Co-Cathedral Wedding Ceremonies

Guidelines & Agreement
In accord with pastoral guidelines for marriage preparation in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee and all the dioceses of Florida, these instructions are meant to assist those preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. If you need help, please do not hesitate to contact us. We hope that your wedding day will be beautiful and meaningful and that these guidelines will help you prepare for this special day. For your convenience we have also enclosed a Co-Cathedral Wedding Agreement on page 7. This agreement must be completed and signed before your wedding is scheduled in our parish calendar. Fee information is on page 3 and in the wedding agreement.

Who Can Be Married at the Co-Cathedral?
Any Catholic wishing to be married at the Co-Cathedral is welcome to choose this church. Priority is given to parishioners. “Parishioner” means either the bride or the groom or their parents have been registered supporting members of the Co-Cathedral for a minimum of one year prior to the first marriage preparation appointment with one of our clergy. By “supporting” we mean regular, identifiable contributions to the Co-Cathedral. If you are being married by a visiting priest or deacon, he will need to send a letter or email to the Co-Cathedral requesting faculties (permission) within four months of your scheduled wedding date.
**Wedding Fees**
The wedding fee pays for the parish ministers required for the wedding ceremony. The wedding fee for *parishioners* is $800.

For *non-parishioners* the wedding fee is $1,400, which includes $800 for the parish ministers required for the wedding ceremony plus a $600 fee for use of the church.

**Early Requirements & Timelines**

*Parishioners* - Before you make any commitment for your wedding, *parishioners* are to contact the priest or deacon who will celebrate your marriage, ask for an interview, and find out the necessary requirements. The priest or deacon will enter your anticipated wedding date in the parish calendar. Wedding dates can only be set after the couple has met with the priest or the deacon.

*Non-Parishioners* - Before a wedding date can be entered in the parish calendar, *non-parishioners* must have a letter sent from their home parish to the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More at least 6 months prior to the anticipated wedding date, giving permission for marriage at St. Thomas More. It is also necessary that you obtain a copy of “Guidelines for Marriage Preparation for Non-Parishioners.” These guidelines are posted on our parish website: www.cocathedral.com or are available through the parish office.

**Scheduling the Ceremony & Rehearsal**
Weddings may be scheduled on weekdays or weeknights or on Saturdays to start between 9:00 & 11:00am or 1:30 & 2:30pm. Nuptial Masses are not permitted on Saturday evenings or on Sundays. Dates can only be set after the couple has met with the priest or deacon. Not all weekend dates are available. Wedding dates are not scheduled for major holy days and holidays and the weekends connected with them: Thanksgiving Day and weekend; Christmas; New Year’s Day; and Palm Sunday weekend through Easter Sunday.

Please check with the priest or deacon concerning Saturdays which fall on holiday weekends (i.e. Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day). Keep in mind that the periods of Advent (4 weeks before Christmas) and Lent (the 40 days before Easter) are considered solemn, penitential periods in the Church calendar. Because of the joyous nature of your celebration, weddings are discouraged during these times.
Planning the Ceremony
For ease of planning your wedding ceremony, the booklet, “Together for Life” is available from the priest/deacon preparing you for marriage or through the Co-Cathedral office. The Co-Cathedral wedding coordinator will assist you in planning and also during your wedding ceremony. The wedding coordinator’s function is to attend to the affairs of the church.

Rehearsal
Wedding rehearsals are generally held the evening before the wedding. A specific time must be set with the priest or deacon who will be celebrating the Sacrament. All members of the wedding party, and lectors and musicians taking part in the ceremony should be present for this practice. Arriving on time is essential. Rehearsal should last no more than an hour.

Final preparations for the ceremony, e.g., dressing/make-up, rooms where the ladies and gentlemen of the wedding party gather, must be made in advance with the wedding coordinator in consultation with the parish office manager. The Co-Cathedral is not responsible for personal possessions or items rented for use in the ceremony.

Florida Law requires a license issued by the Clerk of Courts in order for the marriage to be solemnized. Your marriage cannot be officially recorded with the County Clerk without this. You must present your marriage license to the celebrant at the time of the wedding rehearsal.

Alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and the ceremony are prohibited out of respect for the Sacrament of Marriage and the church as the House of God.
Music
Music selected for a wedding must be sacred in nature. To respect the solemnity of your ceremony the Church has set forth clear guidelines regarding the music that it considers acceptable. Your choices will be made from a wide selection of liturgical music, either classical or contemporary.

At each Nuptial Mass or Marriage Ceremony, the couple is required to use a Cantor and Pianist/Organist provided by St. Thomas More. If the couple has a family member/friend who they would like to use for either of those positions, that musician must speak with the Wedding Music Coordinator and is required to be at the scheduled wedding rehearsal for the couple. If the couple would like extra instruments, trumpet or stringed, that is available as well for an additional charge.

Flowers & Environment
Placement of floral arrangements must allow for ease of movement by the celebrant and servers. Flowers are never placed on the altar itself. Floral displays are discouraged during the Lenten Season. Christmas and Easter decorations and floral arrangements will not be removed or rearranged. No rice or birdseed is allowed on parish premises. Live flower petals may not be dropped in church. Liturgical banners cannot be changed for weddings.
Candles
Candles should enhance the liturgy and not take away from the central focus of the wedding, therefore we ask that any candle arrangement be done in consultation with the wedding coordinator and presider of the wedding. Any candles used in addition to those used for Mass will be the responsibility of the wedding party.

Photographs
Photos in moderation are permitted during the ceremony. Photographers are not permitted in the center aisle or on or beyond the steps in the sanctuary/altar area. Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony. Pictures may be taken after the ceremony, when guests have exited the church.

We request that a time limit of one hour be placed on photo sessions. All photographers must check with the celebrant before the ceremony. Videotaping is permitted but must be discussed with the priest or wedding coordinator in advance.

We hope that these guidelines assist you as you prepare for one of the most important days of your life. The joy and happiness of your wedding will come when adequate preparation has taken place on behalf of everyone involved. Many blessings to you as you prepare for this wonderful sacrament.
“Love is patient. Love is kind... It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

1 Cor 13:4-8