

*The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is above all, an act of worship and prayer in the presence of God. Further, this celebration observes the rites and norms of the Roman Catholic Church, and respects all traditions and customs thereof. Lastly, this celebration takes place at St. Thomas the Apostle, which is a sacred home to many that regularly hosts prayerful observances prior to and following wedding celebrations. Please be mindful of this context when planning for your wedding, and communicate these principles as well as the information below to your family, friends, and professionals who will be aiding with your liturgy's celebration.*

## PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

**Respect of those gathered for prayer/celebration & respect for the sacred space is paramount.**

**Schedule** sufficient time for photos prior to the ceremony. Formal photography must be suspended 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the ceremony to allow the wedding party time for personal needs and prayerful preparation for the sacred celebration. Photography & Videography must be concluded and out of the church no later than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony, as the church has other scheduled uses/visitors.

**Flash** photography is discouraged during the sacred celebration, as it distracts from the prayer of those gathered. 'Soft flash' may be used if necessary. Any photography methods may be used prior to, or following the liturgy.

**Tripods** or other camera devices may not block the view of any of those gathered to participate in the ceremony, or be left in one of the main aisles/walkways for safety reasons.

**Professionals** will not step up on the Altar platform, walk in front of any guests, or obscure any person's view during the ceremony. Likewise, professionals will not interfere with musicians/the choir area. Alternatively, the use of side shots, crouching shots from part way down the center aisle and long shots behind the back pews is encouraged. Professionals should also avoid excessive movement during the ceremony so as not to be a distraction to those at prayer. Please see the diagram for more information on photography locations.

## ENVIRONMENT & DECORATIONS

**Respect for the Sacred Space & the Liturgy of the Church is paramount.**

**Decorations** in general are festive and welcome. It is helpful to photograph the Altar platform prior to decorating for easy and fast restoration of the church's appearance after the ceremony. All of the regular decorations in the church must be returned to their original configuration 30 minutes after the ceremony's conclusion. Failure to return the church to the configuration used for regular worship will result in loss of the cleaning deposit.

**Flowers** are a beautiful addition to the celebration of a wedding. Flowers must never be placed atop, in front of, behind, or next to the Altar, out of respect for the Eucharistic celebration which takes place there, and in consideration for the walkways on either side which are needed for movement during the wedding liturgy. Some stands are available for use. For questions on flower placement, please contact the Director of Liturgy.

**Flower Girl petals** are welcome if the ceremony involves a flower girl. Silk petals are encouraged for throwing, as real petals can stain clothes/floor/pews, and are a challenge for you to clean up.

**Toys or Carts** of any kind are not allowed for use as part of the liturgy out of respect for the Sacrament being celebrated. If a child (potential ring bearer/flower girl) is too small to process into the church on their own or with the aid of a loved one, they are too young to serve as a ring bearer/flower girl, etc.

**Pew attachments** are a beautiful way to reserve pews for the wedding party/family or to change the appearance of the space in general. Please ensure such attachments do not obstruct the aisle walking space, damage the pews/floor, or pose any kind of fire hazard (no candles, please).

**Tables** in the church entrance may be used for a guestbook and distribution of worship aids, etc. Please return the entry space to its previous configuration within 30 minutes after the ceremony.

