

SAINT MARY CATHEDRAL WEDDING/FACILITY GUIDELINES

Revised March 2016

Introduction

We are honored that you have chosen to hold your wedding ceremony at the Cathedral, and it is our prayer that the ceremony will begin a lifelong walk of faith in the company of our Savior. As you begin the preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony, be assured of our prayers and support. These guidelines are designed to assist in the planning of your wedding at the Cathedral. We ask that you read carefully through the following paragraphs.

General Guidelines

Marriage License: The couple is responsible for obtaining the marriage license.

Marriage License Waiting Period: There is a required 3-day waiting period between the time a marriage license is obtained and the ceremony. The marriage ceremony may not take place during the 72-hour period immediately following the issuance of the marriage license.

It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your marriage preparation programs. We recommend that you complete all the required programs at least three months before the wedding date.

All members of the wedding party must be at least 5 years old.

Decorum

We ask that you and your guests honor the sacredness of the Cathedral, where our parish gathers for worship:

- please speak quietly, when necessary;
- bring no food or drink into the church;
- do not chew gum;
- do not run;
- do not stand on pews or chairs, even while taking pictures.

The pews in the Narthex serve as a hospitality area designated for families with small children. The area is not sound proof.

The use of alcohol in the Cathedral or on Church property at any time, by members of the wedding party or guests, is not allowed.

Smoking is not permitted in any of the Cathedral facilities, including the Bride's Room. Smoking is permitted in public courtyards and outdoor areas at least 50 feet from any building entrance. Please dispose of cigarette butts appropriately. It is the responsibility of smokers to dispose of their own cigarette butts, not the grounds staff.

The Cathedral assumes no responsibility for items that are lost or left in any building. It is recommended that purses and items of value **NOT** be left in the Cathedral. It is also recommended that couples designate a friend/family member to do a walk-through of the Cathedral at the conclusion of the ceremony to gather items guests may have forgotten.

Locking the doors during your wedding or keeping out visitors other than your guests is not in keeping with Christian hospitality or civil ordinances. Our Wedding Monitor will monitor the activity of all visitors to ensure that the sacredness of the wedding ceremony is respected.

Wedding Attire

Wedding gowns, attendant dresses and guest attire should be modest in nature befitting the sacred character of the celebration in the Cathedral. Gowns and dresses with bare midriffs, short dresses/skirts, high slits, skin-tight outfits, plunging necklines or backless gowns are not dignified or appropriate for the wedding rehearsal, Marriage Rites and/or Mass.

Saint Mary Cathedral is a small, historic church. We have private space, the Alma Hanson Bride's Room, for the bride and some attendants to wait prior to the ceremony, but not to dress. Restroom facilities are limited; there are restrooms next door on the exterior of the Cathedral Office/Rectory Building.

It is recommended that the wedding party arrive dressed at least 30 minutes before the wedding ceremony.

The Cathedral dedicates the large Sacristy to the left of the Sanctuary for the groom and groomsmen to wait prior to the ceremony. However, there are no dressing facilities for men at the Cathedral, therefore groomsmen should arrive dress ready for the wedding.

Flowers and Environment

The Cathedral is a sacred place, the House of God, and all guests whether Catholic or not are asked to demonstrate respect and reverence for the Cathedral. Because the Cathedral is the home church of the Bishop of Austin, there are specific details we implement to preserve the sacredness of our Cathedral church. These include:

- Pew decorations/aisle markers must be secured by the use of ribbon only—tape, tacks, or hooks are not permitted. Pew decorations/aisle markers are removed immediately after the wedding ceremony.
- For reasons of safety and liturgical appropriateness, aisle runners are not permitted.
- The tossing of flower petals in the aisles is not permitted.
- For reasons of safety, candles are not used in the nave of the Cathedral.
- Because Unity Candles are not part of our Catholic Wedding Ritual, they are not permitted.
- Bringing in of additional furniture and candelabras or candle holders are not permitted.
- Due to space constraints in the narthex, guest books are not permitted.
- The adornment of the exterior of the Cathedral or the narthex is not allowed.
- Objects may not be tossed in the air as the bride and groom leave the Cathedral. This includes the throwing of birdseed, confetti, rice, glitter, flower petals; blowing of bubbles; and lighting of sparklers.
- Props and signage are not permitted in the Cathedral.

The seating capacity of the Cathedral is 450.

The floral fee is included in your Wedding Fee and is used to provide flowers for your wedding liturgy. These flowers are placed on the high altar and go on either side of the tabernacle. Understand that your wedding is being celebrated within the context of sacred worship—we are not able to honor special floral requests.

- Your Wedding Fee does **not** include a bouquet for the presentation of flowers to Our Blessed Mother, this is not mandatory.
- You may use your own florist or our house florist for your floral needs.

Photography

Because a wedding is worship, we ask that all who work at Saint Mary Cathedral, including photographers and videographers, act in a professional manner, respecting the sacredness of the ceremony and the assembly gathered in prayer. During the ceremony, picture-taking should be unobtrusive and respectful. If videotape equipment is used, it should be set up in a stationary place out of the sight lines of the assembly. Photographers may not use the balcony.

Respecting the schedule of other weddings or church functions, the church can be made available for picture-taking after the ceremony. We recommend that photographers and videographers visit the church prior to the ceremony to become familiar with the surroundings and lighting conditions. During the procession, photographers/videographers must be unobtrusive and not obstruct or hold up the movement of the minister and wedding party.

During the ceremony, those taking pictures may not:

- be in the sanctuary (the altar area)
- stand in front of the first pillar on the side aisles
- stand in front of the last occupied pew in the center aisle
- be positioned between the couple and the priest
- stand on the pews or chairs
- use flash or flood lights during the ceremony
- use any theatrical spotlights already positioned in the church without prior written approval

Post ceremony photographs are limited to twenty minutes immediately following the conclusion of the wedding ceremony, flash and additional lighting may be used during this time. Photos that include jumping, posing in staged positions are strictly prohibited inside the Cathedral Church. These photos are appropriate for the reception venue, alternate location or outside the Cathedral Church.

Videographers may not change or add to the microphone system. The bridal couple is responsible for acquainting the photographer/videographer with these guidelines.

Before the wedding, please remind family members and friends to refrain from taking photos during the ceremony.

Wedding Rehearsal and Wedding

The Rehearsal

The rehearsal allows those involved in the wedding to become familiar with the ceremony, the environment of our church building and the roles they will assume in the liturgy. Please let them know that it is important that they be at the rehearsal and be on time. Everyone in the wedding party and individuals who will have a part in your wedding liturgy are required to be at rehearsal. Lectors should also be present. Musicians are not usually at the rehearsal.

The Cathedral is the House of God and sacred space, all guests are asked to demonstrate respect and reverence. The pews in the Narthex serves as a hospitality room designated for families with small children.

Saint Mary Cathedral is an active parish church with numerous activities, events, and sacraments being celebrated in the Cathedral therefore punctuality is of the essence. We usually have multiple rehearsals on a given day, so if your party is late, only minimal parts of the service will be rehearsed. Please remind members of the wedding party to allow ample time for congested traffic and difficult parking conditions. Rehearsals and wedding liturgies need to begin on time. Rehearsals are scheduled the Friday before the day of the wedding, unless otherwise noted due to scheduling at the Cathedral.

- If your wedding is scheduled at 2:00 pm, your rehearsal is at 5:00 pm
- If your wedding is scheduled at 4:00 pm, your rehearsal is at 4:15 pm
- If your wedding is scheduled at 7:30 pm, your rehearsal is at 6:00 pm

Rehearsals are conducted by the priest or deacon officiating your wedding with the collaboration of the Cathedral Wedding Monitor.

Bring the marriage license, certificate and envelope for the officiant honorariums and honorariums for others to the rehearsal. Saint Mary Cathedral staff will ensure the license is returned to the appropriate county clerk office.

Parking

Wedding guests are encouraged to take advantage of complimentary parking in Capitol Tower Garage, located across the alley, behind the Cathedral. Capitol Tower Garage is accessible via San Jacinto Blvd. Guests may validate their parking tickets on Level 2 either before or after the wedding ceremony. This is not the responsibility of the Wedding Monitor, failing to validate your parking ticket will result in a charge by parking management.

- Guests may park on level 6 or above
- During non-school hours, the elevator lowers to level 2
- Proceed to gym area
- Validator located to the right with instructions for self-validating
- Walk thru gym area across alley into breezeway to access the Cathedral.

Handicap parking spaces are available in the alley, accessible via Brazos Street.

We do not provide overnight parking. Vehicles left in the alley after 9:00 p.m. or in the garage may be towed. The Cathedral is not responsible for any costs incurred by your guests due to towing fees, failure to validate or lost parking ticket.

Responsibilities of the Cathedral Wedding Monitor

A Wedding Monitor will be assigned to your wedding. The Wedding Monitor is your point of contact for planning your wedding liturgy and facilitating any last minute questions about your upcoming wedding.

The Cathedral Wedding Monitor's responsibilities include:

- contacting the bride and groom to offer assistance with the logistical planning of their wedding liturgy,
- answer any questions you may have regarding the wedding liturgy and serve as a 'troubleshooter' for you,
- coordinate the wedding rehearsal,

- assist clergy with setup and preparation of the wedding liturgy,
- assist the wedding party with the coordination of rehearsing and wedding schedules, giving processional and recessional cues, and directing the ushers,
- coordinate with photographer and/or videographer to ensure they are aware of Cathedral Guidelines and answer questions that may arise,
- ensure punctuality for all aspects of the wedding: rehearsal, ceremony, and taking of photographs after the wedding liturgy,
- ensure wedding party compliance with Cathedral Wedding Guidelines.

The Cathedral Wedding Monitor will be present for the Wedding Rehearsal and is available an hour before your Wedding Liturgy on the day of your wedding.

If you have hired the services of a wedding or event planner, please understand the Cathedral Wedding Monitor has primary responsibility for the rehearsal, ceremony and any corresponding events at the Cathedral.

The Wedding Monitor is not responsible for any matters regarding flowers, other than ensuring altar arrangements are set up properly, and that any Blessed Mother offering is in its designated place prior to your Wedding Ceremony.

It is recommended that you ask your wedding/event planner or another individual to be responsible for the distribution and pinning of boutonnieres, bouquets, corsages, etc.; setting-up and removal of pew markers which do not belong to the Cathedral; as well as cleanup and removal of all personal effects left in the Alma Hanson Bride's Room after it has been used by your bridal party.

The Cathedral is not responsible for any items left in the Alma Hanson Bride's Room or Cathedral after your wedding party has left the Cathedral campus.

Wedding party responsibilities:

- Arrive on time to rehearsal and wedding.
- Corsages and/or boutonnieres, etc., place in the back of the Cathedral; these are your responsibility not the wedding monitor. Assign someone to hand these out and pin.
- Removal of pew markers; removal of personal effects, etc. from sacristy, Cathedral and brides room, assign someone to handle immediately after ceremony, facilities staff need to ready areas for the next event.
- Altar/sanctuary and sacristy access; reverence/respect for place of worship, especially with photographs
- No food or beverage other than water in the Cathedral, sacristy, and bride's room.
- Ensure no smoking at entrances of Cathedral facilities, especially the Cathedral Church.
- **Ensure guests understand alcohol on premises is not permitted.**

Professional Wedding Planners

If the bride and groom choose to hire a professional wedding or event planner, the wedding/event planner does not have a role in the rehearsal or the actual wedding liturgy. The Cathedral Wedding Monitor operates under the guidance and direction of the Cathedral Rector and clergy. The Wedding Monitor is there to ensure the wedding party and guests maintain the highest modum of decorum deserving of all Catholic liturgies.

We invite the wedding/event planner to assist the Cathedral Wedding Monitor with the understanding that he/she is there to assist. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to communicate this expectation to the hired wedding/event planner.

Refund Policy

- A full refund will be issued if cancellation is received at least six months in advance of the schedule date.
- If a cancellation notice is received between three and six months prior to the schedule date a partial refund will be considered pending receipt of letter of circumstances.
- No refund will be given if the cancellation notice is received less than three months prior to scheduled date.
- Pending circumstances, you may request consideration to reschedule within a year from the original scheduled wedding date.
- A cancellation notice stating the reason for the request must be received from the bride or groom, in writing.

CATHOLIC WEDDING ETIQUETTE

Announcements and Invitations

The Catholicity of the event is often times a nice way to express to your guests that they should expect a religious ceremony rather than a social event. A tasteful way of communicating this is to include the name of the Priest or Deacon on the invitation.

Stipend

It is traditional that the couple offers a gift to the Priest or Deacon after the wedding. This gift is normally commensurate with the size of the wedding and the amount of preparation time the Priest/Deacon has dedicated to the event. You are not bound to offer a stipend.