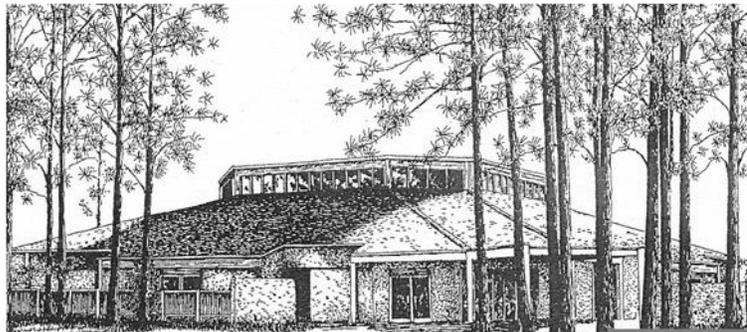


Wedding Policy

For

St. Theodore Catholic Church



*785 Sam Houston Jones Parkway
Lake Charles, LA 70611
(337) 855-6662
Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau, Pastor*

Revised
July 2020

WEDDING POLICY FOR ST. THEODORE CHURCH

Great care is taken to insure that your wedding is reverent, graceful, beautiful and open to the movement of God's spirit among us. In this spirit, St. Theodore Church provides the following policy for celebrating weddings in our church. This policy must be followed in order to preserve the dignity and respect of the church and the beauty of your wedding.

To maintain respect for the grounds and the House of God, the following are not permitted:

- ***Smoking and gum*** chewing anywhere in the church, the sacristy, the bride's dressing room and surrounding areas.
- ***Alcohol*** of any kind is absolutely forbidden anywhere on the church grounds, in the church, the bride's dressing room, the sacristy or gathering space for the groomsmen. Any groom, bride, or member of the wedding party who comes to the wedding while drinking must realize that they forfeit the right to be in the wedding.
- ***Food or drink*** may not be brought into the church, the bride's dressing room, the sacristy or the place for the gathering of the groomsmen. Water is permitted, but bottles must be removed.
- For safety reasons, no rice, birdseed, confetti or other materials may be thrown on the church grounds following the wedding. Likewise, no flower petals (real, silk or paper) may be thrown in the church or on the church grounds. This is both for insurance purposes as well as for safety reasons.

Limited space is available in the bride's dressing room. Therefore, it is recommended that only the bride dress at the church. All other members of the wedding party should come properly attired for the wedding.

DRESS CODE

Modest apparel should be worn by the bride and her attendants. Shoulders should be covered and the front and backs of dresses must come up to the neckline. No mini-skirts. We always need to be conscious of our presence in the Lord's house.

All personal belongings must be removed from the church facilities IMMEDIATELY following the wedding. The parish cannot be responsible for articles left unattended.

NOTHING may be moved in the church, sacristy, cry room or any other facility of the church without the explicit permission of the Pastor or one of his associates. This is to include furnishings, plants, flowers and liturgical décor.

Photographers and video-tapers are not to move anything, even though things may interfere with photos. Photographers must sign and return agreement sheet.

OUT-OF-PARISH WEDDINGS

Couples from other parishes are welcome to celebrate their wedding in our church. However, since the parishioners of the parish provide the financial support for the church, maintain the church and pay for all the expenses of its operation, including utilities and upkeep; and since weddings of persons from outside the parish incur expenses beyond the normal parish use of the facilities; a fee of \$200.00 is required of non-parishioners desiring to have their wedding celebrated in our church.

THE CELEBRANT OF THE WEDDING

Ordinarily, one of the priests on the parish staff will preside at weddings celebrated in the parish. On occasion, a couple may have a priest friend or priest relative they wish to invite to preside at the wedding. In this case, the couple should mention this to the priest of the parish early in the process. Visiting priests will be asked to observe Church law and parish policy and customs regarding the celebration of the sacrament of marriage. Delegation from the Pastor must be attained by any outside priest or deacon.

SIZE OF THE WEDDING PARTY

Weddings are not theatrical productions, but a celebration of God's love found in the lives of two people which solemnized in liturgical prayer. In order to preserve the reverence and dignity of the celebrations we ask that you keep the number of the bridal party to a minimum. The Pastor's approval is needed for bridal parties larger than 7 couples (bridesmaids/groomsmen).

Ring bearers and flower girls are not ministers, nor are their services required for the celebration of marriage. Couples will be asked to consider the age of children involved in these roles and whether their presence will add to or detract from the joyful solemnity of the celebration. If couples choose to use ring bearers and flower girls, it is the policy of our parish that these youngsters be at least FIVE (5) years of age. Miniature bride and groom are not encouraged.

UNITY CANDLE

The Unity Candle is not permitted at a Catholic wedding because it takes away from the true symbols of marriage - the vows and rings. This is best used at your reception.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals must begin on time since there are often other services, or wedding rehearsals to take place in a single evening. It must be remembered that rehearsals are conducted in the church; therefore, shorts, cut-offs, etc. are not considered to be appropriate attire for the occasion. Wedding party members should not come to the rehearsal drinking and chewing gum in the church.

The Church will provide a Wedding Coordinator to assist you and the priest at both the rehearsal and the wedding. This is free of charge.

CHURCH DÉCOR

During certain liturgical seasons of the Church year, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, particular décor is used in the church. The colors used by the Church should be considered when planning weddings, as these colors and décor CANNOT be removed or changed for any reason. Please have your florist and/or decorators read and sign the instruction sheet.

Return this sheet (church Décor) to the church office 10 days prior to your wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

Photographers and videographers are welcomed but they are not permitted to roam about the church once the liturgy has begun and they are not permitted on the steps or sanctuary platform. Please have your photographer and videographer read and sign the policy.

Return this sheet (Photography & Videotaping) to the church office 10 days prior to your wedding.

MARRIAGE POLICY CONTRACT

Dates for the celebration of marriage are tentatively held for the couple, but will not be officially accepted and finalized until the couple has read the Parish Marriage Policy and have signed the Parish Marriage Policy contract.

Weddings are special and joyful times for brides and grooms, for their families and friends. The promise and hope that weddings are for us, the community of St. Theodore, make their celebration a special and grace filled time in the lives of the families and friends, as well as this community. The Church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their weddings in the context of our prayer as Christians. Indeed, so important is marriage in Christian life that it is called a sacrament.

READERS

Only officially approved Scriptures may be read at the wedding. Officially approved Scripture readings for weddings will be provided by the church office or by the priest or deacon.

In selecting readers for your wedding, remember to ask persons who have a good speaking voice. If they have read at Mass before that would be an advantage

LITURGICAL MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

A Roman Catholic marriage is sacramental, not just legal; sacred, rather than merely secular; public, as well as personal. A Catholic marriage is a time for prayer and thanksgiving to God and the primary purpose of music is to lead all to reverence.

Before planning any music you must arrange an appointment with our Director of Music to discuss the liturgical suitability of all music, vocal and/or instrumental, to be used for your wedding. Our Director of Music will help you choose appropriate music for your wedding. All music must be approved by the Music Director and Pastor.

Love songs from movies and Broadway plays, secular rock, country and western ballads, or “pop” music of any kind is **not** permitted either before or during your wedding liturgy. These kinds of pieces have texts, which do not conform to the principles of liturgical suitability in sacramental celebrations and should be reserved for the wedding reception. Music for your wedding will be different from music for your reception.

The secular connotations of the “Bridal Chorus” from Richard Wagner’s opera, *Lohengrin* prevent its use as a processional in liturgical worship.

You may hire your own musicians, but they must be approved by our music director. It is suggested you hire one of our church organists/pianists to provide the keyboard music for your wedding as they have the experience for liturgical music for a Catholic wedding.

Taped music and CDs are not permitted. All music in church must be provided by a competent musicians.

The fee for the organist depends on the complexity of the requests, the number of vocalists and/or instruments with which he/she must rehearse, etc.

When a competent cantor or soloist is present (one who reads music and who is experienced with leading Roman Catholic song), it is expected that the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation be sung during the Liturgy of the Word. The Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, and Lamb of God) may also be sung. The Lord’s Prayer is a part of the Liturgy that is expressly intended to be a prayer of the entire community and a solo rendition of this prayer within the liturgy is not possible.

Our parish has access to trained singers and musicians who can provide music for your wedding. These persons can be contracted through our Director of Music on your behalf. A separate fee for each singer and musician is required for their services.

All fees for musicians should be paid in full no later than TWO WEEKS prior to your wedding.

WEDDING WITH MASS

If both parties are Catholic and want a Mass (*Communion*), the latest we can schedule this is 1:00 pm on Saturday. Wedding without Mass can be scheduled on Saturday evenings.

We are not able to offer a Mass when it is a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. Except for Communion, the full marriage rite is celebrated.

FLORIST AND CHURCH DECORATIONS

1. From the document, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, only real flowers and plants are to be used in decorating the Church as they are more appropriate to the dignity of the occasion.
2. Floral decorations should never impede the approach into the sanctuary nor encircle or obstruct the Altar. There are other places appropriate for floral decorations.
3. The decorations for your wedding may be affected by the date you select. For example: during Lent and Advent flowers and other elaborate decorations may not be used. Please consult with the Pastor.
4. Decorations and supplies (*boxes, candleholders, pew bows, etc.*) for Saturday weddings must be removed immediately after the weddings so that they do not interfere with the Saturday afternoon Mass.

If you wish to donate your flowers for use by the church following your wedding, please make arrangements with the Church Office.

5. Florist and decorators are to make arrangements with the Church Office for times to enter the church. Florist and decorators for Saturday evening's weddings may not set-up until after the Saturday afternoon Mass.
6. Please **do not** use tape to attach flowers or bows to the ends of the pews. Tape removes the varnish. Please tie or use holders for these decorations.
7. For safety reasons aisle runners cannot be used.
8. Just as certain liturgical seasons of the Church has particular decor so too are the colors used in church. For example, the Church will be decorated in purple during Advent and Lent. Church banners and decor cannot be changed or moved.

- *This form is to be read carefully by the bride, florist and those decorating the church.*
- *Everyone must abide by all aspects of the policy outlined above.*
- *By signing this policy statement, the involved persons agree to the terms of this document.*

Bride's signature

Florist's signature

Please return this to the Church Office at least 10 days prior to your wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

Photographers are welcomed; however, they must keep in mind that a wedding in a Catholic Church is a sacred worship service. Likewise, this is a formal occasion and photographers should dress in a manner befitting the occasion. Tee-shirts, blue-jeans, and shirttails hanging out are not appropriate. Also short skirts, spaghetti straps, strapless or low cut tops are inappropriate attire for women.

While we understand the desire to record this occasion, we ask that the following policy be observed so that photographic and video-taping equipment and personnel will not mar the sacred joy of this day.

1. Photographers and videographers are not permitted to roam about the church once the wedding has begun. They are not permitted on the steps or on the sanctuary platform at any time. Videotaping should be from a stationary tripod.
2. Wedding guest should know that picture taking is limited to the hired professionals.
3. Only the church lighting may be used.
4. After the wedding, the church will remain open for pictures but must be restricted to no more than 30 minutes. Other church services may be scheduled following the wedding. Please remember that you are in church and to always give proper respect.
5. Photographs may be taken as the bridal party walks down the aisle during the processional and recessional. Pictures may be taken prior to the wedding, but must be completed at least 15 minutes prior to the appointed time of the wedding so we can begin on time.
6. Photographers and videographers are not permitted to move anything in any part of the church even if objects may interfere with the taking of pictures.

This form is to be read carefully by the bride, groom, and photographer and/or videographer. Everyone must abide by all aspects of the policy outlined above. By signing this policy statement, the involved persons agree to the terms of this document.

Bride's signature

Photographer's signature

Groom's signature

Videographer's signature

Please return this to the Church Office at least 10 days prior to your wedding.