

# **Guidelines and Policies for Weddings in St. Agnes Church**

Thank you for considering St. Agnes Church as the location for the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. St. Agnes Church is a traditional Roman Catholic Church. The following guidelines and policies, established and approved by the Pastor, are to be adhered to during all wedding services taking place in this church. Our staff will assist you in every way possible in planning your wedding liturgy for this special day, and guide you in making certain that your wedding is a proper and memorable celebration in our Church.

Please read this document, “Guidelines and Policies for Weddings in St. Agnes Church,” very carefully before making a final decision and confirming your wedding date.

## **PRELIMINARY PREPARATION INFORMATION**

- 1.** To receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, Couples are required to begin marriage preparation not less than six months in advance of the anticipated wedding date. This is a New Orleans Archdiocesan policy. Couples are required to take a FOCCUS test and complete a Pre-Nuptial Inquiry.
- 2.** Couples are also required to attend a Marriage Preparation Program approved by the Archdiocese. Information about such programs can be obtained from the Archdiocesan Family Life Apostolate Office at 504-861-6243 or [www.fla.arch-no.org](http://www.fla.arch-no.org).
- 3.** You must arrange with your parish priest or deacon to preside at the wedding liturgy. This 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. No other arrangements should be made before contacting a priest.
- 4.** The parish priest or deacon who will preside at the wedding liturgy must be willing to complete the Pre-Nuptial inquiry, obtaining all dispensations and documents needed. This priest or deacon must also agree to complete all marriage preparations with the couple required by the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
- 5.** For couples living outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans – your marriage preparation is to be done by your parish priest or deacon. If a couple is not able to arrange for a member of the clergy to officiate at the wedding, St. Agnes Church Office will assist in procuring the services of a priest or deacon of the Archdiocese. A stipend of \$250 for the priest is not included in the wedding fee.

6. In accordance with Archdiocese regulations, the Nuptial Mass may be celebrated as part of the Liturgy of Matrimony only if both the bride and the groom are practicing Roman Catholics. Special permission must be obtained for a Mass to be celebrated at a wedding between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic. The Liturgy for Weddings at St. Agnes is from "Together For Life." **See appendix A for details**
7. Cohabiting couples must separate for at least six months prior to the wedding. If unable to comply with this policy, you may get married at St. Agnes in a simple ceremony without a Mass or music.

### **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:**

#### **1) Church Documents Required by the Archdiocese of New Orleans:**

- Application and deposit
- The Pre-Nuptial Inquiry
- Premarital Inventory (FOCCUS)
- Marriage Preparation Seminars Certificates (Weekend for the Engaged; Day for the Engaged)
- Permission letters from home parish priest
- Letter of Delegation
- Dispensation Form
- Testimonial of Suitability for Visiting Priests not of this Diocese
- Baptismal Certificates – with proper notations, dated within six months of your marriage.
- Marriage License – copy must be faxed or mailed to St. Agnes Church Office

These documents are to be given to your officiant; **he is to see that these documents are in St. Agnes Church Office not less than one month before the wedding date.** These become your permanent marriage file and will remain at St. Agnes Church.

#### **2) Civil License**

The couple, following the laws of the State, must obtain a Marriage License from the State of Louisiana. It is your responsibility to bring this license to your wedding rehearsal. It is to be signed by the bride, groom, witness (es), and priest or deacon. Please do not leave this license with anyone other than the officiant of your wedding. It is to be mailed by your officiant to the proper clerk of court within ten days of your

wedding. Otherwise, your wedding is not civilly legal. A wedding will not be performed without this license. A copy must be submitted to St. Agnes Church Office.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

After carefully reading this entire document, if you decide to have your wedding at St. Agnes Church, please detach and fill out the last page, **Wedding Date Confirmation Form**. This form must be returned to Agnes Church along with your non-refundable deposit. This signed Form will be held with your permanent documents. Please keep the rest of this document for your reference. **Your tentative date cannot be reserved until this signed document and St. Agnes Church receives your non-refundable deposit.** If you choose to mail your documents and fee, it is advised that you telephone the rectory and check with the secretary to be sure that your documents have arrived. The balance of the wedding fee is due one month prior to the wedding.

**1. Wedding dates and times:** To schedule date and time with St. Agnes Church Office call **Sabrina Haynes, 504-833-3366 or 504-834-4118.**

Dates and times of Weddings Available:

Friday: 7:00 pm.

Saturday: 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm.

Additional days and times must have St. Agnes Church office and Pastor's approval.

**2. Wedding fees:** The following base fee schedule is effective for applicants as of January 1, 2009.

A) Parishioners - A Parishioner is one who has been attending St. Agnes Church as a registered parishioner, receiving the weekly donation envelopes and contributing for at least 24 months prior to the date of the wedding. Children of registered parishioners must be under the age of 21 and living with their parents or be a student to receive the parishioner rate.

FEES: Friday Evening \$500.00 (\$250.00 non-refundable deposit)

Saturday Day-Time \$500.00 (\$250.00 non-refundable deposit)

Saturday Evening \$800.00 (\$400.00 non-refundable deposit)

B) Non-Parishioners –

FEES: Friday Evening \$1,100.00 (\$550.00 non-refundable deposit)

Saturday Day-Time \$1,100.00 (\$550.00 non-refundable deposit)

Saturday Evening \$1,500.00 (\$750.00 non-refundable deposit)

**\*\*Wedding date will not be confirmed until deposit is received. Balance is due one month before the date of the wedding. At this time, please also include the stipend for the officiant performing the ceremony, made payable to the officiant. The stipend is \$250.**

**\*\*There will be at least (2) Altar servers for each wedding at St. Agnes Church. A stipend of \$20 is paid directly to each altar server the night of the rehearsal. The Bride and groom are welcome to bring an altar server from outside of St. Agnes but at least one altar server must be from St. Agnes Church.**

### **3. Wedding Coordinator:**

St. Agnes Church employs a Wedding Coordinator to assist you in following our policies and guidelines. She is responsible for overseeing all documentation and paperwork required for the wedding. In addition, she is responsible for making certain that all proper liturgical, Archdiocesan, and parish guidelines and policies for your wedding liturgy are followed. The Coordinator will be present to supervise and coordinate the rehearsal and the wedding liturgy. **If an outside coordinator is used for the planning of the wedding, he/she will have no role in the church ceremony or liturgy of St. Agnes Church.** All questions relating to the wedding ceremony, including flowers, etc., must be directed to the church Wedding Coordinator of St. Agnes Church or the church office, **Sabrina Haynes**.

**Wedding Coordinator – Kelly Wilbert**

**(504) 835-3974 or (504)952-4343 or [kellywilbert@aol.com](mailto:kellywilbert@aol.com)**

**4. Bridal Parties:** Space limitations as well as liturgical decorum limit your bridal party to no more than 18 person's total, including bride and groom.

There will be four kneelers in the sanctuary for the bride and groom as well as the maid of honor and best man. All other attendants will sit in chairs in front of the first pew or in the first pew of the Church.

**5. Flowers:** St. Agnes is an active parish church. Accordingly, the sanctuary will be decorated according to the liturgical seasons and feasts. These decorations are part of any liturgical celebration and will normally remain in place for your wedding. Couples are to arrange for their own florist and are to make the florist aware of the guidelines. For complete guidelines concerning floral and other decorations, **please see Appendix B for details.**

**6. Music:** The sacred nature of your wedding liturgy requires the use of a Music Director from St. Agnes Church and the careful selection of appropriate music.

Dr. Louise Labruyere and Eric McCrary are St. Agnes Church Music Directors, who are organist, pianist and vocalist. As soon as the church secretary has secured the tentative date of your wedding, the couple should immediately contact Louise at (504-738-7446) or Eric at (504-723-3622). They are the organist for all weddings taking place in St. Agnes Church and will help you plan a musical program that will lend dignity and solemnity to your wedding celebration. If neither are available, you may make arrangements outside of St. Agnes Church but need to get approval from St. Agnes Church. The Music Director's fee is not included in St. Agnes Church's wedding fees. The Music Director does not attend wedding rehearsals. They will discuss their fee and the time and manner of payment when you contact them. **Please see Appendix C for details.**

- Popular music is not to be performed or sung in church, either before or during the wedding.

**7. Photos/Videos:** A wedding at St. Agnes Church is a religious ceremony. Excessive movement of photographers and videographers during the ceremony detract from the sacredness of the place and the event. The sacred nature of your wedding liturgy demands discreet and professional behavior on the part of recording professionals. **Please see Appendix D for details.**

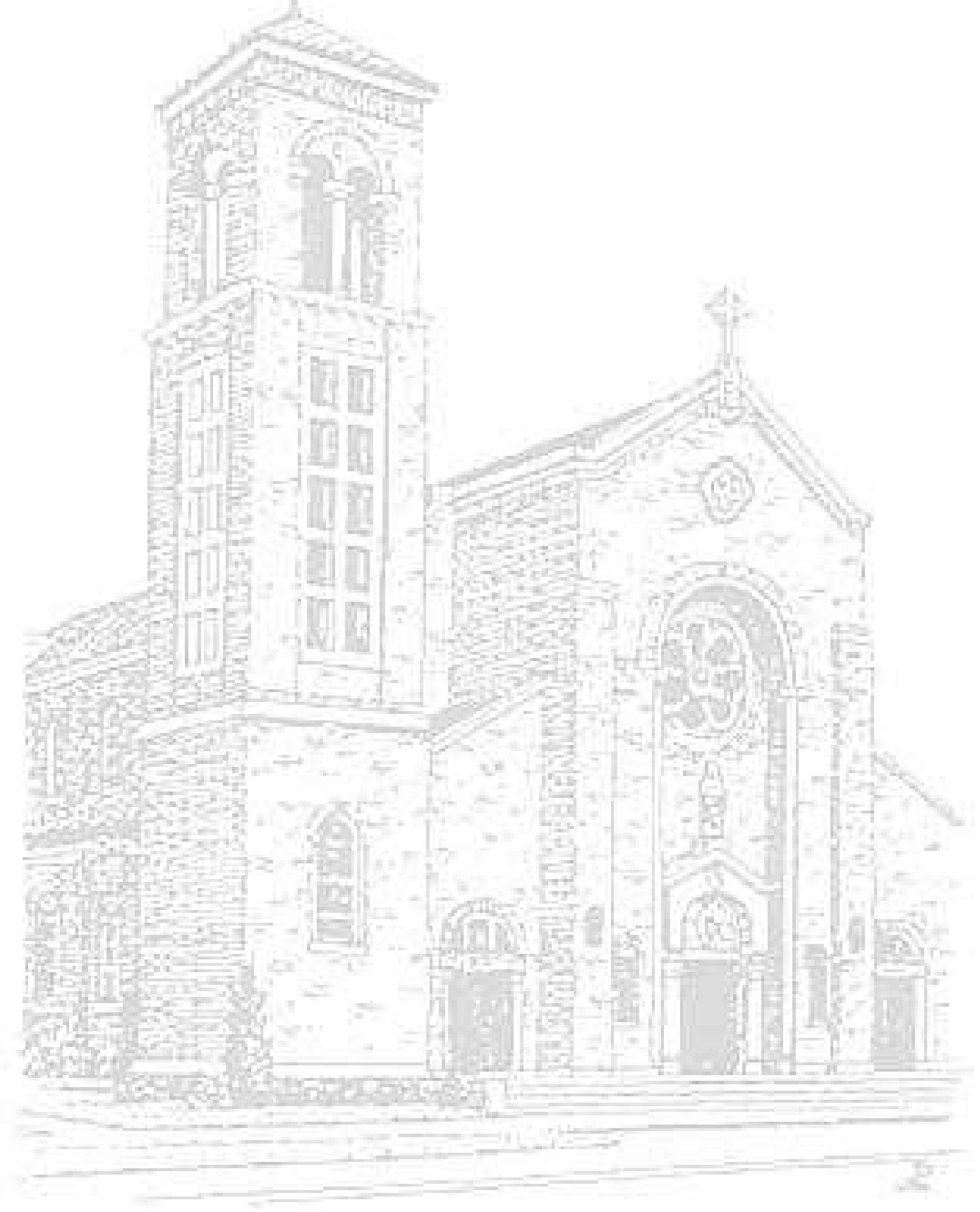
**8. Decorum:** Proper respect and decorum are required at all time on parish premises. At no time is eating, drinking, or smoking allowed. Alcohol and individuals under the influence are not allowed on our property. Failure to abide by these guidelines will result in the immediate dismissal of offending wedding party members. Failure to leave upon request will delay or cancel the wedding.

**9. Dress Code:** Christian modesty in dress will be observed in St. Agnes Church. The bride and groom are asked to use discretion in their wedding plans to ensure that no indiscreet clothing is selected.

- Traditional, formal dress is customary at St. Agnes Church.
- Immodesty in dress is unacceptable.

**10. Rehearsal:** The date and time of the wedding rehearsal will be scheduled by the wedding coordinator only after your tentative wedding date is secured. Rehearsals are scheduled on Wednesday or Thursday at 6pm or 7pm. Rehearsals must start promptly at the appointed time to avoid conflict with other scheduled church activities. You are asked to arrive 15 minutes prior to schedule time. The wedding coordinator will conduct the rehearsal.

**11. Punctuality:** Out of respect for the pastoral assistants involved, we must insist that you be prompt for both rehearsal and wedding. Weddings beginning more than 20 minutes late will be restricted to a Liturgy of the Word and Exchange of Vows.



**WEDDING DATE CONFIRMATION FORM**

To secure your wedding date, sign this form and return with your non-refundable deposit to:

**St. Agnes Church  
3310 Jefferson Hwy  
Jefferson, LA 70121  
Attention: Wedding Confirmation**

We have received and read the “The Guidelines and Policies for Weddings in St. Agnes Church,” and we agree to them.

If it is deemed necessary for St. Agnes Church to cancel a wedding due to circumstances beyond its control (i.e. hurricanes, unforeseeable major repairs or other) we will reschedule or refund all payments made to the church. No other expenses incurred will be reimbursed. St. Agnes Church reserves the right to alter any of its wedding policies or regulations as deemed necessary.

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, St. Agnes Church is under no obligation to return church fees or reschedule our wedding.

**Wedding Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fee Quoted:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Deposit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Groom:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_ (Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Phone) \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone) \_\_\_\_\_

(Email) \_\_\_\_\_ (email) \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride & Groom’s mailing address after the wedding:**

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

**Priest or deacon who will be performing ceremony:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Church Affiliation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**[Signatures]:**

**Bride** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Groom \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECKLIST TO BE GIVEN TO THE WEDDING COORDINATOR**

\_\_\_\_\_ Priest who will prepare couple: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Priest or deacon who will perform the wedding ceremony:  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Application and deposit  
Date mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Pre-Nuptial Inquiry  
Discussed with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ FOCCUS Test  
Discussed with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Engaged Encounter  
Where conducted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Permission letter from home parish priest  
When mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dispensation form (if required)  
Discussed with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Testimonial of Suitability for visiting priests not of this Diocese  
When mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Baptismal certificates  
When mailed: \_\_\_\_\_



**\_\_\_\_\_ Letter of delegation from Pastor of St. Agnes**

*St. Agnes Church Wedding Guidelines*  
**Liturgy Celebration Order of Service**

**Entrance Rite**

Procession

Unity Candle (if applicable) - Celebrant will invite mothers to light individual candles. Takes place after Bride and Groom have processed.

Opening Prayer

**Liturgy of the Word** (Read Slowly)

Old Testament Reading

Responsorial Psalm (song, chant, or reading)

New Testament Reading

Gospel Acclamation - if not sung, then omit

Gospel

**Rite of Marriage**

Exchange of Vows - Couple — should face each other

Traditional (personalized vows not acceptable)

Memorized — preferred (especially if celebrant from St. Agnes Church)

Blessing of Rings - Couple — should face each other

Signing of license (if applicable)

Unity Candle (if applicable) light after celebrant pronounces husband and wife, celebrant will lead couple

Prayer of the Couple - may be combined as one with Prayer of the Faithful

Prayer of the Faithful - May add personal prayers — prior approval by pastor required

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Presentation of the Gifts (Should be inclusive of both families)

Prayer over the Gifts — omitted, if no mass

The Our Father — recited

Nuptial Blessing

Sign of Peace

Present flowers to mothers (if applicable)

Communion -Omit — if no mass or 'intra—faith/inter—faith'

Meditation — following communion approx. 30-second quiet time flowers to Mary— (if applicable) celebrant invites couple to do so vocalist /instrumental

**Concluding Rite**

Final Blessing

Recessional — Bride/Groom, Bridal Party, Parents, and Guests

## Appendix B

### Floral and Decoration Guidelines

Due to the historic significance of St. Agnes Church and the religious import of the wedding liturgy, it is extremely important that all church furnishings be respected. These guidelines will assist you in knowing what is permitted in our church. **Couples are responsible for communicating these guidelines to their florists and returning this signed form to the Wedding Coordinator.**

- Florists may set up no more than **one hour** before the scheduled ceremony.
- Any seasonal decorations placed by St. Agnes Church must be left in place.
- Floral arrangements are ordinarily allowed only on the main altar, side credence tables, and side altars. Under no circumstances are flowers to be placed directly on the altar table. Columns are available for use in the Church. We request that arrangements placed on the high altar be left for our weekend Masses. In the tradition of our Church, Lent is a solemn season of prayer and fasting in remembrance of the Passion of Christ. All floral arrangements must be removed.
- Floral arrangements are to be brought to the church already assembled. The florist is not to use the altar, sanctuary or vestibule to make arrangements.
- Floral arrangements may be attached to the end of pews or to the pulpit using **ribbons only**. No staples, wire, clamps or tape may be used to attach anything to the pews or to any other church furnishings. Pews and aisles are not to be blocked or cordoned off in any way.
- Rice, confetti, bubbles, seeds, petals, etc. are not allowed inside or outside the church.
- Aisle runners are not allowed.
- It is the responsibility of the florist and/or wedding party to remove any decorations attached to the pews immediately after the ceremony along with flower boxes and other refuse.
- Unity Candles are permitted. St. Agnes Church does have a Unity Candle holder. Other candles or candelabra (with drip-proof globes) are permitted only if **pre-approved**.  
**By signing below, florists agree to remain on premises for the duration of the wedding so that candelabra can be removed immediately after the wedding. Furthermore, they agree to pay any costs incurred by the church either for professional clean up of wax spills or for overnight storage of materials not removed within 15 minutes after the wedding.**

**We agree to follow all decorating guidelines as stated above.**

**Bride:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Florist:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C Wedding Music Guidelines**

All sacred music used within a wedding celebration must also be **liturgical**, that is, it must contribute to the active participation and prayer of the assembly. As a result, not all sacred music is appropriate to the celebration and not every song is appropriate to every moment. To ensure the best possible liturgical experience, therefore, one of our Directors of Music, Dr. Louise Labruyere (504-738-7446) or Eric McCrary (504-723-3622), must approve all selection and placement of music.

- If you plan to employ an outside vocalist, s/he will need to be approved by our Director of Music and will be responsible for providing appropriate music to our organist.
- Since wedding rehearsals are intended for the blocking of the wedding ceremony (who stands where, etc.), the organist and cantor do not attend.
- In order to encourage participation we also encourage the use of **worship aids/programs** for your celebration. Both the Coordinator of Sacramental Preparation and the Director of Music are available to proofread a draft copy of your program for accuracy. The Director of Music should approve final copies.
- Finally, musician fees are **not** included in the Church Wedding Fee. The Music Director will discuss his/her fee and the time and manner of payment when you contact him/her.

**We agree to follow all music guidelines as stated above.**

**Bride:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Every aspect of your wedding celebration has as its **primary purpose** the engagement of those assembled in active prayer and worship of God. For this reason, only sacred music is appropriate to the occasion. **See page 2 for Music to be performed.**

The Wedding Day

Prelude Music will be provided for 30 minutes prior to the time of the wedding.

Music to Be Performed

Wedding celebrated with Mass:

1. Seating of parents
2. Entrance of attendants
3. Entrance of bride
4. Responsorial Psalm (optional)
5. Gospel Acclamation
6. Offertory
7. Holy, holy, holy (optional)
8. Memorial Acclamation (optional)
9. Great Amen (optional)
10. Lamb of God (optional)
11. Communion
12. Signing of license
13. Flowers to Mary's Altar (optional)
14. Recessional

Wedding ceremony without Mass:

1. Seating of parents
2. Entrance of attendants
3. Entrance of bride
4. Responsorial Psalm (optional)
5. Gospel Acclamation
6. Signing of license
7. Flowers to Mary's Altar (optional)
8. Recessional

**Appendix D**

**Photographic / Videographic Guidelines**

Given the sacred nature of the marriage celebration, professional photographers and videographers must be very careful not to disrupt the flow of the liturgy or distract those in attendance. For the purpose of this document, “professional” will be used to refer to anyone recording your ceremony. Couples are responsible for communicating these guidelines to professionals and for returning this signed form to the Wedding Coordinator.

- Professionals must not be conspicuous nor obstruct any of the proceedings. At no time should they stand in the aisle or enter the sanctuary.
- Professionals are to follow the directives of the **Wedding Coordinator** at all times concerning where s/he may stand or move.
- Flashes are not permitted during the homily or during the Eucharistic Prayer, the consecration or Communion of Mass. Be sure to tell your photographer to bring a telephoto lens and high-speed film.
- No equipment is allowed in the sanctuary. Video cameras may be stationed to the side of the sanctuary provided they remain **immobile**.
- No photos are allowed in the sanctuary once the prelude music has started. At this time, all members of the bridal party must be in their respective places in order for the liturgy to begin.
- Following the liturgy, **Group Pictures** are permitted in the church for 15 **minutes** from the end of the liturgy, at which point lights in the church will be turned off.
- Photographers and videographers need to be considerate of each other when positioning themselves for picture taking. One is not to obstruct the view of the other.

**We agree to follow all recording guidelines as stated above.**

**Bride:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Photographer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Videographer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_