



GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING YOUR WEDDING
AT ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH OF
MACON, GEORGIA

830 POPLAR STREET
MACON, GEORGIA 31201
478-745-1631

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I. CHURCH REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirement for marriage preparation is six months in advance of the desired date.

Freedom to Marry

Church law requires that both of you must be free to marry, that is, neither one was married before. If either of you were married before, either a civil or common-law marriage, and the former spouse is still living, you will need to obtain a declaration of nullity (annulment) on the marriage from the Tribunal of the Diocese of Savannah, if you do not already have such a decree. The St. Joseph Office Staff will assist you in starting this process. Under no circumstances can a date be set for the ceremony, even tentatively, until the Tribunal process is completed and a final decree is issued.

Interfaith Marriage

In an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party makes a promise to maintain his or her faith and do all in his or her power to ensure that any children born of the union will be raised in the Catholic faith. The party who is not Catholic makes no promises but is made aware of the promise by the Catholic party.

In an interfaith marriage at St. Joseph's, the Minister of the non-Catholic party may be invited to participate in the ceremony. The type of participation will depend on whether or not the marriage will be celebrated within a Mass. Having a Mass will involve participating in the readings and/or giving a blessing. Church law does not permit the Priest and Minister jointly to ask for and receive the vows, nor does it permit a double recitation of the vows.

By Church law, all weddings are to be celebrated in the Church. Special consideration may be given to marriages between a Catholic and a non-Christian. All such requests must be supported by serious reasons explaining why the exception is necessary and must be approved by the Pastor. If the Pastor approves, then a formal dispensation/permission must be requested through the Bishop of the Diocese of Savannah by the clergy with whom you are preparing. Such permission, if granted, affects only the actual ceremony. You must still comply with the other provisions of Church law.

II. SETTING THE DATE

Reservation Procedure

To reserve a date for your wedding, you must first contact St. Joseph's Office. You will then be sent a questionnaire that will need to be filled out and returned to begin the process. You can find out available dates for the wedding from the Church Secretary. Once you have confirmation that your date and time is available, you may make your payment to reserve the Church for that time. Dates cannot be put on hold until payment is made. Once your payment has been made a confirmation email will be sent along with the Wedding Refund and Cancellation Policy that must be signed and returned. The date and time of your wedding and corresponding rehearsal time cannot be changed without speaking to the Event Coordinator. Any proposed date change is dependent upon the availability of your Priest or Deacon and the availability of the Church. The new date and time is not confirmed until the Event Coordinator has notified you of the confirmation.

If you are working with a Priest or Deacon outside of our parish, we will ask for his name and address and we will mail him our Visiting Priest Commitment & Delegation Request Form. This confirms in writing that he is willing to officiate, to work with the Bride and Groom to complete the necessary marriage preparation and paperwork required by Church law, and abide by all of St. Joseph's policies and procedures for weddings. If he is not a priest or deacon within the Diocese of Savannah, he is required to apply for faculties through the Savannah Diocese within 60 days of the wedding date, and furnish a copy of the letter granting those faculties.

For the visiting clergy, delegation will be granted in writing once we have received a completed marriage paperwork packet from him, and if applicable, the letter granting faculties. We ask that the marriage documentation, as well as the letter granting faculties if applicable, be received in our Parish Office at least four weeks prior to your wedding date.

Wedding Times

Weddings are scheduled at St. Joseph's on Saturdays only. The set times for weddings are 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. (These times may not be changed.) The normal time allowed for a wedding is 1/2 hours for set up, one hour for the ceremony and fifteen minutes for pictures and clean up.

Rehearsal Times

Rehearsals are scheduled for the evening before the wedding.

If your wedding is: Your rehearsal is:

Saturday, 12:00 p.m. Friday, 5:15 p.m.

Saturday, 2:00 p.m. Friday, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Friday, 6:45 p.m.

There may be instances where rehearsal times are adjusted based on St. Joseph's schedule. Your Event Confirmation will have your correct rehearsal time on it.

Wedding Coordinators

St. Joseph's Wedding Coordinators will work with you to help plan the logistics of your ceremony and assist the Celebrant in coordinating your rehearsal and wedding day within the parameters of St. Joseph's Church. Consultation with a Wedding Coordinator at St. Joseph's is required for all weddings, even if your Officiant is not a member of our clergy. Once your wedding has been assigned to your Wedding Coordinator, they will contact you directly and they can answer questions about many of the practical details of your wedding. Please be aware that the entire ceremony is under the direction of the clergy and St. Joseph's Church and the Wedding Coordinator assigned to your wedding.

Outside Wedding/Bridal consultants, if you choose to have them, are not to interfere, are required to abide by St. Joseph Church policies, and may function only under the direction of the Officiant and/or our Wedding Coordinator.

III. FACILITIES

Our Church building was built in 1903 and has the look and feel of a European Cathedral. Thousands of people visit our Church every year in order to pray and to experience the beauty and mystery of God that is reflected so well in this Church. St. Joseph's Church has a rich tradition and is an ideal setting for a wedding to take place. There is a sense of beauty and reverence that seems to transcend time. The Church Sanctuary provides seating for 550 people and a downstairs Social Hall is available to be rented for a reception.

St. Joseph Church is an active parish, and due to other scheduled events, the following are recommendations to follow to accommodate both the wedding and regular parish life in harmony:

For a Saturday 12:00 p.m. wedding, the Church must be vacated by 1:30 p.m.

For a Saturday 2:00 p.m. wedding, the Church must be vacated by 3:30 p.m.

For a Saturday 6:30 p.m. wedding, the Church must be vacated by 8:00 p.m.

For a Saturday 6:30 p.m. wedding, the Bridal Party is asked to be considerate of the ending of the 4:30 p.m. Vigil Mass and to not block the stairs, walkways and parking lot as parishioners exit. The Wedding Coordinator will direct the Florist, Photographer and Videographer to an appropriate waiting/preparation area. Preparations in the Church, including the florist, photographer, and videographer, may not begin until all parishioners have exited the Church following the Vigil Mass.

IV. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The required Marriage Preparation includes a marriage preparation class, consisting of meetings with the Officiant, completion of FOCCUS and review, as well as attendance at a pre-Cana program recommended by the Diocese of Savannah.

FOCCUS

FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Communication, Understanding, and Study) is an inventory given to engaged couples at the marriage preparation class. The Bride and Groom will fill out the inventory separately. FOCCUS is an aid for your marriage preparation. It can help you study, understand and communicate openly about many things that are important to your relationship. It is not a test or a way to predict the future. It is designed to help you target the topics you need and want to talk about as a couple, which provides an excellent introduction before beginning the pre-Cana program.

PRE-CANA INSTRUCTION

Various programs are available throughout the state of Georgia and a calendar of upcoming weekend classes/retreats can be found on the Diocese of Savannah website at: <https://diosav.org/familylife-programs>

Your Priest or Deacon can help you determine which program will be best for you.

V. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Church Documents

The following documents are required by the Church:

1. Baptismal Certificates: **Catholics** need a recent copy of their baptismal certificate from the Church of their baptism, noting all Sacraments received, and should be no more than 6 months old as of the date on which it is handed to the Officiant or the person preparing you for marriage.* If the Bride or Groom was baptized in another faith, and later was received into the Catholic Church, we need a copy of his/her Profession of Faith, with notations. Non-Catholics must provide some evidence of baptism, i.e. a certificate or letter from the Church's secretary, or a signed affidavit by a witness to the baptism. Bring these documents to the Priest or Deacon as soon as they are available.

**This can be easily obtained within a couple of weeks by writing to the Church where you were baptized requesting a "baptismal certificate with notations." The original certificate issued years ago is unacceptable.*

If baptized at a Military Chapel, write to: Archdiocese for Military Services, USA, Sacramental Records Department, P. O. Box 4469, Washington, DC 20017-0469. You can either print a request form to mail to this address, or make your request online at <http://www.milarch.org/sacramental/index.html>. There is a processing fee for each request.

2. Bride and Groom Questionnaires (Form A-1 & A-2): These forms are completed by the Priest or Deacon at one of your meetings. Forms are signed and witnessed to certify that the information is correct.

3. Affidavit for Freedom to Marry (Form B): The Bride and Groom each need two affidavits completed on their behalf. Affidavits are completed by relatives or friends who attest that each of the espoused is free to marry. These forms must be either **notarized by a Notary Public or signed in the presence of a clergy member of the pastoral staff, or if out of town, in the presence of their own priest or deacon.** Forms will be given to the couple during their first meeting with the Priest or Deacon and should be returned as soon as possible.

4. Dispensation Form (Form D-1): Whenever a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, Christian or non-Christian, the Church requires this form to be filled out by the clergy and filed with the Diocese of Savannah. Whenever a marriage ceremony (reception of vows) is conducted by a non-Catholic minister or civil official, a dispensation form is required as well. The Clergy member will complete this form for you if required.

5. Mixed Marriage Promises (Form D-2): As noted above, in the case of an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party makes a promise to maintain his or her faith and do all in his or her power to ensure that any children born of the union will be raised in the Catholic faith. The party who is not Catholic makes no promises but is made aware of the promise by the Catholic party.

6. Letter of Permission from Pastor (Form P): If either party is a Catholic and a member of a parish other than St. Joseph's, they will need to have the pastor of their parish provide a letter of permission in order to be married outside of their home parish.

7. Final Decree of Annulment (Form E): If either party has been married before and the marriage resulted in a divorce, evidence of an annulment will be required. For those who have already obtained an annulment, a copy of the Final Decree is required; if an annulment is required but not yet obtained, the Priest or Deacon can assist with this process. A wedding date cannot be entered on the Church calendar, even tentatively, until evidence of the annulment, in the form of a Final Decree, has been received.

Civil Documents

1. Civil Marriage License: A Civil Marriage License is obtained at any County Probate Court in the State of Georgia, however if you reside outside of the state of Georgia, you **must** obtain your license from Bibb County. License fees may vary from county to county; you can obtain specifics on fees and requirements by contacting the Probate Court Office here in Macon at: <http://www.maconbibb.us/probate-court-marriage-license/>

The Marriage License, along with the return envelope furnished by the County (preferably stamped), should be given to the Officiant at least one week prior to the wedding ceremony. It is illegal in Georgia for a clergy member to officiate at a marriage unless the license is in hand. Assurances that the license has been issued are not sufficient.

2. Death Certificate: If either party has been married before and the marriage ended due to the death of a spouse, a copy of the death certificate will be required.

Marriage Certificates

On your wedding day, St. Joseph's Catholic Church will issue a Church Certificate of Marriage to you.

To obtain a certified copy of your Civil Marriage Certificate, contact the Probate Court in the county in which you received your Marriage License. In some counties, you can arrange for this at the time you apply for the license.

VI. FEE SCHEDULE

Sanctuary

The fee for the Sanctuary covers the use of: the Sanctuary for the ceremony; the Sanctuary for the rehearsal; the Bride's Room; and the Groom's Waiting Area. This fee is due, along with the Church Reservation & Acknowledgement of Responsibility Form, at the time of reserving your proposed date.

Non-Parishioners- \$1,200.00

Registered Parishioners who are not active**- \$900.00

Active Registered Parishioners***- \$500.00

**When a member of St. Joseph's reaches the age of 21 years old, they are expected to register as an individual parishioner, independent of their family of birth. An individual older than 21 years of age, who has not registered independently of their family of birth, will not be recognized as a registered parishioner.

***An "active registered parishioner" is an individual who is registered at St. Joseph's and who has been active in Time, Talent and Treasure for **at least six months prior to the reservation of the wedding date**. The determination of whether one is an active parishioner is made at the point of scheduling the first meeting with the Priest or Deacon, and is based upon regular attendance at Mass, volunteer work in parish ministries, and financial contribution through regular and consistent use of parish envelopes or check, so that it is on record at the parish.

Officiant

It is customary for the groom to provide an honorarium to the Priest or Deacon officiating. The amount is a matter of personal discretion and should reflect your sincere appreciation. A recommended minimum of \$300 is appreciated.

Music

Organist- \$200

Cantor- \$100

Additional music fees may apply, please see the Music Section on page 10 for more information.

Altar Server

Altar Server- \$20 per server. (one server is assigned for a Liturgy of the Word, two for a full Mass)

Deadlines for Fees

The fee for the Sanctuary is due at the time of reserving the date on the Church Calendar along with the Church Reservation & Acknowledgement of Responsibility Form.

The fee for the Altar Server(s) is due at the Rehearsal in cash. Altar Servers are coordinated by the Altar Server Ministry through information provided to them by the Wedding Coordinator. Music Department fees are due prior to the ceremony.

Refund Policy

If a wedding is cancelled, the following schedule will determine the refund, if applicable, to the party who paid the fee:

If cancelled at least nine months prior: 100% of fee is refundable

If cancelled within six to nine months prior: 50% of fee is refundable

If cancelled within six months prior: Fee is non-refundable

VII. PLANNING THE LITURGY

Ceremony

There are two types of beautiful wedding ceremonies: Wedding Liturgy within the Mass and Wedding Liturgy outside of Mass. Both of these Liturgies celebrate unity. The Bride and Groom will discuss these options with their Priest or Deacon and decide which is appropriate for their wedding. All decisions and plans should be made while meeting with the clergy.

Two Catholics: It would be highly recommended that the celebration of marriage between two Catholics would take place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal Mystery of Christ. The couple should understand that they are the ministers of Christ's grace in the Sacrament of Matrimony. The Priest who assists at the celebration of the sacrament receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church. The purpose of the Priest and the other official witnesses (best man and maid of honor) is to express visibly the fact that marriage is a public, ecclesial (Church) reality. It is also highly recommended that before their wedding, the Bride and Groom would each make a sincere and good confession.

Interfaith Marriage: If one of the spouses is a baptized Christian of another denomination, either Liturgy may be used. However, if choosing the Wedding Liturgy within the Mass, only the Catholic party may receive Holy Communion because the Catholic Church does not recognize intercommunion. The Priest will give a brief explanation at Mass and will invite those who are not Catholic to come forward for a blessing. In addition, if one of the parties in the marriage is not baptized, then the wedding takes place most appropriately in the context of a Wedding Liturgy apart from Mass, which would not include Holy Communion.

Should you wish to include language in your program explaining the sacrament, the following may be used: **It is the Catholic Church's doctrine that we are unable to extend an open invitation for everyone to receive Communion. If you are not Catholic, we invite you to come forward at Communion to receive a blessing, and to be one with us in this faith community praying for Christian unity. When coming forward for a blessing, please indicate this by folding your arms across your chest.** The Priest or Deacon will provide a copy of a wedding planning publication for the appropriate Wedding Liturgy chosen, which lists suggested readings and gives an overview of all prayers and vows recited. This booklet is designed to help you choose readings, music, prayers, etc., as well as wedding participants. You will use this booklet to discuss your ceremony with the Officiant and your Wedding Coordinator. You will be asked to complete the Wedding Information Form located in the back of the booklet and return it to the Priest or Deacon preparing you at least one week prior to the wedding date.

Music

The first step in arranging music for your wedding is to contact Nelda Chapman at (478) 745-1631 ext. 120 or nelda@st-joseph.cc. You will be able to discuss music plans with Nelda in detail as it relates to your ceremony.

Sacred Music- Since the wedding is a worship service, only sacred music may be used. You may suggest music for use during the service, and you may request the guidance or the officiant helping you in the planning of the wedding, but the final decision rests with the organist.

Guest Vocalists / Instrumentalists- **All guest performers must be approved by Ms. Chapman.** The text of vocal solos is to be limited to Scripture and sacred poetry and must be approved as well. The St. Joseph Music Department will be glad to assist you in securing cantors and/or soloists.

Rehearsal- Music is not rehearsed at the wedding rehearsal. Guest musicians must confirm music and rehearse with the organist by appointment. If requested, there may be a fee for frequent meetings or rehearsals which require the presence of the music department.

Fees- The base fee for one St. Joseph Church organist is \$200. This base fee covers prelude music through recessional music. Additional fees may be assessed for special requests. Fees for guest musicians (singers and instrumentalists) are set by the individual performer. The organ of St. Joseph's is an extremely valuable instrument, quite complex in design and such an integral part of the St. Joseph liturgies that only the St. Joseph organists and associates are allowed to play. In the event that a guest organist is approved to play for a wedding, a bench fee of \$200 is required. Fees for St. Joseph choirs are set based on the number of choristers required and can be determined by Ms. Chapman. No music rehearsal may take place during the wedding rehearsal due to time constraints.

Flowers, Candles, and Decorations

Decorating of the Church may take place only on the day of the wedding. If multiple weddings take place on a single day, planning should be made to accommodate the different weddings. You may use your own florist for floral arrangements used in the Sanctuary. Your florist will be asked to abide by the policies of St. Joseph's Church and placement and delivery of the flowers will need to be directed and coordinated by the Wedding Coordinator.

Altar Flowers- Flowers, palms, ferns or other plants may be used on the main altar, as well as the side altars, and such flowers are to remain in the church for the weekend Masses. Rental flowers may be removed the next business day. Artificial flowers or plants are not allowed for the wedding ceremony. In general, Altar flowers are not permitted during the season of Lent, however, flowers are permitted for weddings. For any weddings during Lent, the flowers will be removed from the Altar after the wedding ceremony.

Candles: The candles on both the High Altar and the Side Altars will be lit for your ceremony. Use of the Church's candelabra is available, but other candelabras are not to be used for the wedding ceremony. The use of Unity Candelabrum is not allowed at St. Joseph's. You may not use open flames or candles in globes as aisle decoration.

Pew Decorations: For the protection of the pew furniture, pew decorations are discouraged. If used, ribbon, or a length of tulle, may be tied to the end of the pew to attach a flower arrangement; no tacks, nails, staples, tape or putty may be used on pews, walls or furnishings; shedding greenery and candles are not allowed on the pews. Anything used to attach flowers to the ribbon/tulle should be covered in fabric. All pew decorations must be removed by the florist or their representative, and any cleanup necessary due to removing the pew decorations must be done by same immediately following the ceremony. You will be held fully responsible for any damage to the pews or other furnishings as a result of non-compliance with the instructions given.

Outside Wedding Décor: Decorations are allowed on entry doors, both exterior and interior, however no tacks, staples, nails or other implements which may harm the wood may be used. No rice, balloons, birdseed, bubbles, sparklers, or confetti, etc., may be used either inside or outside of the Church. Bells and colored glow sticks are allowed outdoors. Any requests for other decorations must be approved by the Pastor and if approved, must be removed immediately following the ceremony. St. Joseph's Church reserves the right to ask any Florist who violates the rules to either correct these violations immediately or to leave the premises. No exceptions will be made.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

Due to liability issues, flower petals, real or artificial, may not be strewn on the floors of the Sanctuary or anywhere in or outside the church building or parking lot. However, they may have flower buds that can be handed to guests seated on the aisle, every other row so as not to delay the procession, or carry a flower bouquet/ball. Otherwise, if you choose to have a flower girl in your wedding party, her role is to be strictly symbolic. The same is true for ring bearers. The rings to be used for the ceremony may not be attached to the ring bearer's pillow. The rings should be given to the Wedding Coordinator prior to the wedding so that she can place them on the altar. The minimum suggested age for both flower girls and ring bearers is age four. No signs or notices of any kind may be carried by either the Flower Girl or Ring Bearer (for example: Here Comes Your Bride).

Altar Servers

St. Joseph's Altar Servers will be assigned, as required, for your ceremony based on whether you will marry within the Mass (two servers) or outside of the Mass (one server). All weddings are required to have these servers, who have been trained on wedding procedures at St. Joseph's. If the couple wishes to invite additional servers, that is acceptable and they are welcome. However, all servers must be currently active and serving at a Catholic parish. If the couple knows altar servers who have been trained at St. Joseph's and wishes for them to serve at their wedding, they should contact the Wedding Coordinator. They will verify that the requested servers are trained for weddings and will be sure the schedule is pre-filled with the proper assignments.

Photography

The photographer should direct any questions to the Wedding Coordinator during the time they are on St. Joseph's premises and are asked to cooperate with direction provided by the Wedding Coordinator and Officiant. The choir loft will be open, permitting photographers that vantage point as well as the vestibule areas, center aisle positions to the rear of the seated guests. The **photographer may not enter the altar area during the ceremony, nor may they go down the side aisles.**

Posed pictures taken on the altar following the ceremony must be confined to formal family and wedding party group shots. Under no circumstances should informal shots, including members of the wedding party seated on the altar steps be considered.

St. Joseph's Church does not allow flash photography during the ceremony. The official photographer, family and friends should keep in mind the sacred nature of the occasion and conduct themselves accordingly.

Pre-Ceremony Photos

Wedding Parties may not arrive at the Church any earlier than one and a half hours prior to the start of the ceremony. Photos inside St. Joseph's are not possible prior to the Wedding Ceremony. Pre-Ceremony photos may be taken in various areas around St. Joseph's grounds – the front steps, side walk ways, street in front of Church, etc. The photographer must be finished photographing any of the Wedding Party 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. At 15 minutes prior to the ceremony, the wedding party will be brought to their respective places and may be unavailable for a short time during that transition.

Post-Ceremony Photos

The time allocated for photos after the ceremony is 15 minutes. Please be prepared to move quickly through your list of photos. We suggest you provide your photographer a complete list of their "must-have" requests prior to the wedding to make the most of the time allotted. Any posed photographs involving the Officiant are to be taken first. During the photography time after the ceremony, the photographer is the person principally charged with insuring that a respectful decorum, consistent with the sacred nature of the space, is observed by all involved. In the event the photographer has difficulties enforcing this, he/she may request the assistance of the Wedding Coordinator. When the Wedding Coordinator has indicated that the allotted time is complete, the photographer and Wedding Party will be requested to leave the Church and remove all equipment at that time.

Videography

The Bride and Groom make their own arrangements for videography.

1. All video equipment must be set up no later than thirty minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding. For the 6:30 p.m. wedding, the videographer may set up only after the parishioners have exited from the 4:30 p.m. Mass.
2. The Bride and Groom may wear wireless microphones.
3. Video equipment must be stationary during the ceremony; no “roving” camera is permitted. Equipment may be set in front of the first pillar in the front of the church or in the corner of the transept, but must not be visible to guests and cannot block the aisle. Equipment may also be set in the center aisle behind the last row of guests, after the processional has completed.
4. Absolutely, no floodlights or any other special lighting may be used during the ceremony.
5. No wires may be laid across any aisles.
6. Nothing may be, pinned, stapled or otherwise affixed in any way to Church walls, furnishing or floors. The only acceptable tape is stage or gaffers tape, but should only be used if absolutely necessary.
7. Persons operating video equipment shall be dressed appropriately for a formal church service and in a manner comparable to guests in attendance.
8. The videographer may not “tap” into St. Joseph’s sound system for additional sound. The Bride and Groom are responsible for ensuring the photographer and/or videographer has received a copy of these Guidelines and agrees to abide by them. St. Joseph’s Church reserves the right to ask any photographer and/or videographer who violates these rules to either correct the violation immediately or to leave the premises. No exceptions will be made.

VIII. REHEARSAL

A rehearsal is usually scheduled for the day before the wedding. Rehearsal times are scheduled based on the wedding day/time you have chosen. The existing rehearsal times cannot be changed; they are set to accommodate Church scheduling and the schedules of the Wedding Coordinators who, in many cases, come to the Church for your rehearsal directly from work.

Please be aware that the entire ceremony is under the direction of the Priest or Deacon who is in attendance, with the assistance of the Wedding Coordinator. Wedding/Bridal consultants, if you choose to have them, are not to interfere and may function only under the direction of the Officiant and/or our Wedding Coordinator.

All rehearsals will take place in the Sanctuary, and are limited to 45 minutes in length. The rehearsal is limited to the time allotted due to other wedding rehearsals and special events that take place at St. Joseph’s throughout the year. **Rehearsals will begin promptly at their assigned time, whether all are present or not.** The Bride and Groom are responsible for ensuring prompt attendance of all members of the wedding party.

Those attending should be present at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled rehearsal time to ensure a successful rehearsal.

All members of the wedding party must be mindful they are in a sacred place where respectful behavior is expected from everyone.

IX. WEDDING DAY

The Bridal Party may not arrive at the Church any earlier than one and a half hours before the scheduled wedding time, with no exception. The Wedding Coordinator will meet you and direct you to the Bride's Room and Groom's Waiting Area.

The florist, photographer and videographer may set up 30 minutes prior to the wedding. They are asked to abide by the regulations set forth in these and other guidelines. If they have any questions on the wedding day, they should direct them to the Wedding Coordinator.

As at the rehearsal, the Bridal Party must be mindful of the sacredness of the rite and are asked to abide by the St. Joseph Catholic Church policies and procedures within this booklet and listed specifically in the next section, General Regulations.

Tardy Policy

Due to the nature of St. Joseph's daily schedule, it is imperative that your ceremony begin on time. If you are not present at St. Joseph's Church or are present, but are not ready to begin your ceremony at the scheduled time, you will forfeit the fifteen minutes of post-ceremony photography. Additionally, if your ceremony is scheduled as a Mass, it will be shortened to a Liturgy ceremony. Please take care to be aware of any events on your wedding day that may cause you delay (planned road construction, sporting events, conventions, etc.) and plan accordingly.

Bride's Room

The Bride's Room (Nursery), is located in the basement of the Church and can be accessed by the stairs located on the side and back end of the Church. The Bride's Room is for the exclusive use of the Bride and her bridesmaids before the ceremony only. Water and light snacks are allowed in the Bride's Room only, within reason, and with the expectation that the room will be cleaned and in the condition in which it was found.

All personal items must be removed from the Bride's Room at least 20 minutes prior to the ceremony and the room must be returned to its original state. It is best to assign someone outside of the wedding party to take charge of personal belongings and lock them in the trunk of someone's car.

The Wedding Coordinator or other persons cannot accept responsibility for watching possessions during the ceremony.

The parish cannot accept responsibility for the security of personal items or of items left before, during or after your ceremony anywhere on St. Joseph's grounds.

As with the food regulation above, the room is expected to be left in the condition in which it was found and it is the Bride and Groom's responsibility to designate a person for tidying the Bride's Room and Groom's waiting area.

Dress Code

Great sensitivity is required in choosing the wedding dress. There can be no bare shoulders or back, and the hem must reach at least below the knee. If your dress is strapless, you will need to wear a shawl or bolero (but nothing sheer or see-through) during the ceremony. If you have a veil (which is not mandatory), please note that it is **NOT sufficient** to cover bare shoulders and back. It is very important to follow these guidelines. You will be required to sign an agreement that you are aware of and understand these policies.

We also ask that you be tasteful in selecting gowns for your wedding party and avoid dresses that are low cut or very short in length; and in keeping with the St. Joseph Church surroundings and the Sacrament celebrated.

X. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- The Bridal Party is urged to arrive at the Church at the time given in the Facilities Section of this booklet, and to abide by the times listed as required departure time.
- No smoking is permitted anywhere in the Church building.
- No alcohol** may be consumed or brought on the parish grounds or in parish buildings, either at the rehearsal, before the ceremony or at the actual ceremony, and all wedding participants must arrive for the ceremony in a sober state. If there is any question to the sobriety of the party, the Priest or Deacon has the right to refuse to perform the ceremony, or ask the offending member to leave the premises.
- No flower petals (real, paper or silk) may be thrown by guests or flower girls. No aisle runners or other items that could cause someone to trip in the aisle are permitted. No rice, balloons, bubbles, birdseed, confetti, sparklers, etc. may be used. Bells and colored glow sticks are allowed outside.
- Receiving lines and guest books are not permitted in the Church. These delay the seating prior to the wedding and the recession following the wedding; there may be another Wedding or Mass to follow.

□ St. Joseph's Church nursery is not available during weddings. Under no circumstances will any room within the church be allowed for impromptu babysitting purposes by family or guests, as this is in direct violation of the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Savannah. The Bride and Groom will be held responsible for communicating this policy to family and guests.

□ For the sanctity of the Church, protection of parish property, security of your guests and for the overall decorum of your wedding, these regulations will be strictly enforced. It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to ensure that your florists, photographers, videographers, outside wedding consultants, wedding party, family and guests are aware of and observe these regulations.

CANCELLATION POLICY

St. Joseph's Church reserves the right to cancel the wedding if the legal requirements under State or Church law are not met. In the event of cancellation for any reason, please refer to the Fee Schedule section on page 8 for the refund policy of wedding fees.

XI. ORDER OF CEREMONY

Processional

Seating of Grandmothers / Mothers
Processional of Celebrant (if Liturgical Procession)
Processional of Attendants
Processional of the Bride

Greeting / Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading
Psalm (Sung or Spoken)
Second Reading
Gospel Acclamation (Sung or Spoken)
Gospel
Homily

Rite of Marriage

Exchange of Vows
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful)

Liturgy of the Eucharist (if having a Mass)

Presentation of the Gifts
Eucharistic Prayer
The Mystery of Faith
Great Amen
Lord's Prayer (the Our Father)
Nuptial Blessing
Sign of Peace
Lamb of God
Distribution of the Holy Eucharist
Devotion to Our Lady (if applicable)

Final Prayer and Blessing

Recessional

XII. CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSES FOR A WEDDING MASS

GREETING

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Celebrant: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ

INVITATION TO PRAYER

People: May the Lord accept this sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his Name, for our good and the good of all His holy Church.

PREFACE DIALOGUE

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right and just.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

Priest: The mystery of faith

People:

A – We proclaim Your death O Lord, and profess Your resurrection until You come again. –OR–

B – When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim Your death, O Lord, until You come again. –OR–

C – Save us, Savior of the world, for by Your cross and resurrection, You have set us free.

SIGN OF PEACE

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And with your spirit

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us. (Repeat)
Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world:
Grant us Peace

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

People: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

CONCLUDING RITES

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.