

Marriage Guidelines

*Journey of Faith
into the
Christian Community*

St. Aloysius Catholic Church

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Preparing for Marriage

In preparing for the Catholic Sacrament of Marriage, the following steps should be followed:

1. Contact St. Aloysius Church to determine the availability of the church for the wedding date(s) you are considering.
2. **BEFORE RESERVING A RECEPTION VENUE OR THE CHURCH**, it is important to **establish the availability of the priest/deacon who will facilitate your preparation requirements and commit to your wedding date!** (*His personal calendar is not the same as the church calendar*). If the clergyman who will facilitate your preparation and officiate at your wedding is not assigned to St. Aloysius, he must contact the St. Aloysius Pastor know **before** St. Aloysius Church can be reserved for your wedding.
3. The priest or deacon committing to your wedding will want to set up a meeting/appointment with you and your fiancé to begin the preparation process, and your first meeting with him should be **SIX MONTHS BEFORE YOUR PLANNED WEDDING DATE** to allow time for completion of the preparation process.
4. Once the commitment of a priest or deacon to your preparation and wedding date has been confirmed, St. Aloysius Church may be contacted about reserving the church (see section below about 'Church Fees.')
5. Follow the instructions of the priest or deacon to complete a relationship assessment instrument with him, and establish with him the additional major preparation element(s) he determines for you, e.g. an *Engaged Encounter* Weekend, *Called To Love* Retreat weekend, In-Parish '*For Better & Forever*' Sponsor Couple sessions, or a combination.
6. Consult with the St. Aloysius Church Worship Director on music, décor, ceremony at least *two months* prior to the wedding date
7. Final meeting with priest or deacon
8. Consult with Wedding Liturgy Coordinator to prepare for rehearsal
9. Wedding rehearsal (*obtain civil license and bring to the Worship Director at the Church office NLT one week prior to rehearsal*)

What is Sacramental Marriage?

Sacraments are special acts of worship which celebrate the presence of the Holy Spirit at particular moments in the life of the community of faith and its members. Sacraments involve a relationship with Jesus and therefore, presume faith on the part of the individual and the community. Christian marriage is a sacrament, the joining together of a man and a woman into a community of love called a family. In the love which binds two in one, the Christian community finds a reflection of the tremendous love of God for us, a love which binds us to God and to each other. Husband and wife confer the Sacrament of Matrimony on each other. In doing this, the two become a source of renewed grace each day and a reminder to each other of God's presence and love.

Marriage Preparation at St. Aloysius

The Church is concerned more than ever for the well-being of married couples and adequate preparation will offset problems that could arise during marriage. Rather than seeming to make it hard to get married, the Church doesn't want your married life to be hard. This is why the Church asks couples to complete a preparation process for the Sacrament of Marriage. It will assure the spiritual and practical understanding of the

Sacrament and God's plan for your married life. The staff of St. Aloysius Church is readily available to assist couples in preparing for marriage and in making plans for the wedding, but the most important preparation is for a life-time of marriage..

Previously Married

Any prior marriages in the history of either party to a prospective sacramental marriage needs to be disclosed to the priest/deacon in one's first communication with a priest/deacon about marriage. A sacramental annulment process may be necessary for either the Catholic or non-Catholic party to a new marriage.

Required Documents

A document needed by the priest or deacon facilitating your preparation is a newly issued certificate of baptism of the Catholic parties to a marriage. It is not to prove they are Catholic, but to document the Catholic party's freedom to enter the Sacrament of Marriage.

Birth certificates are needed to acquire a civil marriage license within 30 days, but not less than 24 hours, from the Clerk of Court, prior to the wedding date. The civil marriage license should be acquired from the civil parish Clerk of Court office where the couple wants the marriage to be recorded. Be sure to visit the website of the Clerk of Court office to learn the fees/documents you must bring to acquire your license. Requirements vary slightly from one civil parish to another.

Your marriage license must be delivered to St. Aloysius Church office at least a week in advance of your wedding.

Natural Family Planning

Information and training in natural family planning is available to all engaged couples, who are urged to consider how they will deal with their mutual gift of fertility and the importance of keeping their relationship life-giving and open to the gift of new life. Information about registering for a natural family planning class is included in the materials provided couples by the priest/deacon preparing them for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Fees

Priest/Deacon. Officiating at weddings is not among the required duties of a Catholic priest or deacon, except at those to which he freely agrees, and he receives no compensation from the Church for officiating at weddings. An honorarium of the couple's choice to the officiating priest/deacon – for his time and effort in facilitating your preparation requirements and the actual wedding ceremony elements – is customary.

St. Aloysius Church. These fees are nominal, and do not cover the costs incurred by the parish for hosting a wedding. However, **no one is ever denied a wedding at**

St. Aloysius Church due to limited financial resources. Please speak directly with our Pastor prior to speaking with other staff about reserving the Church. We are happy to celebrate the weddings of those who cannot afford the fee, provided this is also reflected in the simplicity of the wedding with regard to music, number of attendants, décor, reception venue, etc.

Because of the costs of utilities, staff and custodial expense incurred by the Church, the fee for weddings at St. Aloysius Church is \$575 (\$225 deposit/ \$350 balance due 2 months before wedding) for registered parishioners and/or their children and \$775 (\$425 deposit/ \$350 balance due 2 months before wedding) for non-parishioners. **The non-refundable deposit must be received in the parish office at the time the church is reserved for the wedding.** *(If the priest or deacon who will be officiating at a St. Aloysius wedding is not assigned to St. Aloysius, the Pastor must also receive the written commitment from the priest/deacon to conduct the couple's preparation/wedding, before the church is reserved for the wedding.)*

Summary of Fees

St. Aloysius Church - \$575 parishioners (\$775 non-parishioner) The distinction presumes that registered 'parishioners' are already supporting our regular church operating expenses by their participation in Total Stewardship to St. Aloysius Church, and are subsidizing the extra-ordinary expense of the weddings we host. Our **Wedding Fee** (payable to St. Aloysius Church at least 2 months prior to wedding date)

What IS included:

- Church Usage Fee *(HVAC, Audio, Lighting systems/utilities, custodial & janitorial services)*
- Honorarium to the assigned Wedding Liturgy Coordinator/Rehearsal
- Honorarium to the Church's Worship Director/Organist

What is **NOT** included:

- Honorarium to Officiant/Priest *(couple's discretion, because he not compensated by the Church for weddings he agrees to do)*
- Fees for Cantor/Singers/Soloists - negotiated in advance – made payable to individual(s)

Consultation/Liturgy Preparation Only - \$100 *(for weddings which will be elsewhere)*

Parish Hall Rental – Total cost \$595 which includes:

- Diocesan event insurance fee \$95
- Non-Refundable \$200 deposit at time of booking of Parish Hall
- Final Payment - due two months prior to reception - \$395

The Place and the Officiant

Since Catholic weddings are acts of worship and prayer, in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, celebrations of the Sacrament of Marriage take place in a parish church and are not permitted in private homes, gardens, or reception halls, and are witnessed by a Catholic priest or deacon.

The Sacrament of Marriage should normally be celebrated in the parish church where the bride or the groom is a registered parishioner/member, or the family of either bride or groom is registered and active. Because the waiting period of Catholic marriage preparation is 6 months prior to the date of a wedding, and to keep the church available for the weddings of parishioners, our church may not be reserved by non-parishioners prior to 6 months before the date of the wedding. Professional wedding/event planners may not reserve our church on behalf of a prospective bride or groom. Only the prospective bride or groom personally may reserve the church for a wedding date.

With the permission of the bishop, when one party is an active member of a different denomination or faith tradition, the wedding can take place in the worship place of the non-Catholic party and in the presence of the religious leader of that denomination's community. *(This permission from the bishop is called a dispensation from canonical form..applies to the Catholic party...and the priest/deacon conducting the couple's marriage preparation can facilitate the permission request.)* A Catholic priest or deacon can be invited to participate in the ceremony.

In an interfaith marriage that takes place in a Catholic church, the religious leader of the non-Catholic party may be invited to take part in the ceremony to the extent allowed by Church guidelines.

No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises of St. Aloysius Parish prior to or during the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. A visiting priest or deacon who officiates at weddings in St. Aloysius Church must receive a letter of delegation from the pastor of St. Aloysius Church. The visiting priest or deacon must understand and agree to follow the marriage preparation guidelines of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, as well as the wedding liturgy guidelines of St. Aloysius parish. Furthermore, a cleric from outside the Diocese of Baton Rouge must have the testimonial of suitability for ministry from his own religious superior or bishop before he is able to exercise ministry at St. Aloysius (within the Diocese of Baton Rouge).

Dates and Times

All couples meet with a St. Aloysius Parish priest or deacon before a wedding date is set. At this meeting the couple demonstrates that they understand and agree to follow all parish marriage guidelines. Due to its demand for parish activities and events, the church is reserved for your use 1 hour before the wedding and 1 hour after the wedding. This is the time available for setup, decorating, Photography/videography and clean-up. If additional time is needed before the wedding, this must be scheduled with the parish Worship Director and extra fee may be incurred.

- **Monday thru Friday**, weddings may be held at any hour before 7:30 pm, based on church availability.
- Daytime weddings at St. Aloysius **on Saturdays** may be scheduled at either 10:00 A.M. or 1:00 P.M. *(to help us accommodate a funeral request, if it arises)*
- Evening weddings at St. Aloysius **on Saturdays** may be scheduled no earlier than 7:00 P.M. *(The church is available for set-up no sooner than 5:30 P.M. on Saturday evenings.)*

Because of its regularly scheduled Masses, St. Aloysius is unable to accommodate weddings on Sundays and on Holy Days *of Obligation*.

St. Aloysius is also unable to accommodate weddings on these particular **Saturday evenings** and/or **holy days/holidays**:

- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Friday & Saturday before Mardi Gras
- Lundi Gras
- Mardi Gras
- Ash Wednesday
- Saturday before Palm Sunday
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of Holy Week
- Holy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Saturday before Easter Sunday

Important Note About Saturday EVENING weddings: If the wedding on a Saturday evening includes a Mass, it may have no choice of readings and Mass propers if it occurs during the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent, and Easter, as the Mass Readings and Prayers would be those of the Sunday Mass instead of the Rite of Marriage. Similarly, for Saturday evening weddings during Advent would permit only the addition of greenery with no floral arrangements. During Lent, no wedding decorations can be used in the church, and the vestments worn by the officiant would be violet (purple).

Wedding Ceremony

The couple is invited to be actively involved in the preparation of their wedding liturgy. The Church's liturgy provides many options for the prayers, readings, vows and blessings. **The couple should visit the website www.catholicweddinghelp.com for helpful information regarding the wedding ceremony.** The priest or deacon and the parish worship director will assist the couple in selecting appropriate texts for the wedding. Christian weddings are not private events but are sacramental celebrations which take place in the presence of the faith community. A couple who enters into a marriage covenant is an important symbol for the faith community – a symbol of the love that God has for each one of us. For this reason the wedding liturgy at St. Aloysius is celebrated in a way that always has the married couple visible to the community. As with all rites of the Church, the active participation of assembly in the prayers, acclamations and singing is considered the norm. In addition to the wedding party, liturgical ministers are needed for the celebration of a wedding liturgy. Ushers, readers, server, communion ministers, and musicians have an important role to play in your wedding. The people that you choose to serve in these liturgical roles must have the gifts and the proper training necessary to participate in your wedding liturgy. A wedding liturgy coordinator or the Worship Director will advise your liturgical ministers about any procedures unique to St. Aloysius Church.

Wedding Liturgy Coordinator

A Wedding Liturgy Coordinator from our church will be assigned to assist in the organization of your wedding liturgy. The Wedding Liturgy Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal, open and

close the church, organize processions and see to matters of hospitality on the wedding day. This coordinator also sets up the sacred vessels, bread and wine, books, and linens needed for a wedding liturgy. The fee for the Wedding Liturgy Coordinator is included in the total amount of the wedding fee listed elsewhere within these guidelines.

Music

The music for your wedding must be appropriate for liturgical use and should lead the assembly gathered for the wedding to worship and prayer. The Director of Worship/Music (phone 343-6657) will assist you in selecting appropriate music for your wedding liturgy. In St. Aloysius parish, music for weddings is chosen based on guidelines from the diocese. The couple must contact the Director of Worship to secure the services of the parish organist. The parish organist's compensation is included in the total amount of the wedding fee listed elsewhere within these guidelines. The use of an organist from outside the parish is allowed only with the permission of the Director of Worship. The service of a cantor or song leader is also necessary for most weddings. The Director of Worship will provide the list of approved cantors from which the couple may choose for their own wedding and with whom they make private financial arrangements. If the couples desire a singer other than a trained cantor, the Director of Worship will assist them in finding a time in the wedding ceremony for that person to sing.

Flowers & Decorations

Floral decorations add to the beauty and dignity of a wedding ceremony; however, good taste in the appointment of decorations must be used. During some seasons of the church year (esp. Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter) the church will be decorated with appropriate seasonal décor which cannot be removed. During Advent floral arrangements should be minimal and in keeping with the spirit of the season. During Lent, no decoration is allowed. The couple should contact the Director of Worship for guidelines before consulting with a florist. In the Church of the living God, only living plants and flowers are appropriate. Flowers or plants should not obscure the view of the altar, ambo, chair or the wedding party. No more than 2 floral arrangements are allowed in the sanctuary. Consideration should also be given to placing flowers in the gathering space and in the body of the church. The parish has green plants which normally decorate the church; additional greenery is usually not necessary. Floral arrangements may not be nailed or attached in any way to walls, arches, beams or doors. Pew markers must be attached with ribbon or plastic hangers only. Taping pew markers to pew ends is not allowed. Additional candles (i.e., pew candles) may be used in moderation. **Pew candles and large sanctuary candelabra must be placed in glass globes or lanterns.** The florist should provide covering to protect the floor and upholstery from wax drippings. All candelabra must be placed so that there is no danger of fire. Florists will be held responsible for any damage to church facilities caused by decorations. Due to safety concerns and details about the opening procession, the white aisle runner is not allowed. Finally, all decorations must be removed from the church in the hour after the wedding. The couple should contact the Worship Director if they wish to leave any floral arrangements for Sunday masses.

Photographers

While photography/videography during the wedding liturgy is permitted, our weddings are occasions of worship/prayer in space that is sacred to us, and all due respect and reverence is expected. the photographer/ Videographer is required to consult with the wedding coordinator

prior to the ceremony and to use proper decorum so as to be a minimal source of distraction to the assembly during the services. He/she would be well advised to also briefly visit with the officiant before the wedding begins to determine his personal photograph/videography directives. During the ceremony, only one official photographer and one official videographer will be permitted. Movie and video lighting are not allowed. If the ceremony is to be videotaped, the videographer/equipment will be positioned outside the sanctuary area in only in pre-designated locations. **The church is available for wedding portraits only one hour before and one hour after the wedding.** Photographs after the wedding should be limited so that the wedding party will not be delayed in attending the reception. The photographer is responsible for proper decorum at this time.

Rehearsals

The rehearsal should be scheduled soon after reserving the church for a wedding, but must be scheduled in consultation with the Worship Director, who must coordinate the date and time with a wedding liturgy coordinator who will conduct the rehearsal. An outline of the names of all participants in the wedding liturgy should be brought to the meeting with the Wedding Liturgy Coordinator prior to the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party, including the bride herself, should rehearse for the wedding. The substitution of another person for the bride at the rehearsal is superstitious and is opposed to faith.

Bride's Room

A room for the bride is available on the corridor between the church and parish hall, adjacent to the ladies' restroom, and for the bridesmaids, the parish hall, is available. The wedding liturgy coordinator will schedule the use of the bride's room when 2 weddings are held in one day. The gathering location for the groom and groomsmen is the cry (quieting) room in the body of the church.

Reception

Based on availability, the parish hall may be reserved for a wedding reception by parishioners who marry in St. Aloysius Church. Reservations are made with the parish by completing a "Facilities Request Form." **SCHEDULING:** Receptions may be scheduled for weddings which are celebrated in the church on a weeknight, on Friday evening or Saturday morning. The hall is not available for weddings held on Saturday afternoon or evening. Only one wedding reception may be scheduled in the hall per weekend. When both a morning and an afternoon wedding are held in the church on Saturday, no reception may be held in the hall on Saturday. Weeknight and Friday evening receptions must end by 11:00 pm. Saturday receptions must end by 3:00 pm. (On Saturday, clean up may continue in the hall past 3:00 pm; however, the parking lots must be cleared for the 4:30 pm vigil mass.) The time set for advanced access to the facilities (hall and kitchen) must be scheduled with the Church Facilities Manager. **RESTRICTION:** Alcoholic beverages are to be restricted to wine and champagne only. The kitchen is not equipped for cooking. Warming ovens, microwave ovens, and a refrigerator are available for catered receptions. Taping or nailing decorations to the walls, doors or windows in the hall is not permitted. Throwing rice or bird seed when the bride and groom leave the reception is not permitted; anything else thrown must be cleared by the maintenance supervisor. **HALL FEES:** The rental cost for the hall is \$595 which includes an event insurance fee required by the insurance company. A non-refundable deposit of \$200 must accompany the Facilities Request Form. The balance of \$395 plus a separate damage deposit check for \$250 is due two months

before the reception. If no damage occurs, the damage deposit will be returned after the event.