

Marriage Guidelines

Journey of Faith into the Christian Community

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church
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April 7, 2021

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What is Sacramental Marriage?

Sacraments are outward signs of inward graces given to the Church by Jesus Christ for our holiness. Christian marriage is a sacrament that joins together a man and a woman into a community of love called a family. In the love which binds the two in one, the Christian community finds a reflection of the free, total, faithful, and fruitful love that God has for us.

Marriage Preparation at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

The staff of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church (OLOHR) is readily available to assist couples in their preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Couples must first establish the availability/commitment of a priest/deacon for their planned wedding date, and that is done at least SIX MONTHS in advance of the prospective wedding date. Adequate time is needed to allow for interviews with the priest or deacon who will assist the couple in assessing their readiness for marriage. It will also allow ample time for participation in and completion of the marriage preparation program selected for the couple by the priest or deacon facilitating their preparation for the sacrament.

The six-month requirement is counted from the date the couple first contacts the church. The couple should refer to the church website: **olohr.com** for all marriage preparation information.

The Church is concerned more than ever for the well-being of married couples and adequate preparation will offset problems that could arise during marriage. In keeping with this, the Church requires that all couples participate in a marriage preparation program. It will assure the spiritual and practical understanding of married life and the Sacrament of Marriage. After an initial meeting with the priest or deacon, the engaged will receive an email message with instructions for the on-line completion of a confidential relationship assessment instrument. At that time, the priest or deacon along with a married couple mentor who will be assigned to the engaged party will also assess the other elements of preparation appropriate for the couple.

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 a week, 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 the fees/documents you must bring to acquire your license. Requirements vary slightly from one civil parish to another. Your marriage license must be delivered to OLOHR office at least a week in advance of your wedding.

Natural Family Planning

Information and training in Natural Family Planning are available to all engaged couples. Information about registering for a Natural Family Planning class is located on the church website. Each couple preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage will need to contact the Diocese of Baton Rouge at <https://www.diobr.org/nfp-101-the-basics-course> to complete this course.

Previously Married

Any prior marriages in the history of either party to a prospective sacramental marriage needs to be disclosed to the priest/deacon in one's first communication with a priest/deacon about marriage. A sacramental annulment process may be necessary for either the Catholic or non-Catholic party to a new marriage.

Church Fees

Officiating at weddings is not among the required duties of a Catholic priest or deacon, except at those to which he freely agrees, and he receives no compensation from the Church for officiating at weddings. An honorarium of the couple's choice to the officiating priest/deacon – for his time and effort in facilitating your preparation requirements and the actual wedding ceremony elements – is customary. Because of the costs of utilities, staff and custodial expense incurred by the Church, the fee for weddings at OLOHR is \$400 (due at the time of booking) for registered parishioners and \$750 (due at the time of booking) for non-parishioners. These fees are nominal, and do not cover the costs incurred by the parish for hosting a wedding. However, **no one is ever denied a wedding at OLOHR due to limited financial resources.** If a couple has limited resources and cannot afford the Church Fees, please speak directly with our pastor prior to speaking with other staff about reserving the Church. We are happy to celebrate the weddings of those who cannot afford this fee, provided this is also reflected in the simplicity of the wedding regarding music, number of attendants, décor, reception venue, etc.

Wedding Ceremony

The couple is invited to be actively involved in the preparation of their wedding liturgy. The Church's liturgy provides many options for the prayers, readings, vows and blessings. The priest or deacon will assist the couple in selecting appropriate texts for the wedding. Christian weddings are not private events but are sacramental celebrations which take place in the presence of the faith community.

A couple who enters a marriage covenant is an important symbol for the faith community – a symbol of the love that God has for each one of us. For this reason, the wedding liturgy at OLOHR is celebrated in a way that always has the married couple visible to the community. As with all rites of the Church, the active participation of the assembly in the prayers, acclamations and singing is considered the norm. In addition to the wedding party, liturgical ministers are needed for the celebration of a wedding liturgy. Ushers, readers, server/cross bearer, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and musicians have an important role to play in your wedding. The people you chose to serve in these liturgical roles must have the gifts and the proper training

necessary to participate in your wedding liturgy. A wedding liturgy coordinator will advise your liturgical ministers about any procedures unique to OLOHR.

The Place and the Officiating Minister

Since weddings are acts of worship and prayer, in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, weddings must take place in a parish church and are not allowed in private homes, gardens, or reception halls. Marriages may be celebrated in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. With the permission of the bishop, when one party is an active member of a different religion or faith tradition, the wedding can take place in the worship place of the non-Catholic party and in the presence of the religious leader of that religious community. A Catholic priest or deacon can be invited to participate in the ceremony. In an interfaith marriage that takes place in a Catholic Church, the religious leader of the non-Catholic party is invited to take part in the ceremony to the extent allowed by Church guidelines.

Anyone involved in the wedding ceremony is expected to arrive sober so that each person participating is fully present during the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises of OLOHR prior to or during the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony.

A visiting priest or deacon who officiates at weddings at OLOHR must receive a letter of delegation from the pastor of OLOHR. The 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 OLOHR Parish. Furthermore, a cleric from outside the Diocese of Baton Rouge must have the testimonial of suitability for ministry from his own religious superior or bishop before he is able to exercise ministry at OLOHR (within the Diocese of Baton Rouge).

Wedding Liturgy Coordinator

A Wedding Liturgy Coordinator will be assigned to assist in the organization of your wedding liturgy. The Wedding Liturgy Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal, open and close the church, organize processions and see to matters of hospitality on the wedding day. This coordinator also sets up the sacred vessels, bread and wine, books, and linens needed for the wedding liturgy. The fee for the Wedding Liturgy Coordinator is included in the total amount of the wedding fee.

Selecting a Date and Time

All couples meet with a OLOHR Parish priest or deacon before a wedding date is set. At this meeting, the couple demonstrates that they understand and agree to follow all parish marriage guidelines. During the week, weddings may be held between 6:00 pm

and 7:00 pm except at those times when daily Mass is scheduled. Saturday weddings may be held anytime between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., or either 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.. If you desire a Saturday evening wedding, please contact the parish Administrative Assistant (sgautreau@olohr.com) to obtain the current available Saturday dates.

Due to its demand for parish activities and events, the church is reserved for your use 1 hour before the wedding and 30 minutes after the wedding. This is the time available for setup, decorating, photography/videography and clean-up. If additional time is needed before the wedding, this must be scheduled with the parish Administrative Assistant. An extra fee may be incurred.

If you schedule a Saturday evening wedding, there will be no decorating of any kind, including the delivery of any flowers or decorations prior to the Saturday Vigil Mass. Only after the Mass is concluded and all in attendance have vacated the church, can there be any deliveries of flowers or décor placed.

Modesty Policy

Due to the sacredness of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church promotes modesty. With this in mind, policies have been established to guide brides when choosing attire for herself and members of her wedding party. Keep in mind; coverage of the breasts (top and sides), and the back of the dress should not go below the waist. Strapless dresses may be worn with the addition of a bolero, shrug, jacket, shawl, tulle, etc. This guideline also applies to attire for the mothers, grandmothers, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Lectors, Gift Bearers, and any other female member in the wedding party. **It is the bride's responsibility to convey this policy to the female members in the wedding party.**

Music

The music for your wedding must be appropriate for liturgical use and must lead the assembly gathered for the wedding to worship and prayer. Ordinarily the couple is invited to select music. The various liturgical laws of the Church and all applicable parish policies – as well as good taste! – must be followed in conducting the wedding, with the local pastor having the final say in matters of this sort. In this regard, no secular music will be allowed in the ceremony. Additional guidelines and policies regarding music are also available from the Office of Marriage and Family Life of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Music for weddings is chosen based on guidelines from the diocese. The service of a cantor or song leader is necessary for most weddings. A cantor usually leads from the choir loft. He/She must be familiar with acceptable liturgical practices for the Sacrifice of the Mass. Some weddings opt to use only instrumental music, in which case a cantor is not necessary. The church office will provide the list of approved cantors from which the couple may choose for their own wedding and with whom they make financial

arrangements. If the couple desires a singer other than our approved cantors, the parish will have to approve their service provided they meet all of our guidelines.

The wedding couple is responsible for paying all musicians.

Decorations and Flowers

Floral decorations add to the beauty and dignity of a wedding ceremony; however, good taste in the appointment of decorations must be used. During some seasons of the church year the church will be decorated with appropriate seasonal décor (especially during the Christmas and Easter seasons) which cannot be removed. Weddings should be booked outside the seasons of Lent and Advent. Should the couple have questions with regard to flowers in the sanctuary, please contact our Administrative Assistant (sgautreau@olohr.com) for guidelines before consulting with a florist.

In the church of the living God, only living plants and flowers are appropriate in the sanctuary. Flowers or plants should not obscure the view of the altar, ambo, chair or the wedding party. No more than two floral arrangements are allowed in the sanctuary. Consideration should also be given to placing flowers in the gathering space and in the body of the church. The parish has green plants which normally decorate the church; additional greenery is usually not necessary. Floral arrangements may not be nailed or attached in any way to walls, arches, beams or doors. Pew markers must be attached with ribbon or plastic hangers only. Taping pew markers to pew ends is not allowed.

Altar candles are the only candles allowed in the church. The florist will be held responsible for any damage to church facilities caused by decorations.

Due to safety concerns and details of the opening procession, the use of candles and/or any floor décor is strictly prohibited down the aisle.

Finally, all decorations must be removed from the church within 30 minutes after the wedding. The couple should contact our Administrative Assistant (sgautreau@olohr.com) if they wish to leave any floral arrangements for Sunday Masses.

Photographers

While photography/videography during the wedding liturgy is permitted, weddings are occasions of worship and prayer in a space that is sacred to us, and all due respect and reverence is expected. The photographer/videographer is required to consult with the Wedding Liturgy Coordinator prior to the ceremony and to use proper decorum so as to be a minimal source of distraction to the assembly during the services. He/she would be well advised to also briefly visit with the officiant before the wedding begins to determine his personal photograph/videography directives. During the ceremony, only one official photographer and one official videographer will be permitted. Movie and video lighting are not allowed. If the ceremony is to be video-taped, the videographer and equipment will be positioned outside the sanctuary area in only in pre-designated locations.

The church is available for wedding portraits only one hour before and 30 minutes after the wedding. Photographs after the wedding should be limited so that the wedding party will not be delayed in attending the reception.

The photographer is responsible for proper decorum at this time.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal should be scheduled when reserving the church for a wedding, both of which must be scheduled in consultation with our Administrative Assistant (sgautreau@olohr.com), who must coordinate the date and time with a Wedding Liturgy Coordinator who will conduct the rehearsal. An outline of the names of all participants in the wedding liturgy should be given to our Administrative Assistant prior to the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party, including the bride herself, should rehearse for the wedding.

Bride's Room

A room for the bride and her attendants is available in the Full of Grace Café, if it has not been reserved by the Parish for another event. This can be reserved through our Facilities Coordinator (rdelatte@olohr.com). The gathering location for the groom and groomsmen is the cry (quieting) room in the back of the church.

Receptions

OLOHR is unable to host wedding receptions at this time.

“Checklist”

In preparing for marriage, the following steps must be followed:

1. Contact the parish Administrative Assistant, Susan Gautreau, 225-647-5321, during regular office hours to establish the availability of the priest or deacon to commit to your wedding date BEFORE reserving the church and reception venue. (His personal calendar is not the same as the church calendar.)
2. Prior to the initial meeting with the priest or deacon scheduled to officiate your wedding, it is advised to complete the required Diocesan retreat or Beloved Program at OLOHR as well as the NFP course at the Diocese of Baton Rouge <https://www.diobr.org/nfp-101-the-basics-course>.
3. The Administrative Assistant will contact you to begin your marriage prep meetings with the priest or deacon approximately 6 months before the ceremony.
3. Consult with the priest or deacon on music and our Administrative Assistant regarding décor at least two months prior to the wedding date.
4. Have final meeting with the priest or deacon approximately 1 month prior

to the ceremony.

5. Obtain a civil license and bring to officiant at the Church office no later than one week prior to your wedding rehearsal.

Summary of Fees

Wedding Fee - \$400 parishioners (\$750 non-parishioner)

The distinction presumes that registered parishioners are already supporting our regular church operating expenses by their participation in Total Stewardship to OLOHR Church, and are subsidizing the extraordinary expense of the weddings we host. Our wedding fee (payable to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary at time of booking wedding date) includes the following:

- Church Usage Fee (HVAC, audio, lighting systems/utilities, custodial & janitorial services)
- Stipend to the assigned Wedding Liturgy Coordinator/Rehearsal

Wedding Preparation - The wedding couple is responsible for paying the following fees which will prepare them for the Sacrament of Marriage:

- Focus Score - \$10
- Weekend Retreat - \$260
- Natural Family Planning Meeting – refer to the website for cost.

Consultation/Liturgy Preparation Only - \$100 (for weddings which are held elsewhere)

Music - The wedding couple is responsible for paying all musicians.