay her directly.
2. For non-parishioners there will be a \$500 charge for the use of the Church. This fee must be paid at least one month prior to the date of the wedding. A non-parishioner is: **1)** someone who does not live within the territorial boundaries of Sacred Heart Catholic Church; **2)** couples who are co-habiting and live outside the territorial boundaries of this parish are considered non-parishioners – even though their families may live within this parish.  
For non-parishioners there is an initial \$150 deposit fee. This fee will be returned after the wedding if the policy has been followed; for any violation of the policy, the fee will be forfeited. (The pastor will make the final decision). All couples are asked to give a \$100 fee to the rehearsal coordinator/sacristan. Pay her directly.

3. There will be no smoking inside the Church and no alcoholic beverages brought on the Church property. Any person who is visibly intoxicated for the rehearsal or wedding will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony. So, it is very important that the couple express to their attendants that they want their wedding to be dignified and respectful – intoxicated persons are not dignified or respectful.

4. Be on time for the rehearsal and the wedding. That means you are responsible for your attendants. The person conducting the rehearsal will begin on time with or without the entire wedding party.