

# **GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS**

## *OUR LADY of LOURDES CATHOLIC CHURCH*

*Diocese of Victoria in Texas*

- 1. The couple to be married are expected to have been members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish for at least six (6) months. Otherwise, a letter from the pastor of the previous or present parish allowing the couple to do the ceremony in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is required.**

A couple wishing to marry is expected to make an appointment with the parish priest at least six (6) months in advance. One (1) year in advance would be more preferable, as participation in a prescribed Engaged Encounter Program is also required.

You are entering into a holy Sacrament and as with all Sacraments, proper preparation must be undertaken. In addition to the Engaged Encounter Weekend, the couple will meet for personal talks and consultation with the priest a prescribed number of times. Catholics should arrange with the priest for a time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) before celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony. All required church documents must be in the office at least two (2) weeks prior to your celebration. Also, a Marriage License issued by the State of Texas must be obtained. The license must be obtained no earlier than thirty (30) days and no later than three (3) days prior to the wedding date.

- 2. WEDDINGS SCHEDULED:** Weddings are not scheduled later than 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. (Please do not ask for different times for this day). **Weddings desired to be scheduled on other days and different times are to be discussed with the pastor.**
- 3. MUSIC:** Not all songs are suitable for the Nuptial Mass. As a rule, choose songs that have a religious theme to be sung at Mass. All others should be sung before the Mass.
- 4. FLOWERS:**
  - 1a) Use your own florist and flowers.** If flowers used during the wedding Mass are to be removed after the celebration, the Parish Office should be contacted in order for the parish to provide other floral arrangements for the weekend Masses. **1b) Or you may choose to donate the floral arrangements for the weekend services.**
  - 2) Use whatever is provided by the parish for the weekend Masses.**
- 5. CANDLE(s):** Flames endanger and expose members of the wedding party to accidental burns. All candelabras must be placed to the sides of the altar. Please provide protective floor covering under candelabras, as candle drippings are hard to remove from carpet.

A Unity Candle is not a part of the official Catholic Wedding Liturgy – i.e., it is not included in the Vatican-approved Rite of Marriage; therefore, if the wedding couple wishes to have one, the parish suggests having it at the beginning of the reception.

**ABSOLUTELY NO OTHER OPEN FLAME LIGHTING IS TO BE USED DUE TO RISKS TO THE CONGREGATION AND THE HAZARDS OF FIRES.**

- 6. FLOWER GIRLS and RING BEARERS:** Children that are very young may hesitate to walk down the aisle on the wedding day. Should this occur, an adult must be available to bring them to the front.

Flower girls **may not** scatter live rose petals or other materials as they walk down the aisle. Aside from the fact that flower petals are hard to remove when mashed into the carpet, someone may slip and fall. No bird seeds or rice may be scattered inside the church or around the premises of the church. Insurance liabilities prohibit such practices.

7. **PHOTOS AND/OR VIDEOS:**

Please refer to separate Guidelines for Photography & Videography (as attached to the end of this document).

8. **REHEARSAL:** Once the wedding date has been confirmed, make arrangements with the priest to schedule your rehearsal. Contact the church office at 575-3813 to make these arrangements.

Rehearsals **must begin on time** because there are often other events in the church after the scheduled end of the rehearsal time. Please make sure that all members of the wedding party arrive thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal time.

9. **MARRIAGE LICENSE:** The rehearsal is also the usual and customary time that the civil Marriage License is presented to the priest. A couple may get a marriage license within thirty (30) days of their wedding, but they must obtain a marriage license at least seventy-two (72) hours before the wedding.

10. **BUILDING USE GUIDELINES:** Care and respect of the church as a place of worship and the house of God is to be given at all times.

Wedding rehearsals or practices must be conducted in a respectful manner, due to being conducted in church before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Respectful behavior and dress in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is required at all times. Help maintain a prayerful atmosphere in church by speaking at a low voice level during the rehearsal, photo sessions, and on the wedding day. Children should be kept seated and not left without supervision during the entire time in the church. There is to be **NO FOOD, DRINKS or GUM CHEWING BROUGHT INSIDE THE CHURCH. No smoking nor alcoholic drinks of any kind are permitted on church property.**

11. **STIPEND & ADDITIONAL CHARGES:**

- For parishioners, a donation of \$200.00 to defray the cost of the church's utilities is appreciated. For non-parishioners, the donation is \$400.00. A "non-parishioner" is defined as someone who has neither been registered in the parish for at least one (1) year prior to the wedding date nor has parents and/or grandparents who have been registered in the parish for at least one (1) year prior to the wedding date.
- **The stipend for a visiting priest/deacon (officiant) is separate and to be discussed with the individual. You must make arrangements for his accommodations and meals during his visit here.**
- **The church does not employ a full time janitor. It is imperative that the church be left in as clean and neat a condition as originally found prior to your wedding in order to be ready for subsequent Liturgy services.** Therefore, post-ceremony cleaning service arrangements will be made to clean and restore order to the wedding party dressing areas, usher's room & church vestibule at an extra charge of \$75. This fee is required, **but can be refunded** if the church's priority need of restored cleanliness and order is satisfactorily met by the wedding party & attendants. Include this item in the planning of your ceremony through prior discussion with the officiant in charge.

12. **WEDDING PARTY DUTIES:**

- It will be the responsibility of the couple to plan for and make arrangements for: Wedding Photos, and/or Videos, Flowers, Music & Musician, Altar Servers, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and Ushers.
- The primary duty of an usher is the seating of wedding guests. At this Church, there needs to be an Usher dedicated to the operation of the church's side entrance and Parish Hall's elevators and lifts maintained for the convenience of guests who may have difficulty climbing stairs. At the wedding rehearsal, the **designated Usher** will be given explicit instruction where the key and/or switch is located that activates the elevators, as well as training in the operation of these two lifts.
- These arrangements and designations should be made well in advance. You may call the church office for assistance if needed, or for answers to any questions you may have.
- It will be the duty of the wedding party to remove all floral arrangements, photography equipment, clothing, etc., from the church immediately following the celebration. Items left in the church will be disposed.
- Since Saturday evening services begin with 4:00 p.m. Reconciliation followed by Mass at 5:00 p.m., it becomes necessary to clear the parking lot no later than 4:30 p.m. to allow parking space for the attendees of these liturgies.

**Please understand** that all of the details in these guidelines are intended as a means to do everything possible to assure that your celebration of the *Sacrament of Matrimony* will be a truly religious experience.

HAVE A BLESSED AND HAPPY COVENANTAL MARRIAGE.