

# ST. EDMOND PARISH WEDDING POLICY

*Since marriage is a public act and both the Church and the State have requirements, we offer these guidelines to help you prepare for your wedding. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call the Pastor, Fr. Gil Dutel, at St. Edmond Roman Catholic Church (337-981-0874).*

## **Civil Requirements**

Louisiana Law requires:

1. Obtain a marriage license from Clerk of Court Office no more than 30 days nor less than 72 hours BEFORE wedding;
2. Ceremony and license needs to be witnessed and signed by the celebrant, the bride and groom, and two witnesses BEFORE the wedding.
3. Cost for the marriage license is determined by the Clerk of Court's office.

## **YOU MUST BRING THE LICENSE TO THE WEDDING REHEARSAL.**

Clerk of Court information: 337-291-6335

Address: 800 S. Buchanan St., Lafayette, LA 70501

Web Site: [www.lpclerk.com](http://www.lpclerk.com)

Weddings in the Catholic Church are part of the public worship of the Church community. As a couple, you will be able to make this community celebration “your own” by choosing the members of your wedding party, selecting the Bible readings and your readers, choosing your musicians and appropriate music, and deciding who will celebrate the *Rite of Marriage*.

## **Church Requirements**

The first interview with the Priest or Deacon will be about 6 months prior to the wedding date that has been set through the Pastor and will deal with basic family and faith history information. You will receive further information concerning Diocesan requirements at this initial interview.

At the initial appointment you are to **bring** a recent copy (issued within the last 6 months) of your Baptism and Confirmation Certificates. These may be obtained from the Church of your Baptism. If some of the information is missing, please contact the Church from which you received each sacrament. A non-Catholic Christian should submit to the Church a record or statement indicating the date of Baptism in that particular faith.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is *recommended* for Catholics but is not a pre-requisite for marriage.

NOTE: Weddings dates will not be booked more than 12 months before the desired wedding date for non-parishioners or anyone who has been a registered/contributing member of St. Edmond Parish for less than 12 months.

## **Marriage Preparation Programs**

Every couple is **required** to take part in a marriage preparation program. Currently there are three different programs offered. The Priest will guide the couple in choosing the right program. However, prior to attending one of the marriage preparation programs (which are listed below), the couple must participate in the “Prepare and Enrich” program which will be discussed with them by the priest at the initial visit.

- The first is called **Catholic Engaged Encounter**, a weekend program designed to give the couple planning marriage an opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together, their strengths and weaknesses, their desires, their ambitions, their goals, their attitudes concerning money, sex, children, and family and their role in the Church and in society. This weekend is designed to be a private face-to-face encounter for each couple. For more information about **Catholic Engaged Encounter** visit the website [www.lafayettecee.org](http://www.lafayettecee.org). *For weekend availability contact Jimmy & Tammy Bergeron at 337-706-8880.*

After visiting with your priest, you may register using the form given to you by him. Also, through the Diocese of Lafayette website, you can either [REGISTER ONLINE](#) or [DOWNLOAD THE FORM](#).

- The second program is called **Foundation For A Successful Marriage** and is a one-day program – usually held on Saturdays or Sundays – offering a more abbreviated program on the issues related to marriage and communication.
- In addition, a special program, “**Refocus in Christ**,” is offered by the Diocese for couples who wish to validate a civil ceremony or for cohabitating couples with children.

For further information on “**Engaged Couples Conference**” and “**Refocus in Christ**”, please contact the *Office of Family Life Ministry* at the Diocese of Lafayette, 337-261-5653,

An on-line “**Marriage Preparation Program**” is available under special circumstances to be determined by the Pastor.

### **Follow-up visit with the Priest**

After the couple participates in the Marriage Preparation Seminar, they are to contact the Priest performing the ceremony for the follow-up meeting. Bring the Marriage Seminar certificate to this meeting. Further meetings will be at the discretion of the celebrant and the couple.

The obligation of the Church’s ministers (Priests and Deacons) is to witness the marriages of those couples who have fulfilled all canonical requirements. This obligation does not mean that Mass must be celebrated with the wedding ceremony.

### **Weddings “With Mass” or “Without Mass”**

The Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated, either “with” or “without” Mass. Every pastor in this diocese has the authority from the Bishop to decide the conditions under which marriage will be celebrated either “with” or “without” Mass. Below is the policy adopted here at St. Edmond’s by the current pastor:

#### **“With Mass”:**

1. Only when one of the couple to be married is a life-long parishioner of St. Edmond’s (or family has been long-time parishioners) will Mass be celebrated.
2. Mass will be celebrated in the Ordinary Time of the Church’s year and the Easter Season, but not during Advent or Lent.
3. Mass may be celebrated for non-parishioners when the wedding is not on a Saturday evening.

**“Without Mass”:**

Weddings will be celebrated “without Mass” when:

1. One of the parties is not Catholic.
2. When the couple to be married have been cohabitating and have a child or children together, OR, when one or both of the couple have children by a previous relationship or marriage.
3. For the validation of a civil marriage.

*If your celebrant is not with St. Edmond Parish, he must contact our Pastor, Fr. Gil Dutel, for a Letter of Delegation granting permission for the visiting Priest or Deacon to celebrate the Rite of Marriage at St. Edmond Church.*

**Wedding Date and Time**

Weddings at St. Edmond Church are scheduled on Friday evenings (EXCEPT First Fridays of the month) and Saturday mornings or afternoons, no later than 1 pm. Special permission is sometimes given for Saturday evening weddings. The wedding may include the “*Nuptial Mass*” with communion or may be a “*Rite of Marriage*.” The “*Rite of Marriage*” includes the Entrance Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the exchange of vows and blessing of the rings, Prayers and Blessings, and the Concluding Rite. Both are valid and appropriate ceremonies.

According to Diocesan policy, a Saturday “*Nuptial Mass*” performed after 4 pm Mass can be considered a Vigil Mass only during certain times of the year – Ordinary Time (mostly summer) and during the post-Christmas season (January), as well as the Easter Season. An evening “*Nuptial Mass*” is not permitted on the weekends of Advent, Lent and certain Feast Days that occur throughout the Church’s liturgical calendar.

St. Edmond does not favor scheduling weddings during the Advent or Lenten seasons. The Pastor will guide you in choosing a date and time according to your preference for a ceremony with or without a Mass.

**Definition of “Parishioner” and “Non-Parishioner”****Parishioner**

Parishioners will receive priority and will be able to set their wedding date 18 months in advance.

“*Parishioner*” indicates that either the bride or the groom (or their parents) has been a **registered AND regularly contributing member** of St. Edmond Parish for more than 12 months. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. do not establish one as a parishioner.

**Non-Parishioner**

Currently, the “Non-Parishioner” fee for use of the Church is \$600. Non-parishioners may book their wedding no sooner than 12 months before the desired date. Should the wedding not take place and you have already paid the fee, you will be refunded your money except for \$50.

**LITURGICAL GUIDELINES****Music**

- Sacred music ONLY is performed during the ceremony. No pop songs, songs from musicals, or inappropriate literature for music is allowed during the ceremony. Save these for the reception.
- Some secular music is permitted as ‘prelude music’ before the bridal procession. A list of the music to be used MUST be pre-approved by the celebrant at least two (2) weeks prior to the wedding.

- The couple is free to choose their own musician(s). The Pastor has a list of available local musicians, if needed.
- Appropriate times for music are: the seating of the grandmothers and mothers, the entrance of the wedding party, the entrance of the bride, responsorial psalm (song) after the first reading, [if it is a Nuptial Mass, the offertory song, and the communion song], presentation of flowers to the Blessed Mary and the mothers, and the recessional.

### **Flowers and other decorations**

- The Sacrament of marriage is a sign of God's love and faithfulness. We encourage simplicity in décor and restraint in spending. **The beauty of the wedding is your love. Let that be what stands out.**
- Please have your florist check with the Wedding Coordinator two (2) weeks before the wedding to find out when the Church will be available for decoration. ***The Wedding Coordinator has the authority to reject arrangements*** that do not meet the specifications of the Church.
- **Décor in the alcoves on either side of the tabernacle may NOT be moved.** If the couple desires to use the alcoves as part of their wedding décor, then the floral arrangements **MUST** be left for all weekend Masses. Contact the Wedding Coordinator two (2) months prior to the wedding concerning availability.
- If additional flowers will be donated to the Church for the weekend, please let the Wedding Coordinator know within two (2) weeks of the wedding.
- Silk or artificial flowers are **not permitted** in the sanctuary. Fresh roses to the Blessed Mother and to the mothers are permitted.
- Pew décor **MUST** be attached with elastic or ribbon only. An 'aisle runner' is NOT permitted nor are trellises or arches permitted in the aisle.
- Candelabras can be used only in the sanctuary. If they are used, **non-drip candles** with non-breakable chase candle tubes or globes **MUST** be used. Candles may NOT be used down the center aisle.
- Throwing of rice, flower petals, bird seed, glitter, etc. as part of the ceremony, inside or outside the Church building, is **expressly prohibited**.
- While the use of a **Professional Wedding Consultant** may prove helpful in some instances, his/her responsibilities cease at the Church door and are continued as soon as the bridal couple exits the Church. The Priest or the Church's Wedding Coordinator (Maria Allen: 337-298-3124) is responsible for working with you on the wedding rehearsal and the liturgy. You are responsible for paying Maria \$100 (without Mass) or \$150 (with Mass) for her services.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Alcohol is forbidden on the Church campus. Any wedding party member found with alcohol will be asked to leave the campus immediately. Please **do not bring soda or any food items or water bottles** to the rehearsal or to the wedding. There is a water fountain in the Church should you need it.

**Please designate a family member or friend to collect the unity candle (if used), remove the wedding décor from the pews and any other decorations used to celebrate your wedding.** This person should check the Daily Chapel and the Vesting Sacristy for items that may have been left by the bride, the groom, or other members of the bridal party. Additionally, **this person should gather up any floral debris that may have fallen from the bouquets** or other floral items used, as well as any wedding programs that may be left in the pews. This is important because the Church must be kept presentable for Mass.

### **Photography**

Most couples want to remember their wedding in the form of pictures. We offer the following guidelines:

- Picture-taking of groups inside the Church should be **completed one half (1/2) hour before** the ceremony begins.
- Picture-taking **after the ceremony is limited to 30 minutes** and is to include the bridal party only. In this case, instruct the wedding party to exit the Church nave and, **immediately**, re-enter through a side door to avoid being delayed by the guests.
- Discretion is the key to a good photographer/videographer. Please have him/her remember that a Catholic nuptial ceremony is a sacred event and his/her movements should not distract from the religious ceremony underway.
- Generally, there are two times when movement of the photographer during the ceremony is required: during the procession of the bride and her attendants and during the exchange of vows. ***Entrance into and movement within the sanctuary area (altar area) is NOT permitted.***
- **DO NOT** enter the Sanctuary during Communion time. Pictures of the bride and groom receiving Communion are to be captured from the side.
- Normally, there will be only one (1) photographer and one (1) videographer allowed. (A second photographer/videographer **MUST** remain in the rear of the Church.)
- It is the responsibility of the photographer/videographer to **remove all equipment, film packaging, etc.**, as soon as the ceremony is over.

### **Rehearsal**

- **BE PROMPT.** The rehearsal will begin at the scheduled hour with or without the entire wedding party.
- Rehearsals are usually scheduled the day before the wedding and must be confirmed with the Church calendar.
- All members of the wedding party – bride and groom with their parents, their attendants, ushers, readers, (servers and Extraordinary Minister if providing them for a Nuptial Mass) – are to **attend the rehearsal**. Prepare for a rehearsal of approximately 45-60 minutes. The Priest/Deacon celebrant and/or the Wedding Coordinator will be present for the rehearsal.
- **It is expected that all present will display reverence and decency when in St. Edmond Church.**
- **Remember** to bring with you the marriage license from the Clerk of Court Office.
- Food, drinks of any kind, gum chewing, bottled water, candy, etc. are **NOT** allowed in the Church at any time ***nor is alcohol*** allowed anywhere on the Church grounds.

### **Wedding Dresses for Bride and her Attendants**

This is a delicate matter which will be discussed while meeting with the priest or deacon.

### **Guidelines for Attendants**

The maximum number of attendants – bridesmaids/groomsmen – is eight (8) each. Junior attendants, maid/matron-of-honor, and best man are included in this number. The flower girl and ring bearer are not. The **minimum age required** for flower girl or ring bearer is four (4) years of age and/or the discretion of the celebrant.