



ST. ALOYSIUS

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear Couples:

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming marriage. The Catholic Sacrament of Marriage is a rich part of our Tradition. The Church offers this sacred opportunity to join with family and friends in dedicating your marriage to God, the author of all love. We would like to do all that we can to help make this experience a meaningful and sacred celebration for you and your families.

Attached is a copy of our marriage policies for you to read and sign. These guidelines have been set forth to assist you with the planning of your special day. You are asked to bring the signed “Summary of Guidelines” page and the “Wedding Reservation Form” to the Parish Office, as well as pay the associated fee, before your date can be placed on our calendar.

Please be assured that we will do all we can to make this a joyous occasion for you. Our prayers are with you as you prepare for this important step in your life.

Sincerely,

Fr. Michael J. Alello

Pastor

St. Aloysius Catholic Church
Marriage Preparation Guidelines and Policies

MARRIAGE PREPARATION:
Length of Time and Elements Involved

- A. Contact St. Aloysius Church to determine the availability of the church for the wedding date(s) you are considering. Before reserving the church or reception venue, it is important to establish the availability of the priest/deacon who will facilitate your preparation and commit to your wedding date. Once the commitment of a priest/deacon for your preparation and wedding date has been confirmed, St. Aloysius Church may be contacted about reserving the church.
- B. Couples are required to meet with the priest/deacon at least 6 months before the wedding. This waiting period is required prior to the celebration of marriage.
- C. Following the initial meeting with the priest/deacon, couples may be assigned a marriage preparation mentor couple. This mentor couple will journey with you through the entire preparation process.
- D. The role of the priest/deacon in marriage preparation is to assess the couple's readiness for marriage. If for some reason the priest/deacon (conducting the preparation) discerns that a couple's marriage should be postponed, no other cleric may be allowed to celebrate their marriage without permission of the local Bishop.
- E. Couples will work with the priest/deacon to complete a relationship assessment instrument with him. The couple will then be asked to schedule and attend one of the pre-marriage programs available in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Called To Love or The Engaged Encounter Weekend. The priest/deacon will make reservation information available to you in your first meeting with him. You may also visit www.diobr.org/mfl for information regarding dates and registration.
- F. The priest/deacon and couple will meet to finalize the plans for the wedding ceremony itself approximately a month before the wedding. In all, there are approximately four meetings with the priest/deacon.
- G. All contact with the priest/deacon regarding marriage preparation and the wedding ceremony itself must be made by either the bride or groom.

WEDDINGS IN THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE:
Time, Day, and Place

- A. At St. Aloysius Church, weddings may not be celebrated on Sundays or holy days of obligation. St. Aloysius is also unable to accommodate weddings on the following days:
 - a. Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving
 - b. Christmas Eve through New Year's Day
 - c. Friday and Saturday before Mardi Gras
 - d. Friday and Saturday before Palm Sunday
 - e. Holy Week—Monday through Easter Sunday
- B. Weddings taking place at St. Aloysius Church may not be booked more than ONE (1) year prior to the desired wedding date.

- C. In St. Aloysius Catholic Church, the latest a wedding ceremony can start on Friday evening is 7:00pm. The latest a wedding ceremony can start on Saturday is 1:00 p.m. prior to the Vigil Mass or 6:30 p.m. following the Vigil Mass.
- D. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, no wedding ceremony may take place outside of a church building without the permission of the local ordinary.
- E. No wedding date and time is final until the priest/deacon himself has confirmed this with the couple and the church, and delegation has been given by the pastor.
- F. Persons who do not reside in the geographical area of St. Aloysius Catholic Church but have some tie to the community may celebrate their wedding at St. Aloysius, with the permission of the pastor.

**REGARDING INTER-FAITH MARRIAGES:
Also known as “Mixed” Marriages**

- A. In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, “the celebration of a mixed marriage most appropriately takes place at a non-Eucharistic ceremony.”
- B. In most circumstances, a deacon will be assigned to assist a “mixed” marriage couple with their preparation and celebrate the sacrament of marriage.

**THE WEDDING CEREMONY ITSELF:
Planning, Music, Decorations, Fees, and the Wedding Party**

- A. The fee for a wedding at St. Aloysius church is \$575.00 for registered, active parishioners and \$1,000.00 for others and must be paid at the time of booking. Ten percent (10%) of the fee paid is non-refundable.
 - **This fee includes:** use of the church, utilities and maintenance.
 - **This fee does not include:** wedding coordinator fee, hiring of any musicians or the honorarium to the priest/deacon for their services.
- B. All planning of the wedding ceremony itself is to be done with the priest/deacon presiding at the ceremony.
- C. The wedding coordinator will assist with the wedding rehearsal and will be available the day of the wedding for other preparations. Each couple is required to pay a fee of \$150.00 to the wedding coordinator for her services. This fee is paid directly to the wedding coordinator at the time of the rehearsal and is separate from the church fees.
- D. The wedding rehearsal should be scheduled when the wedding itself is booked with the church. Wedding rehearsals may not be scheduled to begin any later than 6:30pm.
- E. The wedding ceremony will begin and end with a normal liturgical procession including parents, grandparents, cross-bearer (optional), groom along with priest/deacon, wedding party, and the bride with her escort.
- F. During the wedding ceremony, **the following are not allowed:**
 - Unity candle—since the unity candle does not have its origin in the Catholic Rite of Marriage, it may not be used during the wedding ceremony.
 - Wedding aisle runner
 - The throwing of any type of flower petals, rice, bird seed, or similar materials inside or anywhere on church property.

- G. Children standing in the wedding should be at least 4 years of age. They are permitted to walk in procession, however, from that point on in the liturgy they are to be seated with an adult other than those adults standing in the wedding party.
- H. A couple may invite a friend or family member to assist with the distribution of communion, if that person is currently a Eucharistic Minister in his or her Catholic parish.
- I. Scheduling the delivery of flowers to the church and decorating the church can be coordinated with the wedding coordinator. Couples will have access to the church and grounds 90 minutes prior to the ceremony for Friday evening weddings and 60 minutes prior to the ceremony for Saturday evening weddings.
- J. The church is only available for 15 minutes after the ceremony for photos. Please make sure that photos after the ceremony are coordinated in an orderly fashion.
- K. Candles may not be attached to the pews. Any type of candle or candle holder is not allowed in the main aisle. All pew decoration must be approved by the wedding coordinator. Flowers or bows on the pew must be attached in such a way that it does not scratch the pew. *It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure that all pew markers and decorations are removed from the church at the end of the ceremony; if this does not happen, St. Aloysius maintenance personnel will remove these items for an additional charge.*
- L. Church décor that is already in place for the liturgical season at the time of the wedding ceremony may not be altered in any way or removed.
- M. The maximum number of attendants allowed to stand in a wedding is 16 total (this means 8 bridesmaids and 8 groomsmen). As a reminder, children must be 4 years of age at the time of the wedding to participate in the wedding.
- N. All musicians and selections of music are to be approved by the music director or pastor. Although music is required at weddings, this church fee does not include the hiring of any musicians.
- O. Under no circumstances are alcoholic beverages allowed on the church property before or during a wedding liturgy, nor is any member of a wedding party allowed to participate in the wedding if intoxicated. No food is allowed in the church building.
- P. While every reasonable and lawful effort is made to accommodate the couple's wishes, St. Aloysius reserves the rights over its property, including the right even to change times and dates of weddings and /or rehearsals – including time foreseen for photographs, etc., before and after weddings – due to special events and/or emergencies. In all things and at any time the decisions of the pastor of St. Aloysius Catholic Church are final.

WEDDING COORDINATOR:

A St. Aloysius wedding coordinator is the only coordinator allowed to assist with the preparation of the wedding ceremony, to conduct the rehearsal and assist with the ceremony itself. All communication with the church must be done by the bride and groom and not by any professional wedding/event planner.

The wedding coordinator serves as the liaison to the couple and the church office for questions regarding the rehearsal and ceremony. The wedding coordinator will schedule to meet with the couple prior to the wedding to make sure that all final details have been discussed.

The fee for the wedding coordinator as stated above is \$150.00. This fee is paid directly to the wedding coordinator at the time of the rehearsal and is separate from the church fees.

FLOWERS:

No flowers are to be placed on the altar (table). No floral arrangement should obstruct the view of the altar or interfere with the ceremony. The pulpit (ambo) and the readers should be clearly visible from all parts of the congregation out of respect for the Liturgy of the Word. No more than two (2) floral arrangements are allowed in the sanctuary. If there are any questions about the placement of the flowers, please consult the wedding coordinator.

Pew markers must be attached with ribbon or plastic hangers so that they do not scratch or damage the pews. Taping pew markers to the pew ends is not allowed.

All décor should be removed from the church as soon as the wedding ceremony has ended. The couple should let the wedding coordinator know if they wish to leave any floral arrangements for the Sunday masses.

MUSIC:

The music for your wedding must be appropriate for liturgical use and should lead the assembly gathered for the wedding in worship and prayer.

- The couple must contact the St. Aloysius Director of Worship/Music (225.343.6657) to secure the services of the parish organist. The Director of Worship/Music will assist you in selecting the appropriate music for your wedding liturgy. The use of an organist from outside the parish is allowed with permission from the Director of Worship/Music.
- The service of a cantor is also necessary for most weddings. The Director of Worship/Music will provide a list of approved cantors from which the couple may choose for their own wedding.
- If the couple desires a singer other than a trained cantor, the contracted musicians will work with that person to find time in the ceremony for that person to sing.
- The fee for musicians is not included in what is paid to the church. The couple must pay the musicians directly according to the arrangements made in his/her contract with the couple.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY:

In order to maintain the reverent character appropriate to the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, we ask that you explain these policies to your photographer and videographer:

- Flash photographs are not to be taken once the ceremony begins.
- Other than photos taken of the starting procession, there should be limited movement in the church by the photographer and videographer.
- Photographers and videographers may photograph and/or video the beginning procession from the front of the church, but once the bride enters, all photos and videos must be taken from the sides or back of the church.
- Photo and/or video should not obstruct the view of any guest in attendance of the ceremony.
- After the wedding, you may take additional photos in the church, but we ask that this be completed within 15 minutes and done in an orderly fashion.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

The Church requires from the Catholic parties a **baptismal certificate** newly issued within six months prior to the anticipated wedding date.

Birth certificates are not needed for the Church requirements but are needed to acquire the **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 about the fees/documents you must bring to acquire your license. Requirements vary slightly from one civil parish to another. **You must bring your marriage license with you to your scheduled rehearsal.** After the wedding, the completed license will then be mailed by the church office to the Clerk of Court.

BRIDE'S ROOM:

The Parish Hall is used as a gathering space for the bride and bridesmaids. The gathering location for the groom and groomsmen is the quieting room in the body of the church.

WEDDING PROGRAM:

If you are planning to provide a program for your wedding ceremony, you must submit a proof to the wedding coordinator for review before printing.

GUEST CELEBRANTS:

A priest or deacon not currently assigned to St. Aloysius may be permitted to preside at your wedding. In order to do so, the following are required:

Priests and Deacons currently serving in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are welcome to preside at weddings in St. Aloysius Parish. They are asked to contact the pastor of St. Aloysius in writing to request delegation. Delegation is a requirement and must be requested at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

Priests and Deacons of a Diocese other than Baton Rouge or from a religious order must contact the pastor of St. Aloysius in writing, to request delegation. Delegation is a requirement and must be requested at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

Also, priests and deacons of a Diocese other than Baton Rouge or from a religious order must contact the Chancery Office at the Diocese of Baton Rouge to request permission for ministry in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. This is mandatory and must take place at the beginning of the marriage preparation process.

Any 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.

Note: Any priest or deacon who is scheduled to preside at a wedding at St. Aloysius Church must himself conduct the entire process of marriage preparation with the couple. **He is also responsible for sending the completed pre-marriage preparation file to the church office no later than 2 weeks prior to the wedding date.**