

St. Martin de Tours Wedding Policies and Procedures



Rev. Fr. Jason Vidrine
Pastor

337-394-6021/337-654-4194

Weddings in the Catholic Church are part of the public worship (Sacred Liturgy) of the Church. These guidelines are meant to help you prepare. Since Marriage is a public act, both Church and State have certain requirements. While these guidelines are not meant to be restrictive of your right to plan your wedding, they nonetheless reflect the fact that we do, as Catholics, have certain structures, usages, and rituals that are to be respected.

We ask that you read over these guidelines. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call us for clarification. We want to serve you as well as we can and to help you make both your Marriage ceremony and the preparations leading to it as joyous, pleasant, and prayerful as possible.

(1) You must meet with the Celebrant of your Marriage at least six (6) months prior to the desired wedding date. **It is appropriate for the Celebrant to be the Priest or Deacon of the bride's or groom's church parish.**

(2) If one or two of the parties wanting to be married is seeking a Declaration of Nullity (annulment), Diocesan policy states that a wedding date cannot be set until the Declaration of Nullity has been granted.

(3) When you meet with the Priest or Deacon who will be celebrating your wedding, he will explain to you how to register for one of the Diocesan Marriage Preparation courses. ***Diocesan Marriage Retreat or Online classes*** **AND FOCUS or Prepare and Enrich**. Upon completion of the Marriage preparation course, and *FOCCUS* or *Prepare and Enrich*, you will need to submit to the office of St. Martin de Tours the Marriage preparation certificate and *FOCCUS* or *Prepare and Enrich* evaluation. **For more information, visit the Diocese of Lafayette website at www.diolaf.org.**

St. Martin de Tours Church strongly encourages the couple to be married to attend the **Natural Family Planning** class sponsored by the Diocese of Lafayette and the Couple to Couple League. For more information or to schedule the class please call the Office of Family Life of the Diocese (337-261-5653) or visit the Diocese of Lafayette website at www.diolaf.org.

You should make a second appointment with the Celebrant at least one month prior to the wedding. Be prepared to discuss with him why a Sacramental Marriage is important to you and to talk about your understanding of the commitment you will make to each other in the Sacrament of Marriage. Readings from Sacred Scripture, which you have selected, should be submitted to the Celebrant at that time. Also, please have available for approval a draft of your wedding program if you plan to have one.

(4) Upon securing your wedding date and time with St. Martin de Tours, you will be required to provide the office of St. Martin de Tours with recent copies of both your Baptismal and Confirmation certificates. Certificates must be dated within one year of the date of the wedding. To obtain a recent copy of the certificates call, write, or visit the church where you received the Sacraments and request a copy.

NOTE: If either the bride or groom is not a Roman Catholic, the non-Catholic party will need a Baptismal certificate or letter from the church of Baptism stating when and where the Baptism occurred.

(5) In light of special circumstances, such as a pregnancy or if one of you is under eighteen years of age, or for other reasons as well, both of you may be asked to undergo further evaluation to help you determine your readiness for this Sacrament.

(6) The Church very strongly encourages the bride and groom to take advantage of the Sacrament of Penance prior to the wedding.

ST. MARTIN DE TOURS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Nuptial Mass: Setting the Date and Time

Please be aware that there are certain days in the Church's calendar where a wedding Mass cannot be celebrated. In this case, a wedding may take place using the Mass of the day with the inserted Marriage ritual or a Marriage ceremony may take place without a Mass.

Weddings are ordinarily scheduled on Friday at 7:00 p.m. There are no weddings on Sundays. Saturday evening weddings are permitted at St. Martin de Tours. All Saturday evening weddings begin at 6:00pm. Saturday evening weddings take place without a Mass. **Weddings MUST begin promptly at the scheduled time.**

No wedding can be scheduled in the afternoon of the eve of a major feast or on a Holy Day of Obligation. In addition, no wedding can be scheduled on All Souls Day OR during Advent and Lent.

Weddings between Catholics and Non-Catholics

It is customary and normative for there to be NO MASS for a wedding between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. The reason for this is primarily because the Catholic Church does not practice inter-communion. In other words, Catholics are not allowed by the Catholic Church to receive communion in a non-Catholic church and non-Catholics may not receive Holy Communion at a Catholic Mass.

Therefore, to avoid any awkwardness or embarrassment brought about by some receiving and some not receiving Holy Communion, it is best not to have a Holy Mass in such circumstances. Exceptions for a good reason may be made by the Pastor.

In weddings without a Holy Mass, the ceremony is similar to a wedding within a Mass. Such a ceremony would include the opening prayer, readings from Sacred Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows and rings, the nuptial blessing and the final blessing.

Requirements of the State of Louisiana

The Civil Government also has some requirements for marriage. Please obtain your marriage license from the St. Martin Parish Court House. The courthouse is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the Marriage Department is located on the first floor. Only one-person need apply; however, both sets of the following documents must be produced. Each of you needs a certified copy of your birth certificate and a valid driver's license or passport or military I.D. (If you are under eighteen years of age, your parents must sign their consent for you to marry.) If you have been married before, a civil decree of divorce is required; if widowed, a death certificate is required. A cash only fee is charged at the court house.

The marriage license is valid for only thirty days from the date of issuance. There is also a seventy-two-hour waiting period from the time of issuance before you can be married (unless, in a rare case, a judge issues a waiver).

Please make the clerk aware of the date and time of your upcoming wedding to assure you are within the time constraints imposed by the State of Louisiana. Please drop off the license folder and all of its contents to St. Martin of Tours two (2) weeks prior to your wedding.

Maintenance Fee

A maintenance fee is required for all weddings at Saint Martin de Tours Church. This fee helps defray some of the costs associated with operating and maintaining an historical building. The amount of the fee depends on your affiliation with and support of this church parish.

Non-parishioners: a non-parishioner is someone who is not from St. Martinville and not currently residing in the territorial boundaries of St. Martin de Tours:

Fee: \$900.00
Saturday Evening: \$1,500.00

Former parishioners: a former parishioner is someone who grew up in St. Martinville but has moved away AND received Sacraments at St. Martin de Tours Church AND has parents who are still parishioners of St. Martin de Tours:

Fee: \$500.00
Saturday Evening: \$1,250.00

Parishioners: a parishioner is someone who is registered, active and supporting member of St. Martin de Tours OR is under the age of 22 and living with parents who are registered, active and supporting members of St. Martin de Tours:

Fee: \$250.00
Saturday Evening: \$1,000.00

Either the bride or the groom may meet the requirement. All couples who do not fit into one of the above categories will be considered former parishioners for maintenance fee purposes.

The Maintenance fee is due on the first meeting with the Priest/Deacon OR when a wedding date reserved. A wedding date will not be reserved until the Maintenance fee is paid.

Celebrant

If the Celebrant is someone other than a Priest or Deacon assigned to St. Martin de Tours, delegation must be obtained from the Pastor of St. Martin de Tours. The visiting Celebrant must agree to follow the wedding policies and procedures of St. Martin de Tours.

Arrival on Wedding Day

St. Martin de Tours has no dressing room facilities. All members of the wedding party are to arrive fully dressed no more than one hour (60 minutes) prior to the wedding. Arriving in robes, petticoats, or other forms of undress on the grounds of or in St. Martin de Tours is strictly forbidden and is considered indecent exposure in a church.

Wedding Party

The proper place for the seating of the wedding party and attendants is in the nave (four front pews). The attendants will not be allowed to sit in the apse (sanctuary). **Because space is limited in St. Martin de Tours, you are allowed no more than 6 attendants.** Children serving in a wedding should be old enough (at least 5 years old) to understand their participation in the ceremony.

Attendants will join the bride and groom in the sanctuary for the exchange of vows only. All bridesmaids will meet their escort at the pew break or at the back of the church.

Dress Code

The key to proper dresses is **MODESTY** for the bride and the bridesmaids.

NO revealing low-cut neckline for the bride and bridesmaids are allowed.

NO bareback dresses are allowed. (straps across the back of the dress does not cover one's back).

NO strapless dresses for bride or bridesmaids.

Proper length of dresses is to be long enough to cover one's body. That means proper neckline and proper covering of the shoulders. Remember that clothes designers are not concerned with being morally correct. They are interested in the money they can make and are **NOT** concerned as how unfit or improper and immodest the clothes may be for the occasion.

Readers and Ushers

It is recommended that you choose experienced Readers who will be reading from the suggested Scripture readings and Responsorial Psalms found in the Marriage workbook provided by the church.

They must be in attendance at the wedding rehearsal to practice their part in the ceremony. Ushers should also attend to be given specific instructions of what is expected of them.

Altar Servers

Altar servers are not provided for weddings celebrated at St. Martin de Tours. Whether the Celebrant is St. Martin de Tours Clergy or another Priest or Deacon, any arrangements for altar servers must be coordinated with the staff of St. Martin de Tours.

Flowers and Other Decorations

Flowers and decorations can add much to the beauty of your ceremony. All arrangements are to be made with a professional florist who must contact the St. Martin de Tours Parish office at (337) 394-6021 at least two weeks before the wedding to set up an appointment to review the policies and procedures and sign a work permit for your wedding. No decorations are to be hung from the walls and columns of St. Martin de Tours.

The following items are **NOT** allowed at weddings: an aisle runner, candelabra, arches, unity candle, nor glitter of any type (on decorations or ribbons). The florist will be allowed one-half (1/2) hour prior to the ceremony for decorating and one-half hour (1/2) after the ceremony for cleaning. The florist must come with all personnel and equipment needed. The sacristan is available for directions only and to assist the Celebrant.

Sanctuary furniture is not to be moved by anyone.

The use of animals and/or wildlife in St. Martin de Tours or on the grounds is absolutely prohibited (i.e. horse drawn carriages, caged doves, family pets, or exotic animals). **NO** bubbles, scattering of rice, flowers, birdseed, petals, etc. inside or outside the church is allowed. The use of wagons in the opening procession is prohibited.

Because of the age and size of St. Martin de Tours, maintenance is ongoing; therefore, periodically scaffolding will be erected as well as pews removed. Please understand that we will do our best to make it non-obtrusive.

Priority Given for Diocesan and Church Decorations

If your wedding date falls during one of the major Liturgical Seasons (Christmas or Easter) when special decorations are already in the church, or when St. Martin of Tours has been decorated for a Diocese of Lafayette or a parish ceremony, you will not be allowed to change or adjust these decorations for your wedding. These decorations must remain. Weddings are not scheduled during the season of Advent or Lent.

Decorations during the Christmas Season

Because of the special nature of the Christmas season (from the week of Christmas through the Feast of Baptism of the Lord in early January), St. Martin de Tours Parish is solely responsible for decorating the church and no other decorators can obtain permission to decorate at that time. If possible, the wedding party should contribute to the Christmas decoration fund. Contributions can be made directly to St. Martin de Tours Church (337) 394-6021.

Photography

Pictures are nice remembrances; however, the photographer can detract from the sacred nature of the ceremony itself. It is recommended that you engage a licensed photographer. Only ONE official still photographer with hand held camera is allowed for the wedding. TWO photographers are distracting and NOT allowed at St. Martin de Tours. No additional equipment is allowed.

The photographer must contact the office of St. Martin de Tours (337) 394-6021 at least two (2) weeks before the wedding to set up an appointment to review the policies and procedures and sign a work permit for your wedding. Only the official photographer is allowed to take pictures and should arrive no earlier than one-half (1/2) hour prior to the ceremony.

Photographer perimeters are delineated in the work permit. NO EXCEPTIONS. Please let your bridal party, family and guests know this to avoid embarrassment. Photograph sessions are NOT allowed before or after the wedding inside St. Martin de Tours. Pictures can be taken outside St. Martin de Tours before and after the wedding. Pictures CANNOT be taken in St. Martin de Tours Church after the wedding. One group picture of you and your bridal party will be taken during the ceremony. NO photographer is allowed to enter the sanctuary for picture taking. Photographers should dress in a way appropriate to the occasion, males in a coat and tie, females in clothes they would ordinarily wear to a wedding.

Video Taping

If you intend to video tape your wedding, your videographer must contact the office of St. Martin de Tours (337) 394-6021 at least two (2) weeks before the wedding to set up an appointment to review the policies and procedures and sign a work permit for your wedding. It is recommended that you use a licensed videographer. You are allowed to have one videographer downstairs with a self-contained, battery-operated shoulder camera. He should arrive no earlier than one-half (1/2) hour prior to the ceremony. Videographer perimeters are delineated in the work permit.

Video sessions are NOT allowed before or after the wedding inside St. Martin de Tours. Videos can be taken outside St. Martin de Tours before or after the wedding. Video cameras are not to be placed in the sanctuary area. No extra lights are to be brought into the church. If extension cords are needed, the photographer or videographer is expected to provide them. No church plugs are to be disconnected.

Other Regulations

Regarding the florist, photographer and videographer; you are to inform the office of whom you have

contracted with to perform these services for your wedding. A permit has to be signed by all parties one month before the wedding ceremony. Should you decide to change any of these, you will need to notify the office of the cancellation of the original service and the contracting of the new service.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are usually scheduled one or two evenings before the wedding at 5:00, 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. depending on the schedule of St. Martin de Tours.

ONE HOUR is allowed. The rehearsal MUST begin promptly at the scheduled time. If any member of the wedding party is not on time, the rehearsal will begin without him or her.

Only the bridal party, the parents, the Ushers and the Reader should attend the rehearsal. Other guests of the rehearsal supper should go directly to that location.

Wedding Consultants

While the use of a professional wedding consultant may prove helpful in some instances in coordinating the details of your wedding day, his or her responsibilities cease at the church door and are picked up again at the reception. The Celebrant and Sacristan alone are responsible for working with you on the wedding rehearsal and preparing for the Sacred Liturgy.

Liturgical Norms

Liturgical norms must be followed as outlined in the *Rite of Marriage* and in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. All readings are selected from the *Rite of Marriage*. A workbook is provided to help you select your readings.

Music

Our organist will contact you to make the necessary arrangements as soon as your wedding is on the church calendar. It is to be understood that the Organist of St. Martin de Tours is in charge of all musical arrangements and is responsible for the final approval of all musical selections.

Experience has taught us that in order to maintain a style of music that is appropriate to St. Martin de Tours, our own musicians need to provide the music for all weddings which take place here. Therefore, organists from other parishes, family members, or friends will not be allowed to provide music for weddings unless approved by the Pastor of St. Martin de Tours. In such rare cases where a guest organist is used, a bench fee of \$100 to St. Martin de Tours still applies. If our organist must be out of town on the day of your wedding, he will provide for you a substitute with proven skills.

Since weddings are an act of worship, the music chosen must necessarily foster a sense of the sacred and assist those assembled in their prayer. The Church's Documents about Sacred Music decree that musical texts, whether vocal or instrumental, must be either Biblical or Sacramental in nature, free from association with secular or popular music, before, during and after the Sacred Liturgy.

Sentimental favorites from movies, Broadway, or the radio are best saved for the reception where they can be heard in a better context. The acoustics of the building and its formal settings make classical Sacred Music (as opposed to "contemporary Christian music") the most appropriate and ultimately the most successful choice for music at your wedding here. Only live music is permitted; "canned" music from a CD is not acceptable.

The base fee for the organist with no rehearsal is \$250.00, payable at the time of the initial interview with the Pastor. If a rehearsal with other musicians is needed, an additional fee will be added. Rehearsals are scheduled one hour before the wedding; no other times will be considered.

Fees for elaborate music involving choirs, orchestra, etc. are negotiated on an individual basis. Any

additional fees must be paid two weeks prior to the wedding date.

Since the wedding rehearsal is designed to familiarize members of the wedding party with their respective roles during the ceremony, the organist does not attend.

Conduct and Behavior

For both the wedding rehearsal and the wedding you are reminded that St. Martin de Tours is a Catholic Church, a place of worship where the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved. It is not a museum or a rental hall. The conduct and attire of the wedding party and the guests should reflect the sacredness of the place. There should be no shouting, loud noise or improper conduct inside St. Martin de Tours or on the grounds of St. Martin de Tours. **Eating and smoking are not allowed inside St. Martin de Tours.**

It is absolutely forbidden to bring alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs onto the grounds of the Church or inside St. Martin de Tours itself.

DRUNKENNESS OR DRINKING ALCOHOL WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

If any member of the wedding party comes to the wedding or the rehearsal in any form of intoxication, then the wedding may be postponed or cancelled. Inebriation and the disorderly conduct that results from it can ruin your wedding.

The bride and groom will be held responsible for the conduct and behavior of the wedding party inside St. Martin de Tours and on the grounds of St. Martin de Tours. This also includes leaving the church and property neat and clean and free of any damage. Please make your wedding day a happy one and avoid any type of embarrassment to you and your guests.

Transportation

NO TROLLEY CARS WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE FUNERAL DRIVE IN FRONT OF CHURCH. If you choose to have a trolley, pick up and drop off will be on Main Street.

Should you have any questions at any time please contact our parish office at (337) 394-6021 or parish@saintmartindetours.org.

The seating capacity of St. Martin de Tours is 550.

These policies and procedures are subject to change without notice. However, couples will be notified of the changes.

REVISED AND PROMULGATED on July 6, 2021

**Rev. Fr. Jason Vidrine
Pastor**