



*Cathedral-Basilica  
of St. Louis King of France  
And  
St. Mary's Church  
New Orleans, LA  
Wedding Guidelines*

Dear Bride/Groom to be:

Welcome to the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis King of France/St. Mary's Church! We are happy to do all that we can to help you to prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage. Marriage is a most serious and sacred commitment. We, at the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church, are delighted you have chosen to bring your commitment before God and His people by having a Church wedding. We wish to help you prepare not only for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, but also for a permanent, joyful, and faith-filled married life.

Our marriage policy is intended to offer an overview and to clarify any questions you might have concerning the Sacrament of Marriage and how it is celebrated at the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church. Please take the time to review this policy. After you have reviewed it, return the application and the signed contract with the necessary deposit. After we have received your forms and deposit, we will confirm the date and time of your wedding.

Finally, be assured of our prayers that God's abundant blessings will be with you as you prepare for this most holy Sacrament of Marriage.

Sincerely yours in Christ and His Blessed Mother,



Very Rev. Philip G. Landry  
Rector

## ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL/ST. MARY'S CHURCH MARRIAGE POLICY

**“AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION, GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE; FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME AS ONE. THEY ARE NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE FLESH. THEREFORE, LET NO MAN SEPARATE WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER.” MK 10:6-9**

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In these words, the Gospel of St. Mark summarizes the teachings of Jesus concerning marriage. Jesus not only insisted that the original design of His heavenly Father for marriage be preserved, but He sanctified marriage for His followers by giving them the Sacrament of Matrimony. The love of man and woman is made holy in Christian marriage. St. Paul tells us that the love of a Christian husband and wife reflects the love of Christ for the Church. Christian marriage has an added dimension, the sharing of the supernatural life which is first received in baptism.

The Church has consistently taught that marriage is a personal relationship involving a lifelong commitment to a shared life that is both intimate and faithful. A relationship lacking these qualities is not considered a true marriage. But once a true sacramental marriage has been established, only death can sever the marriage bond. It should be noted that annulments granted by the Church do not terminate truly sacramental marriages, but rather declare that marriages presumed to be sacramental were never true and binding due to some impediment that existed from the beginning of the union.

In accordance with the aforementioned teaching of the Church and in support of the marriage preparation policy currently in effect in the Roman Catholic dioceses of Louisiana,

The Cathedral/St. Mary's Church issues the following policy for marriage preparation and enrichment:

Preparations should begin six months before the wedding. A couple desiring to marry must fill out an application for marriage at least six months in advance of the wedding day.

Exceptions to this six month waiting period will be made only in light of serious extenuating circumstances. Reserving a date and time for the wedding on our calendar does not automatically assure the couple's readiness for sacramental marriage. Definitive wedding plans should not be made nor contracts entered into until this determination of readiness is made by the priest/deacon, which is usually after the discussion of the pre-marital inventory (FOCCUS).

Before submitting your application, you should decide which priest will prepare you for marriage. It is preferred that the priest or deacon who prepares you will also preside at the wedding. He will be responsible for obtaining all dispensations and documents needed. The marriage preparation program will consist of: interviews with the priest or deacon, the administering of a premarital inventory (FOCCUS), attendance at one of the Archdiocesan approved marriage preparation programs, a planning session for the wedding ceremony, and finally, the wedding rehearsal.

The priest or deacon must be in good standing in his diocese and have proper ecclesiastical faculties from that diocese. He must also be registered in the State of Louisiana as an authorized minister of marriages.

A confirmation is needed (fax, phone, letter) from the priest or deacon that he is assuming responsibility for your marriage preparation before a wedding date can be scheduled tentatively. Weddings are never scheduled tentatively until this confirmation is received. A follow up call by the couple is highly recommended to make sure your tentative date is being held.

Couples living outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans should be prepared by their parish priest or deacon. The procedure is the same as above. If an out of town couple is not able to arrange for a member of the clergy to officiate, the Cathedral Wedding Director will assist in procuring the services of a priest or deacon of the Archdiocese. Please note that the stipend for the priest or deacon is not included in the Church fees. A stipend of \$250.00 should be presented to the celebrant prior to or at the time of the wedding.

At least one party must profess the Catholic religion. Profession of faith implies some practice of religion such as prayer, attendance at Mass and reception of the Sacraments. Since Christian marriage is a sacrament, it is the responsibility of the priest or deacon to ascertain that the parties are properly disposed to receive the sacrament.

A written letter from the pastor of the bride's or groom's church parish, or from the Catholic party's parish (mixed religion), is required for parties who reside outside of the Cathedral parish.

Marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic is permitted by the Church with proper dispensation. In order to obtain dispensation, the Catholic party is required to promise that he or she will continue living his or her faith in the Catholic Church and will do all in his or her power to have the children baptized and

reared as Catholics. Special permission to celebrate the wedding ceremony of a mixed-religion couple within the context of the Mass must be obtained by the priest or deacon preparing the couple for marriage.

Pre-marital pregnancy is not sufficient reason for marriage. An assessment will be made as to the intention to marry prior to pregnancy and the current circumstances of the couple before a decision is made to perform the ceremony. In any event, a marriage will not be performed without thorough preparation.

If a couple attempts marriage contrary to the laws of the Church before a judge or non-Catholic minister, validation of the marriage is permitted only after proper preparation.

The following fee applies for weddings:

Cathedral/St. Mary's Weddings.....\$2950.00

A non-refundable deposit in the amount of \$1500.00 must be paid at the time the church is booked. Please make check payable to St. Louis Cathedral if wedding will be held at the Cathedral and payable to CCHC if wedding is to be celebrated at St. Mary's church. The balance is due at least two months prior to the wedding.

## STATEMENT OF WEDDING POLICIES

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1. Times for weddings are as follows:

**St. Louis Cathedral**

- Saturday weddings at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. or 7 p.m., Monday through Friday weddings at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., except for the Church's Holy Days of Obligation, other special liturgical days, and major civil holidays.

**St. Mary's Church**

- Monday through Saturday weddings at 3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., except for the Church's Holy Days of Obligation, other special liturgical days, and major civil holidays.

2. To initiate the reservation process, the couple must complete the Marriage Application and Marriage Contract included in this handbook and return them to the Cathedral office with the necessary deposit. Please make check payable to St. Louis Cathedral if wedding is to be held at the Cathedral and payable to CCHC if wedding is to be celebrated at St. Mary's church. **(Please note that you must have the name and address of the preparing priest or deacon in order to make a reservation).**
3. Your Wedding date is not secure until the signed contract and deposit have been received. After documents have been received, your wedding date will be secured. If you choose to mail your documents and fee, it is advised that you call your Wedding Director to confirm that they have been received. You are welcome to come to the Rectory Monday through Friday from 9am to 12 noon and 1pm to 3:30pm if you wish to hand deliver them.
4. Rehearsals are ordinarily on the eve of the wedding. Because it is necessary to place the church under electronic security at night, rehearsals are to begin promptly and be conducted expeditiously.
5. The Cathedral Wedding Director is responsible for overseeing all documentation and paperwork required for the wedding. She/he is also responsible for meeting with the couple to make certain that the couple understands and follows proper liturgical, Archdiocesan and parish guidelines and policies for a wedding liturgy. This Director will be present to supervise the rehearsal and will be present at the wedding liturgy. Any outside wedding consultant has no role in the liturgy or in the Cathedral. The fee for our Director's services is included in the Cathedral fee.
6. The liturgy must be that of the Roman Catholic Church's Rite of Marriage and in accord with the Guidelines for Weddings of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We strongly recommend using the book *Together for Life* which can be secured from the priest or deacon who is preparing you for Marriage.

Kneelers are provided in the sanctuary for the bride and groom, best man and maid or matron of honor (4). The additional members of the wedding party are seated in the first pew of the church.

7. Music and singing have always been an essential element of the wedding liturgy. All music selected for weddings is to be recognized liturgical music. Some classical music is also acceptable. Couples must make arrangements with Mr. Jesse Reeks, the Cathedral Music Consultant, 504-450-7303. For St. Mary's Church Weddings, couples must make arrangements with Mr. Dreux Montegut, Director of Music, 504-812-5836. All music must be approved by

Mr. Reeks and/or Mr. Montegut, and they will be present for the wedding. The stipend for this service is included in the wedding fee. Couples are required to use the service of a Cathedral Cantor to lead the congregational singing during a wedding liturgy, whether it includes Mass or not. The stipend for this service is also included in the wedding fee. Other singers and musicians may be used for solo selections (at the couples' expense) but must be approved by Mr. Reeks or Mr. Montegut at least three months before the wedding.

8. Couples are to arrange for their own photographer and florist. Photos and videos are welcome, provided they do not become a distraction during the liturgy or impede the movement or flow of the liturgy. Photographers may enter the sanctuary, but are limited to the choir stalls area. Photographs are permitted on a limited basis in the church after the wedding at the discretion of the Wedding Director.
9. Decorations may be brought in one hour before the wedding. Please note these restrictions:
  - no kind of adhesive is to be used on the pews or any church furnishings;
  - any candles must have protective glass around them; unity candles are not allowed.
  - no pews or aisles are to be blocked or cordoned off in any way at any time;
  - no aisle runner;
  - rice, flowers, confetti, bird seed, etc. are prohibited for maintenance and safety reasons;
  - any seasonal decor already in the Cathedral must be left in its place.

It is not necessary to leave flowers in church, but if you wish to do so, your offering is greatly appreciated.

10. The online selection form from *Together for Life* ([togetherforlifeonline.com/selectionform/](http://togetherforlifeonline.com/selectionform/)) should be completed and returned to the Wedding Director one month prior to your wedding.
11. The Cathedral does not provide any parking for rehearsals or weddings. Please advise your guests that they will be utilizing public parking lots in the area.
12. A New Orleans police officer will be on the premises for your wedding. The cost of this security is included in your wedding fee.

Due to the difficulty of arriving at the Cathedral, we strongly recommend that you arrange for a police escort. Absolutely no buses, minibuses or vans will be permitted by the Cathedral or the police on the Jackson Square mall in front of the Cathedral. Only limousines may enter the mall area in front of the Cathedral, Cabildo and Presbytere. You may contact Selby Securities, LLC at 504-234-8072 for escort services and second line parades.
13. These historic churches need and deserve constant maintenance and repair. Every effort is made to clear the church of all materials prior to our liturgies, but at times scaffolding or curtains may have to be left in place while repairs are being made.
14. At no time are food and beverages to be brought into any part of the Cathedral or St. Mary's Church or anywhere on the Cathedral premises. Smoking is not allowed at any time. There should be no drinking before or during the rehearsal or the wedding. ***(It should be noted that there are no restroom facilities in the St. Louis Cathedral.)***
15. The police officer on duty for your wedding will only allow invited guests access to the inside of the Cathedral during your wedding. However, the gift shop and the votive candle area in the vestibule of the Church will be open to visitors.
16. On Saturday afternoons, the Sacrament of Penance is celebrated at 4:00 p.m. Any wedding still in progress at that time is not to impede penitents from entering the church for this Sacrament.

*These guidelines, along with those of the Archdiocese, are intended to serve as a means to allow us to work closely with you in a cooperative way to assure that your wedding day is the day you desire, while respecting the liturgy of our Church and the many demands placed upon our Cathedral schedule. We pledge to do all we can to assist you in planning for and celebrating this special event.*

# MARRIAGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

## REQUIREMENTS FOR BRIDE AND GROOM

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not less than 6 months in advance of the anticipated date of the wedding, the couple should meet with the priest or deacon who will be preparing them for marriage to begin the marriage preparation as required by the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Within 6 months of the wedding date, the couple should request newly issued baptismal certificates from their church of baptism to present to the priest or deacon preparing them for Marriage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ One month prior to wedding, having completed the wedding liturgy plans with the priest or deacon, submit the online information form from *Together for Life* to the Cathedral Wedding Director.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Within one month of the wedding date, obtain a marriage license from the state of Louisiana. It is your responsibility to bring this license to the wedding rehearsal. A wedding may not be performed without this license.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARING PRIEST OR DEACON

- \_\_\_\_\_ Preparer or Officiants with faculties within the Archdiocese of New Orleans are expected to guide the engaged couple through the marriage preparation process required by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Required documents are:
  - Prenuptial Inquiry - Should be completed, signed, and documented with your church seal.
  - Dispensations - Necessary for any previous marriages and/or mixed religions
    - A marriage between a catholic and non-baptized person must obtain a dispensation from Disparity of Cult and may not be celebrated within the context of Mass.
  - Baptismal Certificates
  - Certificate of Marriage Preparation Program Attended
  - Pastor Permission Letter – From the Pastor of the bride or groom or the Catholic party's parish (mixed religion) for couples who reside outside the Cathedral Parish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Officiants outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans must obtain a Testimonial Letter of Suitability from the respective Ordinary of his diocese or Major Superior of his religious congregation. This testimony must be sent to Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond and a copy to St. Louis Cathedral/St. Mary's Church, New Orleans, LA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Preparer or Officiants from another diocese preparing couples outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans must send all the necessary documents to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of New Orleans for review and approval.

- \_\_\_\_\_ A letter of delegation for marriage will be sent to the Officiant once all the documents are received at the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church no later than three weeks prior to the date of marriage. Officiants are expected to be present to direct the rehearsal with the assistance of the Wedding Director of the Cathedral/St. Mary's Church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Officiants residing in another state must register with the state of Louisiana to perform the civil aspect of the marriage. The procedure for registration is on the website of the Archdiocese of New Orleans under Downloads in the Chancellor file.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Officiants are expected to return the civil marriage license to the appropriate Clerk of Court.



## APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE

**REQUESTED DAY/DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**REQUESTED TIME**

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHURCH PREFERENCE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation by: \_\_\_\_\_

Officiant: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (C): \_\_\_\_\_ (H): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Church of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been married before? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known your fiancé? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do wish to be married in the Catholic Church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (C): \_\_\_\_\_ (H): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Church of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been married before? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known your fiancé? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do wish to be married in the Catholic Church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## MARRIAGE CONTRACT

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*Please Print*

Name of Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Day, Date, and Time of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

Day, Date, and Time of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

Preparing Priest/Deacon (Name, Address, & Telephone No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Officiating Priest/Deacon (Name, Address, & Telephone No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### COMPLIANCE

We, the undersigned, agree to accept all of the policies and conditions outlined in the wedding handbook. We also understand that if for any reason during our marriage preparation our priest or deacon finds that he cannot, in good conscience, witness our marriage, the Cathedral/St. Mary's is under no obligation to return Church fees or reschedule our wedding.

Signature of Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_