

**WEDDING GUIDELINES**  
**ST. CHARLES BORROMEO CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**Grand Coteau, Louisiana 70541**  
**337-662-5279**

*The following policies are intended to help the wedding ceremony go smoothly,  
so that it will be a joyful and prayerful day for the couple.*

**Diocesan Policies**

Couples must begin the marriage preparation process by meeting with a priest or deacon of St. Charles Borromeo Parish at least **six (6) months** before the proposed date of the wedding.

**Place of Marriage**

Couples are to marry in either the parish of the bride or the parish of the groom. If they are going to marry elsewhere, their proper pastors are to be asked to give permission (c.1115).

**Wedding Times**

Weddings are scheduled only at the following times:

**Fridays** at 6:00PM, 6:30PM

**Saturdays** at 11:00 AM, 1:30PM, 6:00PM, 6:30PM

\* Weddings are not held at St. Charles during the season of Lent.

**Reservation of the Church**

The Pastor of St. Charles will confirm and reserve the date of the wedding and the rehearsal date only when he has approved and signed the *Application to Reserve the Church for a Wedding* form and the couple submits full payment for the wedding.

If a dispensation from an impediment to marry is required from the Holy See or the diocesan tribunal, a wedding date cannot be scheduled, even tentatively, until the dispensation is obtained.

**Fees for Use of Church and Marriage Preparation**

**Parishioner**

If either the future bride or groom has been an active parishioner for at least one year at the time of inquiry, the fee for use of the church and marriage preparation is \$300.00.

(A parishioner is a baptized Catholic living within the parish boundaries, or a baptized Catholic living outside the parish boundaries who is registered at St. Charles Parish. An active parishioner is someone who regularly attends Mass at St. Charles and is supportive of the Church's ministry as recorded by offertory envelopes).

### Non-Parishioner/Inactive Parishioner

For non-parishioners or *inactive* parishioners, the fee for use of the Church is \$850. Non-parishioners would normally engage their own parish priest or another priest for both wedding preparation and the wedding ceremony.

In the rare case when a priest or deacon of St. Charles Borromeo Church does the marriage preparation and/or performs the wedding ceremony for a non-parishioner or an inactive non-residential parishioner, additional fees apply: Marriage Preparation (\$300).

A stipend of \$100 payable to St. Charles Church's Wedding Sacristan(s) is required for all weddings.

The wedding is considered "booked" or confirmed when the **entire fee** for the wedding is paid.

### Liturgical Guidelines

The attire of the wedding party, especially the bride's dress and the bridesmaids' dresses, should reflect the dignity and sacredness of the Sacrament of Marriage.

There is no limit on the number of attendants for the wedding ceremony, but because of limited space in the sanctuary, **only the bride, groom, and two official witnesses may stand in the sanctuary during the ceremony.**

An adult must accompany children younger than 6 years old when they participate in the entrance procession.

### Time Frame for Use of the Church

The Church is available for **1 hour to conduct the wedding rehearsal.**

The reconciliation room is available to the bride for one hour before the scheduled time of the wedding.

The wedding party should arrive no earlier than 30 minutes before the scheduled time unless they are taking pictures outside.

Wedding parties may remain in the Church for 20 minutes after the wedding ceremony to take pictures.

Please designate someone to stay after the wedding to tidy up both the church and the bride's room. Dispose of all trash in the large bin located in the gravel parking lot.

### Wedding Coordinators

The **Church's Wedding Sacristan(s)** must be present for the rehearsal and the wedding to assist the wedding party.

If a contracted Wedding Coordinator is engaged as well, he/she will be expected to follow the wedding policies and guidelines of St. Charles Borromeo Church. Any questions regarding the ceremony will be addressed by the Church's Wedding Sacristan. The contracted Wedding Coordinator can phone the Church office for any questions.

### **Wedding Music**

All couples must meet (either virtually or in person) with our Wedding Music Minister, \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss and select music for your wedding.

The Wedding Music Minister must approve of all music to be performed before, during, and/or after your wedding ceremony in the Church, as well as approve of all musicians and/or vocalists. Please, do not make prior commitments regarding musicians, vocalists, or choice of music until you have consulted with Ms. James.

Please contact the Music Minister as soon as your *Wedding Application* has been approved and the Wedding date reserved.

### **Decorations**

**No part of the Church décor (banners, plants, etc.) may be changed or removed**, especially during the Advent/Christmas season.

#### **The following are not permitted at the wedding ceremony:**

- Unity candles.
- Candles or candelabras brought in from outside of the Church.
- Runners for the main aisle.
- Strollers, wagons, etc. during the procession.
- Archways.
- Tape and tacks, especially on the pews. Only clip-on hooks or ribbon ties are permitted.
- Flowers on the altar. Flowers may be placed in front of the altar or on the side altars.
- Throwing of rice, birdseed, flowers, or any other item either inside or outside the Church.
- Food and drink inside the Church.

If a florist is contracted, the florist must check with the Church's Wedding Sacristan before any final decisions are made regarding flower arrangement.

### **Photography**

The following guidelines must be observed:

- **Flashes and spotlights are not permitted during the ceremony.**
- **Photographers and videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary of the Church.**
- The wedding party may engage the services of only one still photographer and/or only one videographer
- Lights will be turned on in the Church 30 minutes before the wedding begins.

- Photographers should not take group pictures inside the Church before the wedding begins.
- The wedding party may remain after the wedding for group pictures for a maximum of 20 minutes.
- Photographers may not stop persons during the procession to take pictures.

### **Alcohol**

Use of alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal or the wedding is strictly forbidden. As free consent makes a marriage, one jeopardizes the validity of the marriage if he or she is *under the influence*.

### **Cohabitation**

Cohabitation, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the status of unmarried couples living together as sexual partners and sharing a household. The Church teaches this is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of married spouses and to the generation and education of children.

It is important that this issue be addressed early-on in the marriage preparation process and that the couple be challenged to separate or, at least, to stay chaste until their marriage. (It may not be advisable to separate, for instance, if the care of children is involved).

Couples should reflect on this challenge and prayerfully discern what is best for their relationship in terms of preparing for a sacramental marriage within the Catholic Church. (See, Marriage Preparation Guidelines, Province of New Orleans, Pastoral Guidelines VI, A).

### **Accountability**

The bride and groom will be held responsible for the actions and behavior of all the guests, florists, musicians, and photographers.

### **Marriage License**

The marriage license should be brought to the parish office one week prior to the wedding date or brought to the rehearsal (at the very latest)!