

****“Make [your wedding] a real celebration – because marriage is a celebration – a Christian celebration, not a worldly feast! ... What happened in Cana 2,000 years ago, happens today at every wedding celebration: that which makes your wedding full and profoundly true will be the presence of the Lord who reveals himself and gives his grace. It is his presence that offers the ‘good wine,’ he is the secret to full joy, that which truly warms the heart.*

“It is good that your wedding be simple and make what is truly important stand out. Some are more concerned with the exterior details, with the banquet, the photographs, the clothes, the flowers... These are important for a celebration, but only if they point to the real reason for your joy: the Lord’s blessing on your love.”

Pope Francis, address to engaged couples in Rome, February 14, 2014

Cathedral Parish Wedding Policies

I INTRODUCTION

“The Liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life, and from it flows the Church’s power and strength because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.” (Sacrosanctum Concilium, Vatican Council II

The Wedding liturgy is a sacred rite invoking God’s witness and blessing upon the words and commitment made by the bride and groom. In the midst of all the obvious joy and excitement, your wedding remains a moment of utmost, profound worship celebrated by you and your families and friends. It is an expression of your personal faith within the context of the community of the Church.

II GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Because of the sacredness of the wedding ritual, and out of respect for God and the house of worship which is the church building, a few things need to be explicitly understood and accepted without exception. **You are agreeing to all parish wedding policies as presented in this booklet and on our website by choosing to be married at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.**

The Cathedral Basilica is not a ‘venue’ as are reception halls or restaurants, it is not rented: it is a house of worship and a community of faith which you are specifically asking to witness your vows. As a result, there are specific policies and requirements that ensure the appropriate conduct of weddings within our parish.

Respect, decorum and dignified behavior must be maintained and observed at all times by you, your wedding party and all your guests in regards to the church property and building, the sanctuary and the entire staff.

Punctuality for your rehearsal and ceremony is of the utmost importance.

III The Rehearsal

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL will be held on Friday afternoon or evening for Saturday weddings and on Thursday evenings for Friday weddings, and it is an important part of the preparation for the ceremony. It allows members of the immediate wedding party to become familiar with the environment of our church building and with the public roles they will assume as part of the liturgy. The parish wedding coordinator will conduct the wedding rehearsal and will give a brief overview of the liturgy to help all concerned understand the prayerful nature of the celebration. Only those directly involved in the ceremony should be invited to the actual rehearsal in church – others should be directed to meet you at the rehearsal dinner site. Those who should be present at your rehearsal in church include the bride and the groom, both sets of parents, step parents, etc., grandparents (optional), bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (if being used), and gift bearers. At the rehearsal **a responsible adult must accompany any children** who are in the wedding party. We ask that you require all these members of your wedding party to be present for the rehearsal, and kindly remind them they **MUST ARRIVE ON TIME**. We suggest that you ask everyone to arrive 20 minutes before the scheduled time. Also remind them of the inevitable St. Augustine Friday afternoon/evening traffic congestion and the parking realities in the historic district. Rehearsals are allotted a total of 60 minutes and we strictly adhere to the schedule. Rehearsals that begin late risk losing adequate rehearsal time.

The rehearsal itself is not the time for discussion and decision-making. All decisions on the form of the procession, the choice of readers/gift bearers, etc. are to be made beforehand and submitted to the wedding coordinator.

MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING

MUSIC GUIDELINES

Music for the wedding must be planned jointly by the couple in consultation with the Cathedral Basilica organist, Ms. Shannon McKay (ssmckasavant@aol.com). **In order to prevent any hardship, do not make any musical plans without consulting with Ms. McKay first.** She will email you a packet of music information six months before your wedding or earlier if you so desire. Remember that the Sacrament of Marriage is a liturgical celebration. Therefore, one of the basic principles that must determine your selection of music is whether the music is indeed liturgical music. Popular songs, Praise and Worship and secular music, no matter how meaningful they may be to you, cannot be used in the liturgy. They may be appropriately performed at your wedding reception. For the wedding liturgy you'll want to ensure the emphasis is on sacred music, which derives its context from scriptural and liturgical sources; music that celebrates the Love of God, and by its very nature enhances your union within the liturgical rites being celebrated. This music must also be fitting and appropriate for our liturgical space and within the norms of our regular parish music program.

MUSIC STAFF AND ORGANIST

The Cathedral Basilica organist will serve as the principal musician at all Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine weddings. [The organist's fee is \$200 and the Cantor's fee is \$150 – see below. **These fees are not included in your church fee** and will be due one week before the date of your wedding rehearsal.] As principal musician for the wedding, the organist is entrusted with the responsibility of determining the suitability of musical selections within the context of the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, and must approve all music and musicians chosen for the ceremony. The Cathedral Basilica organist also bears the essential responsibility of ensuring the proper performance and timing of the various musical portions of the wedding liturgy. Organists and pianists as principal musicians not affiliated with the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine are not permitted.

CANTOR

A Cantor from the Cathedral Basilica is provided for every wedding and has the liturgical responsibility of leading the singing of the Responsorial Psalm, the opening hymn, the Gloria (at wedding Masses) and the service music required by the wedding rite. **Only experienced Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine cantors may serve in this capacity.** The Cantor may also serve as a soloist at appropriate times within the celebration. All of this helps to avoid disappointment to the couple and their families since it ensures a desirable continuity with the church's regular worship life. It also helps guarantee that the service will go smoothly because organist and cantor are accustomed to working with each other as well as with the specific acoustical demands of the liturgical space.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Instrumentalists (trumpet, violin, oboe, flute, harp, trio, quartet, etc.) may be used upon approval of, and arrangement with, the Cathedral organist. A list of experienced instrumentalists will be provided in your music information packet. Fees for all instrumentalists are to be negotiated independently of the Cathedral Basilica.

CHORAL ENSEMBLES

Occasionally couples wish to engage a choral ensemble for their wedding ceremony. When this is desired, the Director of Music, Dr. Bernie Sans (cathstaugmusic@gmail.com) will secure and rehearse the necessary personnel, and will conduct them during the wedding liturgy. The cost for the choir is payable prior to the booking of the choir and is determined by the number in the ensemble.

GUEST SOLOISTS

On occasion, at the request of the bride and groom, a trained soloist may be invited to present a special piece of sacred music. There are moments within the wedding liturgy where this may take place. They are:

- a. A sung prelude
- b. If Mass is celebrated, at the Offertory or during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- c. Marian tribute

The appropriate placement of the guest soloist's song will be determined by the Cathedral organist or the Director of Music, and the guest soloist must rehearse with the Cathedral organist on the day of the wedding rehearsal.

MUSIC DEADLINE

Music selections must be received four weeks before the date of the wedding.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR MUSIC AT CATHEDRAL BASILICA WEDDINGS (**IMPORTANT**)

1. Immediately after the processional has ended and the wedding party and celebrant are in place, an OPENING HYMN will be sung. A list of possible hymns/songs appropriate for weddings is included in the music information packet.
2. If your wedding takes within the context of Mass, a Gloria will be sung after the Penitential Rite (except during the seasons of Advent and Lent.)
3. The Responsorial Psalm will be sung by the cantor.
4. The Gospel Acclamation will be sung at all weddings.
5. If Mass is celebrated, all of the Eucharistic Acclamations will be sung.