

WEDDING CEREMONY PROCEDURES

St. Paul Catholic Church in accordance with Pastoral Guidelines for Marriage Preparation
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee of Florida.

All couples must meet with a priest or deacon prior to securing a wedding date at St. Paul Catholic Church. All contact regarding wedding planning/scheduling must be made by the bride and groom.

These policies are effective as of January 14, 2025.

REQUIREMENTS

It is with profound awareness of the richness and beauty of the sacrament of marriage that the Catholic Church throughout the State of Florida has written a Common Policy for Pastoral Marriage Preparation.

1. Catholics must present a baptismal certificate dated within six months of the wedding date.
2. Both bride and groom must complete, individually, under oath, and in the presence of a priest, a prenuptial questionnaire known as the "A" form.
3. Two relatives (preferably parents) or friends of each party must sign individually, under oath, in the presence of a priest or deacon, the "B" form to declare the freedom of each party to marry.
4. All couples will take the FOCCUS Questionnaire as a means of determining strengths and weaknesses regarding readiness for the Sacrament of Matrimony.
5. A marriage preparation course is mandatory for ALL COUPLES whether one or both are Catholic. The couple is encouraged to attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend. The Pre-Cana conference will also meet this requirement if the Engaged Encounter Weekend is an impossibility.
6. If there has been a former marriage, both the Marriage Certificate and the Death Certificate or Declaration of Nullity must be produced.
7. In a marriage of mixed faith, the Catholic party alone is to make a written or verbal promise to attend to the Catholic upbringing of all children born of the marriage. The non-Catholic is made aware of the Catholic's responsibility in this matter. In the case of a mixed faith marriage, the wedding ceremony does not include Mass.
8. If a priest other than the local parish priest is to perform the ceremony, he must have the pastor's permission. If the priest is from another diocese, his diocese must provide certification that he is a priest in good standing with his diocese.
9. As a general rule, the marriage takes place in the parish of the bride (if she is Catholic). If the marriage is to take place elsewhere, a letter of permission is to be obtained from her pastor.
10. The Catholic party should attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) before marriage.
11. A non-Catholic minister may take part in the Catholic wedding ceremony but cannot officiate.
12. Under no circumstances are beach, garden, home, theater, etc. settings permitted for the celebration of the sacrament. It must take place in a Church.

PLANNING THE CEREMONY

Together with the Wedding Director, the couple will plan prayers, readings, and wedding format prior to the rehearsal. The Wedding Director will fulfill the role in helping plan the details for the wedding ceremony according to the church, liturgical, and social etiquette. We do not use outside wedding coordinators in the planning and execution of the wedding ceremony. The Wedding Director will conduct the rehearsal and guide the wedding ceremony.

Weddings are typically scheduled on Saturdays at 2:00 pm. Weddings may also be scheduled on Fridays between the hours of 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm. However, weddings may occur any day of the week with the exception of Holy Week at which time no weddings are scheduled.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are typically scheduled at 5:00 pm on the day prior to the wedding ceremony. All who are taking part in the ceremony must attend the rehearsal. This includes Readers and Gift Bearers if they are involved. The Wedding Director will conduct the rehearsal.

MUSIC

Arrangements for ALL music must be made through the Wedding Music Director, Mrs. Elaine Payne. Music for the wedding ceremony should be liturgical in nature and be able to lead the congregation in prayerful participation. Mrs. Payne will make suggestions and assist in planning music selections. She should be contacted as soon as a wedding date has been set and secured.

MUSICIANS/VOCALISTS

Our parish music ministry employs talented organists, pianists, instrumentalists and vocalists who are available to accompany the ceremony. Usage of our parish musicians and/or cantors is included in the wedding fee. Outside musicians and cantors must be approved by our Wedding Music Director. Any additional cost to secure outside musicians and cantors is the responsibility of the couple.

DRESS

All attire for the bride and bridesmaids must be modest. Bare shoulders and backs, and low-cut fronts are not appropriate for the sacredness of a Church wedding liturgy.

FLOWERS

Floral decorations present in the church during Christmas and Easter may not be removed. Flowers are allowed in specific areas of the church. At no time are flowers placed on or above the altar. Fresh flower petals and aisle runners are not permitted in the church, however, artificial petals may be scattered on the aisle as long as they are removed immediately after the ceremony. Only minimal flowers (bouquets and boutonnieres) are permitted during the Lenten Season.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

Picture taking and video must not interfere with the ceremony at any time nor block the view of the altar. At no time will photographers be permitted into the altar area for photos during the ceremony. It is the couple's responsibility to advise their photographer/videographer that they must check in with the Wedding Director prior to the ceremony for specific instructions. No flash photography is permitted during the ceremony.

CHILDREN

If you choose to have a flower girl or ring bearer, we encourage you to select children who are at least five years of age. Please note that the rings for the ceremony will be placed near the altar prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

MISCELLANEOUS

Birdseed, rice, confetti, bubbles, etc. are not permitted in the Church or on the parish grounds which includes the school and parish center. Food and drink are not permitted in the church sanctuary. A cleaning fee will be assessed to the couple for failure to return the church and grounds to order after the ceremony.

ALCOHOL

At no time is alcohol permitted on the premises before the wedding ceremony nor is any member of the wedding party to consume alcohol before the ceremony. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the cancellation of the wedding ceremony.

PARISH RECEPTION SPACES

For rental inquiries, please contact:

Sherry Vo

Parish Events Manager

vos@stpaulcatholic.net

WEDDING DEPOSIT

When your marriage request has been approved by a priest, a \$500 refundable security deposit is required to set the date on the church calendar. Payment may be made by check or online. The security deposit will be refunded after the wedding provided all rules are followed and no additional compensation is needed.

WEDDING FEES

All wedding fees are due 30 days prior to the wedding date. The church usage fee compensates our parish staff including the priest stipend, musicians and ministers involved in the preparation and execution of the wedding ceremony.

For parishioners of St. Paul: \$1,700 (\$500 Deposit + \$1,200 Fee)

(A parishioner is someone who has been an active, registered member of the parish for at least one year, or whose parents are active, registered members.)

For non-parishioners: \$2,700 (\$500 Deposit + \$2,200 Fee)

I have read and agree to abide by these procedures.

Bride

Groom

Date_____