

Wedding Guidelines



*Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, is not pompous,
it is not inflated, it is not rude,
It does not seek its own interests,
It is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
But rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
Hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never fails*

1 Corinthians 13:4-

My Dear Friends in Christ,

In these pages you will find the guidelines for celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage at the St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Birmingham, Alabama. These guidelines are an assistance for you. They are not a series of restrictions, but rather, are composed to help you celebrate the sacrament of Marriage joyfully and reverently. They are in place to help you with planning the liturgy of this most important day, and to insure that your desire for a beautiful wedding is fulfilled. May God be with you as you approach this great day.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Robert J. Sullivan
Pastor

Scheduling

YOUR WEDDING

The first step in scheduling your wedding is to contact the Pastor regarding possible dates. Diocesan policy demands a six-month preparation period before the wedding can take place. (*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama; 11/11/99*) No wedding will be placed on the Church calendar until the couple meets with the priest.

Weddings are normally not scheduled during the season of Lent. Catholic weddings are to be celebrated in a church, and they are not to be celebrated on Sunday. (*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham*)

If your marriage preparation will be done by a priest not at Saint Mark, then a letter must be written to the Pastor, explaining that the marriage preparation will be conducted and the completed Marriage File will be received by the Pastor at least one month prior to the wedding date. **Until this letter is received the date cannot be reserved on the calendar.**

If the Marriage preparation will take place outside of the Diocese of Birmingham, the same letter will be required, but the Marriage File must be sent through the local Chancery to the Birmingham Chancery.

Marriage

PREPARATION

During your six month preparation period you will:

1. Complete the prenuptial inventory and FOCCUS inventory.
2. Discuss any dispensations or permissions necessary,
3. Meet with the pastor or his delegate 3 or 4 times.
4. Attend a Marriage Preparation Workshop.

You will receive a book: *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlain, which contains all the readings and prayers from which you may choose, and which gives you a complete outline of the ceremony. You will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator by Mrs. Lisa Satterfield, Parish Wedding Director, who will help you coordinate all the details of your wedding liturgy.

There is a helpful form in the back of the *Together for Life* which you should fill out with the help of the priest celebrating your Wedding Liturgy. You will review this information with the priest and then mail it to your wedding director at least one month before the wedding.

Please read the accompanying guidelines regarding the use of the church.

Planning

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage involves not only the couple to be married and their families and friends, but also the pastor, the music director, the cantor, the sacristan and the Church building itself. You will be assigned a wedding director who will help you organize your wedding liturgy within guidelines acceptable to the St. Mark the Evangelist Church. Please refer any questions from your florist, photographer, and video camera operator to your wedding coordinator. The wedding coordinator can also refer you to the proper authority for answering questions regarding the acceptability of any paraliturgical additions to the wedding ceremony. Should you employ a professional wedding consultant, please be aware of the fact this his/her authority does not extend to the liturgical ceremony. The Parish Wedding Coordinator has final authority in all matters related to the ceremony and the implementation of the parish wedding guidelines. Please advise your professional wedding consultant of this regulation.

*You shall know they are
Christians by
their Love*

General

GUIDELINES

The space in the Sanctuary is limited. To maintain the Roman Catholic liturgical spirit of noble simplicity, the wedding party should be held to a reasonable number of participants. Children involved in the wedding ceremony should be at least five years old. Your marriage ceremony will take place in Sacred Space. Accordingly, dress for the bride, groom, and entire wedding party should reflect a spirit of modesty, dignity, and decorum. The Bride's Room will be available for the bride and her attendants to change clothes.

The consumption of alcohol anywhere on the Church grounds or buildings is strictly forbidden at the time of the rehearsal or wedding. It is the responsibility of the wedding Couple and their families to make this fact known to all the members.

Music

Wedding music should meet the standard defined by the Wedding Music Directives of the Diocese of Birmingham and be approved by Mrs. Amy Hains, Music Director of Saint Mark the Evangelist Church (SME). She will meet with you, and assist you in selecting music that meets these guidelines. For your convenience, you will be given a copy of the SME Wedding Music Repertoire list to aid in your selection.

The Music Director will designate an SME keyboard accompanist for the ceremony. She will also be responsible for obtaining any additional musicians or vocalists for the wedding. All musicians and vocalists need to be approved by the parish Music Director in order to participate in the wedding ceremony, and are to be scheduled through her. Outside musicians and vocalists may need to attend a music rehearsal the Friday evening before the wedding to coordinate with the SME accompanist and Music Director. Musicians and vocalists should come prepared; it is not the responsibility of the accompanist or Music Director to teach music.

Soloists and musicians will perform from the choir loft. Cantoring (leading the congregation in song) however, will be done from the front. The Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation are always to be sung and lead by a cantor. For a Mass, since the Mass parts are to be sung, the same cantor will be needed. The Music Director offers complimentary cantoring, or if you prefer, she will designate another SME cantor for the ceremony (not complimentary).

A format for the wedding program will be provided by the Music Director at your initial meeting. It is recommended that Mass parts and hymns that are to be sung, be included in (or alongside) the printed program to encourage your congregation's participation. A copy of the final program needs to be emailed to the Music Director for review before printing.

Music plans must be finalized at least six weeks before the scheduled date for the wedding.

Wedding

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal sets the tone for the ceremony the next day. Please ask your parents, attendants, and all who have a specific role in the wedding to arrive fifteen minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin. Only those people who have specific responsibilities in the wedding liturgy should come to the rehearsal. If you have additional guests invited to the dinner afterward, please ask them to meet your party at the dinner.

Your rehearsal should last no longer than an hour. Parking is available in the lot around the Church, and you may enter the Church through the side entrance at the Porte Cochere.

Sacred

SPACE

The Church is sacred space. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in every Catholic Church, dedicating it to God's presence. Anything done for the wedding must reflect and respect this reality.

Therefore:

The guest book should be placed at the reception.

The receiving line should take place at the reception.

All floral arrangements must be approved by the Wedding Director.

The wedding flowers, placed in the church for God's greater glory, are to remain there for that purpose.

Bows may be placed on the pews, but must be attached by such a method that the pews are in no way damaged. Insurance prohibits the use of lighted candles as pew markers. Unity candles are not part of the Catholic wedding ceremony and will not be allowed at Saint Mark the Evangelist. Nothing should be placed or hung on the church doors. There are hooks on each side of the door if there are decorations outside. During the Easter Season (Easter Sunday to Pentecost) the base of the Paschal Candle must be decorated with a candle ring and flowers.

The placement of liturgical furnishings is legislated by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and is not negotiable. All furnishings in the sanctuary will remain in their original position.

Potential hazards dictate that:

1. Rice and/or birdseed may not be thrown on the Church Grounds;
2. We do not allow loose flower petals anywhere in the Church or on the premises. The flower girls may have flowers in a basket. No petals are to be thrown. Loose flower petals cause a hazard on the floor.
- 3.. An aisle runner may not be used.

Photography

To maintain the sanctity and dignity of the occasion, Photographers will follow these directives:

- Photographs may be taken before the wedding, but the Church must be cleared thirty minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin.
- A flash picture of the bride may be taken as she comes down the aisle at the beginning of the ceremony.
- A flash picture of the bride and groom may be taken as the couple comes down the aisle at the end of the ceremony.

No flash may be used during the ceremony.

- The photographer is not to move around the Church during the ceremony.
- No pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary (Altar area) during the ceremony.
- Pictures may be taken (*without flash*) from the balcony during the ceremony.
- A video camera may be set up in the balcony. Photographers should check with the music Director regarding placement of video equipment in the balcony.
- A remote video camera may be set up at the back sacristy door or beside the columns near the altar, but with no video spotlight.
- All picture taking schedules should be approved by the Wedding Coordinator. Please note that the church schedule on Saturdays includes the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 2:30-3:30PM and a Saturday Vigil Mass at 4:00PM. Photographs in the church are not allowed during these times.
- Photograph sessions after an evening wedding must be concluded within thirty minutes.
- Videographers should check with the Wedding Coordinator for guidelines on procedure during a wedding.

FEEES AND STIPENDS

USE OF THE CHURCH FEE

Parishioners are to pay use of the Church fee of \$750 at the time the wedding is scheduled, and \$500 to be paid six weeks prior to the wedding for music.

Non-parishioners and parishioners of less than one year at the time of booking are to pay a use of the Church fee of \$1,750 at the time the wedding is scheduled, and \$500 to be paid six weeks prior to the wedding for music.

The use of Church fee includes a wedding coordinator, custodian, and if having a Mass, a sacristan; music fee for a traditional wedding includes music director/cantor and a keyboard accompanist.

Weddings that include custom music features such as additional musicians and vocalists will have the fees adjusted accordingly.

A stipend for the priest is optional and customary since he does not receive any part of the other fees paid at the time the wedding is scheduled.