
Wedding Policies and Guidelines



ST. MARY'S PARISH

1453 Old Shell Road
Mobile, Alabama 36604
www.stmarymobile.org
251.432.8678

All weddings held at St. Mary's Catholic Church must be scheduled through the Church Office. No wedding will be scheduled until a celebrant (priest or deacon) has agreed to officiate at the wedding and deposit has been paid. Once a date and time for the rehearsal and wedding have been reserved, please do not make any changes without first consulting our office.

WEDDING FEES/SCHEDULING

The fee for the use of St. Mary's Catholic Church is \$900. If the bride or the groom (or the parents of the bride or groom) is an active, tithing parishioner of St. Mary's Catholic Church with records of contributions dating a minimum of 1 year prior to the date of the wedding, there is no fee.

St. Mary's Catholic Church will provide the services of an on-site coordinator/sacristan for both the rehearsal and the wedding (the fee for the on-site coordinator/sacristan is included in the fee for the wedding). The on-site coordinator's role is to prepare the church for the liturgy and assist the celebrant. The on-site coordinator will assist the bride and groom with planning the various aspects of the wedding ceremony. (Trish Agee, St. Mary's Wedding Coordinator, tagee@stmarymobile.org, 251-599-3456)

To schedule a wedding, first contact Jessica Martin at the parish office (251-432-8678 ext. 4) to check available dates. Then complete the contract and submit the non-refundable deposit to St. Mary's Parish Office or make a one-time donation on our website (no deposit for active, tithing parishioners). The balance of the fee will then be due 2 weeks prior to the date of the wedding. Checks should be made payable to St. Mary's Catholic Church, 106 Providence St., Mobile, AL 36604.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Parties are asked to select their own lectors and, at weddings with a full Mass, their own gift bearers. The altar servers can be family members or St. Mary's can provide them.

The rental fee for the church does NOT include an honorarium for the priest or an honorarium for the altar servers (\$20/each in cash). It is advisable to take care of these honoraria the night of the rehearsal.

ORGANIST/MUSICIANS FEES

For well over millennia, music has provided spiritual enhancement to the liturgy of the Catholic Church. At St. Mary's, we aspire to have the highest quality music for this special occasion in your life. Careful attention is taken when selecting music and musicians. The following are guidelines that will make music planning for your wedding as easy as possible.

- St. Mary's Wedding Music Director will be responsible for all music and musicians for services. To make an appointment, call Dr. Collin Lowery at 251.380.8774 or clowery@stmarymobile.org at least six weeks prior to the wedding to determine music, singers, and instrumentalists needed. All musicians will be hired by the Music Director. Only musicians approved by the Music Director and the Pastor of St. Mary's may perform in church services.
- All music performed in Catholic weddings must be sacred, or absolute music that is appropriate for the liturgy. The "*Bridal Chorus*", or "*Here Comes the Bride*" by R. Wagner, and "*Wedding March*" by F. Mendelssohn are not allowed because of the secular subject matter associated with those pieces. Below suggestions for appropriate music for Catholic Church services can be found. There are other options, though additional fees may apply for the preparation needed for non-standard repertoire. *All music must be approved by the Music Director*, and cannot be secular popular music, and cannot be selections from movies, operas, or musicals. The music director reserves the right to reject any piece of music for any reason.
- St. Mary's Director of Music has first choice for performing all wedding music when the organ is required. The fee for the staff organist is \$450. If the organist is needed to attend and play the wedding rehearsal, a fee of \$50 will be added. *If an outside organist is wanted, a \$50 bench fee payable to Dr. Collin Lowery will be incurred.*
- Musician fees should be paid in full and given to the on-site coordinator at the rehearsal. It is customary to be paid in cash or check. *Music will not be performed without advanced payment.* Fees for singers and instrumentalists differ, but are approximately \$100-\$250 per service for most instrumentalists, and \$50-\$100 for most vocalists.

WEDDING MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

Consult Dr. Collin Lowery at clowery@stmarymobile.org.

TIMES

Weddings may be scheduled on Saturdays late morning, early afternoon and early evening times. Should there be more than one on any particular Saturday, we require at least 3 hours between start times. Weddings are not scheduled on dates that conflict with official events or liturgies at St. Mary's Catholic Church, on Christmas Day, Easter, or Holy Week. Rehearsals are typically held on Fridays between 4:00pm and 7:00pm. However, during Lent, they cannot be scheduled at 5:30pm due to Stations of the Cross in the church.

DOCUMENTATION AND CELEBRANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Weddings performed at St. Mary's Catholic Church must comply with the sacramental regulations of the Archdiocese. When you schedule your wedding, you will be required to provide St. Mary's Catholic Church with the name, parish and address of the celebrant.

In addition, you must provide the names and addresses of any other priests or deacons who will be participating in the ceremony. The Archdiocese requires all priests and deacons from outside the Archdiocese of Mobile to be issued a Testimony of Suitability from their bishop or religious provincial. It is the responsibility of St. Mary's Catholic Church to obtain that prior to your wedding; therefore we require the name of the parish and address of all priests and deacons participating in your marriage ceremony on your reservation form. Your reservation cannot be finalized until the parish office has the approval from the Archdiocese that any priest or deacon outside of Mobile has a Testimony of Suitability on file. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the priest or deacon from outside the Mobile Archdiocese to be denied participation in your wedding.

The celebrant, or his delegate, is responsible for completing all pre-nuptial investigations, requests for dispensation, Engaged Encounter verification, etc. The celebrant will take responsibility for the sessions of matrimonial preparation required by the Archdiocese of Mobile. The celebrant must send all wedding paperwork to St. Mary's Catholic Church. As of August 29, 2019, the marriage license from the State of Alabama is obtained without the involvement of the celebrant nor St. Mary's Parish. It is entirely the responsibility of the bride and groom.

It is the task of the celebrant to ensure that all liturgical and sacramental regulations are followed. However, questions as to music, photography, flowers, etc. can be discussed with the on-site coordinator, keeping in mind any restrictions contained in the wedding guidelines for St. Mary's Catholic Church or the Sacrament of Marriage guidelines of the Archdiocese of Mobile. It is the responsibility of the celebrant to insure all policies are enforced.

It is highly recommended that you plan your liturgy carefully, including selecting the readings well in advance and printing them out for your readers.

Your celebrant should work with you on this and all other aspects of your liturgy.

SEASONAL FURNISHINGS AND DECORATIONS

During the various liturgical seasons, the church will have appropriate liturgical furnishings and decorations. For example, during Advent, violet will be the background color and an Advent wreath will be present; in Lent, violet will also dominate; and green will be the color in Ordinary Time. At Christmas there will be a large Christmas crèche as well as other Christmas décor. As these appointments to the liturgical environment are seasonal, all weddings should be planned with these decorations in mind.

PARKING

Parking for weddings at St. Mary's Catholic Church can be found along the south side of the Church itself as well as in the St. Mary's School gated parking lot. All McGill-Toolen Catholic High School parking lots are available on the weekends as well.

FLOWERS AND CANDLES

Simple and tasteful flower arrangements may be used to decorate the church. Only live flowers and plants may be used. The use of tape, tacks, or glue to secure flowers to altars, pews, or windowsills is strictly forbidden, as is the use of any other fasteners that could mar wood or marble surfaces. Nothing can be placed on the brass candlesticks on the altar or reredos. Any wreaths, ribbons, or decor not belonging to St. Mary's Parish are to be removed immediately following the wedding. Flowers placed on the altar should remain in the church after the wedding except during the Lenten season. It is your responsibility to designate an individual who will remove such items from the church.

No additional candles may be brought to the altar, nor any existing candle stands be moved as the air and heat will only blow them out. Candle illuminators with globes may be clamped to the pews, but no bags filled with sand, etc. may be used inside or outside the church. Unless your wedding falls on a high feast or solemnity, the only candles to be lit are the candles directly on the main altar.

There is a possibility that another wedding is scheduled before or after yours. Recognizing this, florists must be informed of when they would have access to prepare the church prior to the scheduled time of your wedding.

POSED PHOTOGRAPHS

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Mobile that during the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, no posed pictures are to be taken in the church before or after the ceremony. With the consent of the priest or deacon officiating, pictures may be taken during the ceremony in a discreet manner

that does not interfere with the sacred character of the occasion. Prior to the recession of the bride and groom, the photographer may come forward and photograph all of the wedding party in the sanctuary.

As per archdiocesan policy, drone photography is not permitted inside nor outside the church.

THROWS/RUNNERS

As per Archdiocesan policy, no rice, confetti, birdseed, or flower petals may be thrown either inside or outside the church. In addition, aisle runners are not permitted.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is NOT permitted at any time in the church or on the grounds of the church. *This applies to the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony itself.*

Any member of the wedding party who is intoxicated will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony, including the bride or groom.

PRIE-DIEU (KNEELER), UNITY CANDLE AND SEATING

The church prie-dieus (kneelers) are for your use and will be placed for you. St. Mary's Catholic Church seats 600 people.

The use of a unity candle is not permitted in St. Mary's Church. However, there is a venerable tradition of placing a flower at the feet of the Blessed Mother either after the exchange of vows or after Holy Communion.

DRESSING AREAS

There are no dressing areas in St. Mary's Catholic Church. Two small restrooms are located in the vestibule of the church.

REHEARSAL

The sacristan/on-site coordinator will be present during the rehearsal at St. Mary's Catholic Church to set up microphones, chairs for the wedding party, etc. It is advisable to have your readers present at the rehearsal so they may practice with the microphone and become familiar with the acoustics of the church. You are asked to be prompt for your rehearsal time as the priest and on-site coordinator will be awaiting you. Average time for rehearsal is 45 min. to 1 hour. Extra time will not be added on to the allotted 1-hour time frame if your wedding party is late.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGE

Any damage incurred during the rental of the church—including damage done by outside musicians to the organ, piano, or sound system—is the responsibility of the bride and groom.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This contract is entered into between the bride and groom and St. Mary Catholic Church. We are available and happy to answer questions from the bride and/or groom about logistics for the wedding liturgy; however, we cannot accept calls from a wedding coordinator/planner since they are not a party to this contract. Should you have any other questions after reading these policies, please contact our office at 251.432.8678 x4 or email Jessica Martin, jmartin@stmarymobile.org. Mailing address is St. Mary's Catholic Church, 106 Providence St., Mobile, AL 36604.