

*There was a wedding in Cana...  
and Jesus had also been invited...*

*John 2:1-2*



*Saint John the Beloved Church  
Wedding Booklet*

Cover Image: Marriage at Cana, c. 1500, Gerard David  
Revised: 9/20/19 by JD

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**NOTE: A PARISH COORDINATOR WILL  
BE ASSIGNED TO EVERY WEDDING.**

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## **Congratulations on your upcoming marriage!**

The faith community of Saint John the Beloved Parish is happy to help you with the necessary preparations for your wedding. This booklet is designed to help you plan a beautiful and meaningful wedding liturgy in conjunction with your parish priests, deacons and parish staff.

Marriage is an important step in your life. For the bride and groom, it is a time of mature discernment, commitment and responsibility. It is a decision that declares your call in life, your vocation. It not only affects your own two lives but definitely affects the family, friends, community, Church, world... In other words, your wedding has far reaching lasting effects.

For Catholics, marriage is a sacrament; the outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. More than a contract, marriage is a covenant that reflects the unconditional love that Christ has for His Church.

Your participation in a “Church” Wedding is more than tradition or custom. It says to everyone that it is a holy state of life and that you invite Christ into this marriage. And how blessed you are! Today’s complicated world cannot depend alone on natural resources to truly survive. For better or for worse takes divine grace.

The front cover depicts an image from our patron saint’s gospel. Saint John tells us in Chapter 2 that *“there was a wedding in Cana... and Jesus had also been invited.”* At that reception, the host ran out of wine for his guests. Embarrassed for the couple, at His Mother’s pleading, Jesus takes six jugs and miraculously turns their contents of ordinary water into the best of wine.

May your invitation to Christ for your wedding truly bless your marriage.

## **Church**

Engaged couples should complete our online Wedding Form to initiate communication at least one year prior to the anticipated wedding date. Upon receipt, a church representative will respond within 1 week of the online submission. Only after confirmation from a priest or deacon can a date be confirmed for the wedding.

Saint John the Beloved Church is available at the following time for your wedding ceremony:

Fridays	Evenings (except Lent)
Saturdays	10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Note: On the day of the wedding, the church will be available to the couple for one hour before and one hour after the ceremony. No weddings will be scheduled during the weekends of Carnival, Palm Sunday and Easter, nor the weekend before Christmas.

## **Clergy**

If you wish a relative or friend, who is a priest or deacon to officiate, we are happy to give permission. We ask that he provides the marriage instructions and does the paperwork if he lives in the area. Likewise, in an ecumenical marriage, an outside minister may be invited to participate in the ceremony.

## **Marriage Preparation Process:**

A considerable amount of time, effort, energy and money is spent preparing to celebrate appropriately your wedding. The Diocese of Wilmington has designed a three-part, year-long process to assist couples in this preparation:

1. Sessions with the priest/deacon
2. Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter
3. Parish-Based small group session.

## **Wedding Offerings**

For the use and upkeep of parish churches and in respect for professional services, the following schedule reflects current practice in Roman Catholic parishes throughout the Diocese of Wilmington:

1. \$350 fee for weddings of which a \$150 deposit fee (nonrefundable if cancelled) is due with 7 days of submission of our online Wedding Form at [SJBDE.org](http://SJBDE.org). The balance is due 60 days prior to the wedding date.
2. Parish Wedding Coordinator                      \$125
3. Music fees are set by the musicians. All music must be approved by the Parish Director of Music in accord with diocesan guidelines.

You may wish to make a personal gift to the officiating priest or deacon. The amount of the gift is at your discretion.

## **Witnesses**

There are no restrictions to the religious faith of the best man, maid/matron of honor or attendants. However, in the State of Delaware, the witnesses must be at least 18 years of age.

## **Rehearsal**

The rehearsal date and time is set with the priest/deacon and marriage coordinator. The Thursday or Friday prior to the wedding is the usual time for rehearsal. The rehearsal is a serious time for preparation. All wedding party members and guests should be reminded our church is a sacred place of worship. We ask that the entire wedding party be present, including readers and parents.

The following is to be brought to the rehearsal:

1. Marriage License
2. Programs/Worship Aids
3. Guest Book

## **Documentation**

In preparing for your marriage, certain documents must be presented to the priest or deacon:

1. Baptismal Certificate (requested from the parish where baptism took place and issued in the last six months) for both Catholic parties. If one is non-Catholic, a copy of the original is sufficient.
2. Anyone under 18 years of age must have prior permission from the Bishop before setting a marriage date. In addition, the consent of parent(s) or guardian(s) must be obtained.

## **Choice of Ritual**

The Catholic Marriage Rite provides a rich selection of Scripture readings and prayers. The priest or deacon will provide you with a book which contains the selection from which you may choose. It is recommended that if both parties are practicing Catholics, the celebration of marriage take place within a Mass. However, if one of the parties is not a Catholic, the Rite Outside of Mass is suggested. Please take the time to consider prayerfully your choices so that your wedding may have a deeper meaning for you and for all present.

## **Liturgical Music**

The Marriage Rite is a Sacrament of the Church. All of the music before, during and after the liturgy reflects the Christian meaning of the vocation.

Three guidelines are offered to help in selecting music for the liturgy:

1. Connect to the sacred to reflect the praise of God.
2. Include sacred music that is familiar and welcoming to all.
3. Invite your guests to sing in this prayerful setting.

Our parish is blessed with highly skilled music ministers, any of which you may request. Dr. Lisa Papili-Carlsen is the Director of Liturgy and Liturgical Music for our Parish and will assist you in preparing for your wedding liturgy.

## **Parish Wedding Coordinator**

At St. John the Beloved Church, a Parish Wedding Coordinator is required. This individual will assure that all aspects of the sacramental celebration flow properly. The

coordinator will prepare the church as well as organize procedures and help conduct the rehearsal. A Wedding Coordinator hired by the couple does not take the place of the Parish Wedding Coordinator. The responsibilities of each are mutually exclusive.

## **Flowers & Decorations**

All church decorations for the Liturgical Year (e.g. Easter, Christmas, etc.) cannot be moved and remain in the church for the wedding ceremony. If you marry during Lent, flowers are to be kept at a minimum due to the nature of the penitential season.

Flower arrangements may be placed in the sanctuary, although placement of these arrangements is contingent on the ceremony. If there is another wedding on your date, you may wish to share floral expenses. Only plastic clips are permitted to be attached to the pews for decorations.

It is customary to leave the flowers after the wedding for the weekend Masses.

## **Photography & Videography**

The taking of photographs is permitted provided that the photographers are discreet. Professional videotaping is also permitted. A permanent station is preferred. No pictures may be taken in the middle aisle or in the sanctuary. Pictures may be taken after the ceremony for one half hour.

## **Marriage License**

The State of Delaware requires a Marriage License which may be obtained from the **Office of the Clerk of the Peace** in the City County Building located at 8<sup>th</sup> and French Street in Wilmington, Delaware. Call (302) 571-7590 or visit their website in advance for hours.

The license must be obtained at least 24 hours prior to the hour of the ceremony. The license is good for 30 days in which the couple is to marry. Please bring it to the rehearsal.

## **Not Allowed**

- Unity Candle (more appropriate at the reception)
- Aisle Runners
- Scattered Flower pedals
- Rice, Bird Seed, Confetti, Balloons, Sparkles
- Food or Drink
- NO alcohol is permitted on the property

## **NOTES:**

## **Alcohol & Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed in the bridal room or any other area of the church. Absolutely no alcohol is permitted on church property. The priest reserves the right to cancel the wedding in the event alcohol is found on the premises, or if any member of the wedding party has been drinking prior to the wedding. Use of alcohol prior to a wedding may invalidate the marriage.

