



CATHEDRAL-BASILICA OF ST. LOUIS KING OF FRANCE
AND
ST. MARY'S CHURCH
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

WEDDING GUIDELINES

Dear Bride/Groom to be,

Welcome to the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis King of France/St. Mary's Church. We are happy to do all that we can to help you prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Marriage is a serious and sacred commitment. We, at the St. Louis Cathedral/St. Mary's Church, are delighted that you have chosen to bring your commitment before God and His people. We are honored that you have chosen us to help you prepare not only for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, but also for a permanent, joyful, and faith-filled married life together.

Our marriage policy is intended to offer an overview and to clarify any questions you might have concerning the Sacrament of Marriage and how it is celebrated at the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church. Please take the time to review this policy and its guidelines. After you have reviewed it, return the application and signed contract with the necessary deposit. Once we have received your forms and confirmation from your preparing priest, one of our wedding directors will confirm the date and time of your wedding.

Finally, please be assured of our prayers that God's abundant blessings will be with you as you prepare for this most holy Sacrament of Marriage and your future lives together.

Sincerely yours in Christ and His Blessed Mother,

Fr. Pat Williams

Very Rev. Patrick J. Williams, V.G.
Rector

ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL/ST. MARY'S CHURCH

MARRIAGE POLICY

"FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION, GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. SO, THEY ARE NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE FLESH. THEREFORE, WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, NO HUMAN BEING MUST SEPARATE."

MK 10:6-9

It is our great honor and privilege here at the St. Louis Cathedral and St. Mary's Church to welcome couples to our beautiful, historic churches as they celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The following packet contains important information on the marriage policy and guidelines. Please take the time to read these guidelines carefully. If you have any questions or would like further clarification on this policy, please contact the Wedding Office at the St. Louis Cathedral at (504) 525-9585 or e-mail cathedral@arch-no.org.

RESERVING THE CHURCH:

Times for weddings are as follows:

- St. Louis Cathedral: Saturday weddings at 11:00am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, and 7:00pm, Monday through Friday weddings at 3:00pm and 7:00pm, except for the Church's Holy Days of Obligation, other special liturgical days, and major civil holidays.
- St. Mary's Church: Monday through Saturday weddings at 3:00pm, 5:00pm, or 7:00pm, except for the Church's Holy Days of Obligation, other special liturgical days, and major civil holidays.

To initiate the reservation process, the couple must contact a wedding director by calling the Cathedral Office at (504) 525-9585 to determine availability. They must then complete the Marriage Application and Marriage Contract, included in these guidelines and return them to the Cathedral office with the initial, non-refundable deposit of \$1,500.00. Please make checks payable to St. Louis Cathedral if wedding is to be held at the Cathedral and payable to CCHC if the wedding is to be celebrated at St. Mary's Church. Your wedding date is not secure until the application, fully executed contract, and deposit have been received.

You can mail the paperwork and deposit check to the Cathedral Office, Attn: Weddings, at 615 Pere Antoine Alley, New Orleans, LA 70116.

PREPARATION:

Reserving a date and time for the wedding on our calendar does not automatically assure the couple's readiness for sacramental marriage. Definitive wedding plans should not be made nor contracts entered into until this determination of readiness is made by the priest/deacon preparing the couple, which is usually after the discussion of the pre-marital inventory (FOCCUS). Each couple will complete all marriage preparations with a priest or deacon in accordance with the requirements of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. All paperwork and documentation required must be submitted to the Cathedral office at least one month prior to the scheduled wedding date. See [Appendix A](#) for further instructions. Parishioners of the St. Louis Cathedral should first contact the parish staff, so that you can be scheduled to meet with either the St. Louis Cathedral Rector or one of the Deacons assigned to the Cathedral, prior to making definitive wedding plans or contracts entered into, until a determination of readiness is made by rector/deacon.

OFFERING:

In order to cover the costs associated with the use of the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church, we request an offering of **\$2,950**. This offering covers the services of the Wedding Director, Organist, Cantor, Security Officer, and other building costs and utilities.

For all couples, a non-refundable **\$1,500** deposit is required to reserve the wedding date. This deposit should be sent in at the same time as the application and contract. The balance of **\$1,450** is due no less than one month prior to the wedding ceremony. Approximately two months prior to your wedding and rehearsal, you will receive an email reminding you of your balance and providing instructions for ensuring that your documentation, music selections, reading selections, rehearsal time, etc. are all in order.

DECORATIONS:

Decorations may be brought in one hour before the wedding. Please note these restrictions:

- no kind of adhesive is to be used on the pews or any church furnishings
- no candles are allowed on the floor of the aisle; Unity candles are not permitted at all
- no pews or aisles are to be blocked or cordoned off in any way at any time
- no aisle runner
- rice, flowers, confetti, bird seed, etc. are prohibited for maintenance and safety reasons
 - Flower girls may not throw flower petals.
- any seasonal décor already in the Cathedral must be left in its place

While we appreciate the sentiment, it is not necessary to leave flowers in church as an offering.

MAINTENANCE DISCLAIMER:

Both the St. Louis Cathedral and St. Mary's Church are historic churches. Due to their age, they require and deserve constant maintenance and repair. Every effort is made to clear the church of all materials prior to our liturgies, but at times, scaffolding or curtains may have to be left in place while repairs are being made.

WEDDING PARTY:

Space limitations as well as liturgical decorum limit your wedding party to no more than 22 persons total, including the bride and groom. Children participating in your wedding party should be at least 2 years of age. All bridal attire should be modest and appropriate to the sacredness of a wedding liturgy. All members of the bridal party are expected to be clothed appropriately for both the wedding and the rehearsal. Please contact the wedding director for further explanation.

Kneelers are provided in the sanctuary for the bride, groom, best man, and maid of honor. The additional members of the wedding party are seated in the first pew of the church.

MUSIC:

Music and singing have always been an essential element of the wedding liturgy. All music selected for weddings is to be recognized liturgical music. Some classical music is also acceptable. You can find a music selection guide on the wedding page of our website to help guide your selections.

Couples must make arrangements with Mr. Jesse Reeks, the Cathedral Music Consultant and our Principal Organist. Mr. Reeks can be reached at (504) 450-7303 or jesser@arch-no.org. All music must be approved by Mr. Reeks. Couples are required to use the services of our Cathedral organist as well as a Cathedral Cantor to lead the congregational singing during a wedding liturgy, whether it includes Mass or not. Both of these are included in the church fees.

Other singers and musicians may be used for solo selections (at the couple's expense) but must be approved by Mr. Reeks at least three months before the wedding. If additional musical instruments are desired, Mr. Reeks will provide referrals.

WEDDING QUESTIONNAIRE:

Approximately one to two months prior to the wedding date, the couple will receive an email (sent to the address provided on the original application) from the Cathedral wedding office. This email will include a reminder of the balance due as well as a checklist of items the couple should have completed including completing the preparation process, confirming music selections, etc. Also included in this email will be a link to a Wedding Questionnaire Google Form. Couples should fill this out and submit it as soon as possible, as the wedding office will use this document to prepare for the rehearsal and confirm any details required for the ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY:

Couples are to arrange for their own photographer and florist. Photos and videos are welcome, provided they do not become a distraction during the liturgy or impede the movement or flow of the liturgy. Photographers may enter the sanctuary, but are limited to the choir stalls area. Photographs are permitted on a limited basis in the church after the wedding at the discretion of the Wedding Director. Photographs may be taken one hour prior to the wedding and fifteen minutes after the wedding. Due to the strict schedule of both churches, this policy will be strictly enforced.

DECORUM:

At no time are food and beverages to be brought into any part of the Cathedral or St. Mary's Church or anywhere on the premises. Smoking or vaping is not allowed at any time. There should be no drinking before or during the rehearsal or the wedding.

REHEARSALS:

Rehearsals are ordinarily on the eve of the wedding. Because it is necessary to place the church under electronic security, rehearsals are to begin promptly and be conducted expeditiously. All rehearsal times are assigned by the wedding office, no earlier than 4 months prior to the wedding date. Please contact the wedding office at the Cathedral to confirm your rehearsal time.

We ask that couples bring their State of Louisiana marriage license with them to the rehearsal.

A Cathedral Wedding Director will be present to supervise the rehearsal and will be present at the wedding liturgy. Any outside wedding consultant has no role in the liturgy or in the Cathedral. The fee for our Director's services is included in the church fee.

PUNCTUALITY:

Out of respect for the parish staff and for other scheduled events, wedding parties are expected to be prompt for both the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. We ask that all members of the party arrive 15 minutes prior to the assigned rehearsal time. On the wedding day, the groom and groomsmen should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. The bride and her bridesmaids should arrive no later than 15 minutes prior to the ceremony.

SECURITY:

A security detail will be on the premises for your wedding. The cost of this security is included in your wedding fee. The officer on duty for your wedding will only allow invited guests access to the inside of the Cathedral during your wedding.

Due to the difficulty of arriving at the Cathedral, we strongly recommend that you arrange for a police escort. Arrangements must be made for any vehicle entering the mall area in front of the Cathedral. Please contact Officer Joseph Spino at (504) 231-2295. If necessary, he will also assist with police escorts and second line parades.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- It should be noted that there are no restroom facilities in the St. Louis Cathedral. Please inform your wedding party and guests prior to the day of the ceremony.
- The Cathedral does not provide any parking for rehearsals or weddings. Please advise your guests that they will be utilizing public parking lots in the area.
- On Saturday afternoons, the Sacrament of Penance is celebrated at 4:15pm. Any wedding still in progress at that time is not to impede penitents from entering the church for this Sacrament.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE AND QUESTIONS:

After carefully reading these Wedding Guidelines, please contact our Cathedral office at (504) 525-9585. One of our Wedding Directors will be able to assist you with any questions you have and guide you through the process, including reserving a specific date and time for your wedding. Once you have spoken to someone in our wedding office, you are encouraged to print out these guidelines, wedding application, and contract. Please note: No date is considered to be reserved until a fully executed application, contract, and deposit are received.

These guidelines, along with those of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, are intended to serve as a means to allow us to work closely with you in a cooperative way to assure that your wedding day is the day you desire, while respecting the liturgy of our Church and the many demands placed upon our Cathedral schedule. We pledge to do all we can to assist you in planning for and celebrating this special, sacred event.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A BRIDE AND GROOM

EARLY PREPARATION:

1. Meet with your parish priest/deacon to complete the *First Step to the Altar* form. This form is required as confirmation that you have secured a preparing priest prior to confirming your wedding date. Parishioners of the St. Louis Cathedral should first contact the parish staff, so that you can be scheduled to meet with either the St. Louis Cathedral Rector or one of the Deacons assigned to the Cathedral, prior to making definitive wedding plans or contracts entered into, until a determination of readiness is made by rector/deacon.
2. Read the *Wedding Guidelines* and complete the Wedding Application and Contract. Return these forms along with the non-refundable deposit check.
3. Select the photographer, videographer, and florist for your wedding and inform them of the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church policies.
4. Select your wedding party. Please see the guidelines regarding the wedding party policies (number of attendants, age of children, etc.).

SIX (6) MONTHS PRIOR TO WEDDING:

1. Proceed with Marriage preparation with your parish priest or deacon in order to begin the preparation as required by the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
2. No sooner than 6 months prior to your wedding date, request newly issued baptismal certificates from your church of baptism to present to the priest or deacon preparing you for marriage.

THREE (3) MONTHS PRIOR TO WEDDING:

1. Consult with your priest or deacon to ensure timely delivery of all required documents.
2. Call/email the Cathedral office with any questions regarding your wedding ceremony and to confirm a rehearsal date and time.

ONE (1) MONTH PRIOR TO WEDDING:

1. Final balance due at the Cathedral office.
2. Complete Wedding Questionnaire Google Form and submit to Cathedral office.
3. Contact Cathedral office to confirm receipt of all necessary documentation from preparing priest.
4. Within one month of the wedding date, obtain a marriage license from the state of Louisiana. It is your responsibility to bring this license to the wedding rehearsal. A wedding may not be performed without this license.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARING PRIEST OR DEACON

1. Preparer or Officiants with faculties within the Archdiocese of New Orleans are expected to guide the engaged couple through the marriage preparation process required by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Required documents are:
 - Prenuptial Inquiry- Should be completed, signed, and documented with your church seal
 - Dispensations- Necessary for any previous marriages and/or mixed religions.
 - A marriage between a Catholic and non-baptized person must obtain a dispensation form Disparity of Cult and may not be celebrated within the context of Mass.
 - Certified Baptismal Certificates issued no sooner than 6 months prior to wedding date.
 - Certificate of Marriage Preparation Program Attended
 - Pastor Permission Letter- From the pastor of the bride or groom or the Catholic party's parish (mixed religion) for couples who reside outside of the Cathedral parish.
2. Officiants outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans must obtain a Testimonial Letter of Suitability from the respective Ordinary of his diocese or Major Superior of his religious congregation. This testimony must be sent to Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond and a copy to St. Louis Cathedral/St. Mary's Church.
3. Preparer or Officiants from another diocese preparing couples outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans must send all the necessary documents to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of New Orleans (7887 Walmsley Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125) for review and approval.
4. A request for delegation should be sent to the rector of the Cathedral, Very Reverend Patrick J Williams, V.G. (615 Pere Antoine Alley, New Orleans, LA 70016). A letter of delegation for marriage will be sent to the Officiant once all the documents are received at the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church no later than three weeks prior to the date of marriage. Officiants are expected to be present to direct the rehearsal with the assistance of the Wedding Director of the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church.
5. Officiants residing in another state must register with the state of Louisiana to perform the civil aspect of the marriage. The procedure for registration is on the website of the Archdiocese of New Orleans under Downloads in the Chancellor file.
6. Officiants are expected to return the civil marriage license to the appropriate Clerk of Court.

APPENDIX A: PREPARATION

1. At least one party must profess the Catholic religion. Profession of faith implies some practice of religion such as prayer, attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments. Since Christian marriage is a sacrament, it is the responsibility of the priest or deacon to ascertain that the parties are properly disposed to receive the sacrament.
2. Marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic is permitted by the Church with proper dispensation. In order to obtain dispensation, the Catholic party is required to promise that he or she will continue living his or her faith in the Catholic Church and will do all in his or her power to have their children baptized and reared as Catholics. Special permission to celebrate the wedding ceremony of a mixed-religion couple within the context of the Mass must be obtained by the priest or deacon preparing the couple for marriage.
3. If a couple attempts marriage contrary to the laws of the Church before a judge or non-Catholic minister, validation of the marriage is permitted only after proper preparation.
4. Before submitting your application, you should decide which priest or deacon will prepare you for marriage. Contact information for the preparing priest or deacon will be required on the application. It is preferred that the priest or deacon who prepares you will also preside at the wedding. He will be responsible for obtaining all dispensations and documents needed. The marriage preparation program will consist of: interviews with the priest or deacon, the administering of a premarital inventory (FOCCUS), attendance at one of the Archdiocesan approved marriage preparation programs, a planning session for the wedding ceremony, and finally, the wedding rehearsal.
5. A confirmation is needed (Fax, phone, letter) from the priest or deacon that he is assuming responsibility for your marriage preparation before a wedding date can be scheduled tentatively. Weddings are not confirmed until this is received. The priest or deacon should send in a signed copy of the *First Step to the Altar* form available on our website. A follow up call by the couple is highly recommended to make sure your tentative date is being held until receipt of this confirmation.
6. A written letter from the pastor of the bride's or groom's church parish, or from the Catholic party's parish (mixed religion), is required for parties who reside outside of the Cathedral parish.

7. Couples living outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans should be prepared by their parish priest or deacon. The procedure is the same as above. All paperwork and documentation of the preparation process must be approved by the local diocese/archdiocese and then forwarded onto the Metropolitan Tribunal and Chancellor's Office at the Archdiocese of New Orleans for approval at 7887 Walmsley Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125.
8. If an out of town couple is not able to arrange for a member of the clergy to officiate, the Cathedral Wedding Director will assist in procuring the services of a priest or deacon of the Archdiocese. Please note that the donation for the priest or deacon is not included in the Church fees. A donation of \$250.00 should be presented to the celebrant prior to or at the time of the wedding.
9. The Cathedral Wedding Director is responsible for overseeing all documentation and paperwork required for the wedding. She/he is also responsible for coordinating with the couple to make certain that they understand and follow proper liturgical, Archdiocesan, and parish guidelines and policies for a wedding liturgy.
10. The liturgy must be that of the Roman Catholic Church's Rite of Marriage and in accord with the Guidelines for Weddings of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We strongly recommend using the book *Together for Life* which can be secured from the priest or deacon who is preparing you.

APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE

REQUESTED DATE: _____
REQUESTED TIME: _____
CHURCH PREFERENCE:
_____ St. Louis Cathedral
_____ St. Mary's Church

PREPARING PRIEST OR DEACON: _____
CHURCH NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____
NAME OF OFFICIANT: (IF KNOWN) _____
WILL MATRIMONY BE CELEBRATED WITHIN MASS? ___ Yes ___ No

BRIDE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____
DATE OF BIRTH: _____ RELIGION: _____
CHURCH OF BAPTISM: _____
OCCUPATION: _____
FATHER'S NAME: _____ MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME: _____
HAVE YOU BEEN MARRIED BEFORE? _____
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN YOUR FIANCÉ? _____
WHY DO YOU WISH TO BE MARRIED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH? _____

GROOM: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____
DATE OF BIRTH: _____ RELIGION: _____
CHURCH OF BAPTISM: _____
OCCUPATION: _____
FATHER'S NAME: _____ MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME: _____
HAVE YOU BEEN MARRIED BEFORE? _____
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN YOUR FIANCÉ? _____
WHY DO YOU WISH TO BE MARRIED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH? _____

MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Please Print

NAME OF BRIDE: _____ RELIGION: _____

NAME OF GROOM: _____ RELIGION: _____

CHURCH: ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL ST. MARY'S CHURCH

DATE AND TIME OF WEDDING: _____

FOR WEDDING OFFICE USE ONLY:

Deposit: \$1,500.00 Date Paid: _____ Check Number: _____ Received By: _____

Balance Due: _____ Date Paid: _____ Check Number: _____ Received By: _____

We, the undersigned, agree to accept all of the policies and conditions outlined in the above stated wedding guidelines. As an essential element of the consideration of this contract, we agree that no part of the wedding ceremony contradicts the teachings and beliefs of The Roman Catholic Church.

Entered into this _____ day of _____, _____.

The Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans
Very Rev. Patrick J. Williams, V.G.
Rector, St. Louis Cathedral and St. Mary's Church

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Bride: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Groom: _____ Date: _____