

GUIDELINES FOR MATRIMONY AT ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH:

1.) SETTING THE WEDDING DATE

Registration for a wedding and the necessary preparation must occur at least NINE (9) months before the wedding date.

Those previously married or in special circumstances (annulment proceedings, etc.) must be in good standing with the Church in order to schedule a wedding date. Dates will not be scheduled more than 15 months in advance. The church reserves the right to restrict weddings on certain dates.

Parishioners and other Catholics may celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Michael's.

A **Parishioner** is defined as a REGISTERED, ACTIVE, and CONTRIBUTING member of St. Michael Catholic Church for at least SIX (6) MONTHS prior to the day you contact the Parish Office to request a date (or the child of a parishioner as defined here).

A **Non-Parishioner** is an individual (or child of an individual) who has been a registered, contributing member of another Catholic parish for at least one year prior to the day you contact our Parish Office to request a wedding date. A letter of good standing will be required from your home parish.

Registration for the parish is made through the website or through the Parish Office. A final wedding date will not be reserved until the Wedding Registration form has been completed and the required 50% deposit has been paid. The Pastor (or his delegate, Gwen Coffey) reserves the right to approve all outside vendors (e.g. photographer, videographer, florist). Please do NOT sign a binding contract with any vendor BEFORE this initial meeting with the clergy and/or Gwen.

Saturday weddings may begin no later than 1:30 PM or may begin at 7:00 PM (or 8:00 PM depending on the seasonal Saturday Hispanic Vigil Mass). Guidance will be provided on the scheduling of your Wedding. Weddings are allowed on another day with the Pastor's permission.

The Wedding Rehearsal is usually held the preceding evening, at 5:00 or 5:30 PM. If the officiating minister is not assigned to St. Michael's, he must be present for this rehearsal, which lasts approximately 45 minutes. Punctuality is essential for those involved in the rehearsal and the wedding.

2.) PRE-MARRIAGE PREP, EDUCATION AND DOCUMENTS

As a bride and groom preparing to enter into a sacramental union, you must attend the pre-marriage programs approved by the Diocese of Memphis. Registration forms for these programs are available in our Parish Office from the Wedding Coordinator, however it is your responsibility to sign up for the required program.

Within nine months of the wedding, a member of our parish staff (or the officiating minister if not from St. Michael's) will administer a pre-marital inventory. The results of this instrument are shared with you by a parish minister, or your officiating minister. During your meetings, you will also discuss and plan the wedding liturgy.

A Baptismal Certificate (dated within 6 months prior to the wedding) is required of Catholics. Christians of other denominations should present a copy of a baptismal record or letter from the church of baptism.

A Marriage License is required by the State of Tennessee. This license is to be given to the officiating minister at the wedding rehearsal. It is unlawful to perform a wedding without this license being in the possession of the minister. Visit shelbycountyttn.gov for Marriage License information.

3.) CLERGY

The officiating minister is usually the Pastor, Associate Pastor, or a Deacon of the parish. If a couple wishes to invite a family friend or relative who is a Catholic priest or deacon to preside, they are welcome to do so with the St. Michael Pastor's permission. Please discuss this with the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Deacon, or their representative during your initial meeting.

Unless other arrangements have been made with one of the priests at St. Michael's, it is the responsibility of the officiating minister to see that the pre-marital preparation has been completed and all required forms and paperwork are filed at St. Michael's before the wedding rehearsal.

If either bride or groom is not Catholic, an ordained minister from her/his Church is welcome to participate in the liturgy, with the permission of the officiating minister. This should also be discussed in the initial meeting between the couple and the Pastor, Associate Pastor, or their representative. If a minister of another church does participate in the ceremony, he will be contacted by the officiating minister and is expected to attend the wedding rehearsal.

4.) PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY

As soon as the wedding date is set, please contact Silvia Vega at silvia.vega@stmichaelsmemphis.com to schedule a planning meeting. As Director of Music, Silvia assists the clergy in planning your wedding liturgy, guides in the selection of music, and assists with many details. She is responsible for the preparation of all music in the liturgy and will advise on the hiring of other instrumentalists and vocalists if they are desired. Please meet with her before contracting any other musical personnel.

Music adds beauty and joy to the wedding, and special care is taken to ensure that selections are in keeping with the ritual. Vocal music should speak of the sacramental nature of the marriage covenant. Church rules prohibit secular texts, and recorded music is not used in Roman Catholic worship.

Fees for musicians are separate from church fees and are determined partly by the musical and liturgical needs of each distinct wedding. These are discussed at the first consultation, and a work sheet will be provided to assist you in estimating costs. (More details can be found in section 8.)

5.) PARISH WEDDING COORDINATOR

After your initial meeting with Silvia, you will be contacted by our Parish Wedding Coordinator, Gwen Coffey. Gwen assists with the wedding rehearsal and the liturgy in conjunction with the officiating Minister and the Director of Music, and cares for the needs of the wedding party and families while they are at the church.

Her professional expertise is invaluable in the smooth execution of weddings. The Wedding Coordinator fee is separate (see section 8) and is discussed beforehand. It is required that the St. Michael Parish Wedding Coordinator be used unless other arrangements are made by the Pastor or his delegate.

6.) WEDDING PARTY MEMBERS & LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Children chosen as Flower Girls and Ring Bearers should be old enough to participate in the liturgy. Those serving as Lectors, Gift Bearers, trained Eucharistic Ministers, and Altar Servers (aged 10 and older) are expected to attend the wedding rehearsal to prepare for their important roles in the liturgy.

All participants in the liturgy should be mindful of the sacredness of this occasion, not only through their behavior but also in their attire. When choosing a wedding gown and bridesmaid dresses, please remember that the wedding is taking place in a church, in front of a Tabernacle containing the Real Presence of Jesus Christ. Therefore, MODESTY is the key word and should be employed.

7.) OUTSIDE VENDORS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

BEFORE signing a binding contract with a florist, photographer, or videographer, the couple must have met with one of the parish clergy.

To ensure cooperation with parish staff, please inform any outside providers of the information found below. Provide them the directives appropriate for their service.

FLORIST & DECORATIONS:

Floral arrangements are not necessary, but if flowers are placed on the altar, the main arrangement(s) is to remain in place following the wedding. Pew nosegays and other wedding decorations must not conflict with the regular parish Mass schedule.

If desired, altar flowers may be dedicated in honor or memory of loved ones and this information listed in the Parish Bulletin (indicate this on the Wedding Registration form.)

Weddings are discouraged during the penitential season of Lent; when allowed, the decor should reflect the more reserved nature of this period.

Altar flowers and other décor must be removed from the church after the wedding.

If Weddings are celebrated within the two (2) weeks after Christmas or after Easter Sunday, the parish altar flowers and other seasonal decorations may NOT be removed. Please remind your florist of this if your wedding falls during one of these time frames.

Due to potential fire hazard, lighted candles may not be used, except for:

- the two candles flanking the Front Altar
- the candles on the Altar

The use of a Unity Candle is not permitted at St. Michael's.

Due to risk of injury, aisle runners are not permitted.

Tacks, nails, or other invasive hardware may not be used to attach decorative items to pews or other church furnishings.

Access to pews or aisles of the church may not be blocked off with ribbon or swags as this impedes the movement of people.

The Parish Office is NOT open on Saturdays. Your florist must call Gwen Coffey several days before a wedding to confirm a specific time for delivering flowers so as to not conflict with other parish events.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Please remember that the church is a sacred place. Photographers must cooperate with our Wedding Party Coordinator and other church staff.

Photographs may be taken during the liturgy from the choir loft or the back of church, **without** flash only. Flash may be used only as the bride enters the Church door at the start of the liturgy and as the couple recesses at the end.

Photographs may begin no more than 2 hours prior to the stated wedding time (e.g. pictures may begin at 12:30 for a 2:30 wedding.) Photographs may be taken in church until the prelude music begins (30 minutes prior to the procession). Photographs must be completed within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the liturgy.

Due to the 4:00 PM Mass on Saturday, the church sanctuary is not available 3:15 to 5:00 PM. Other locations may be available during this period for photographs.

VIDEOGRAPHER

The church is a sacred space. Whether professional or amateur, anyone wishing to videotape in the church sanctuary must abide by these rules:

Personnel and equipment must not distract from or interfere with the liturgy

One attended camera may be set up in the choir loft, and/or next to the pillar behind front pew (on either side)

One non-attended camera may be placed behind the Presider's Chair, but only with the prior permission of the officiating minister.

Equipment must be in place no less than 45 minutes before the stated time of the liturgy, before the prelude music commences and the seating of guests begins.

The following is NOT allowed:

- any personnel in the altar area or moving about the sanctuary during the liturgy
- cameras requiring outside cables or external wiring
- equipment needing connection to the church's circuit breaker boxes
- the placement of cables near traffic areas

8.) FEES

To cover utilities, maintenance, and the services of an onsite security guard:

- Parishioner fee is \$800
- Non-Parishioner fee is \$1,200

A deposit of 50% is due within a week of registration, with the balance due a minimum of two (2) weeks before the wedding. In the event of a cancellation, the deposit will be returned.

A list of fees for Musician(s) and Wedding Party Coordinator will be sent to the couple no less than two (2) weeks prior to the wedding by Silvia Vega.

- Musicians' fees are partially based on repertoire chosen and preparation time required. Each musician's or vocalist's fees may range from \$200 - \$400.
- The Wedding Party Coordinator's fee is partially based on size of wedding party, type of liturgy, and if a guest minister or guest organist is involved. This fee may range \$100 - \$200
- It is customary to give a stipend to the officiating minister. An amount of \$250 is suggested.

9.) MISCELLANEOUS

Dropping of flower petals is allowed but must be cleaned up no longer than 30 minutes after the ceremony. Throwing rice, birdseed, confetti, or blowing bubbles is **not** allowed on church property.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on church premises prior to or during a wedding liturgy.

Smoking is not permitted inside any church facility.

Nursery facilities are not available. However, parents are welcome to sit with their child in the narthex, if needed, during the wedding. A comfortable space can be made if your coordinator is aware. Children must be supervised at all times.

For security reasons, do not leave any possessions visible inside cars.

It is the hope of the clergy, staff, and parish family of St. Michael Catholic Church that you and your family have a wonderful and joyful celebration in our beautiful parish!

Important Contact Information:

Silvia Vega, Director of Music & Vocalist:

(901) 428- 3559 or silvia.vega@stmichaelmemphis.org

Eva Gonzalez, Office Receptionist

(901) 399-8801, eva.gonzalez@stmichaelmemphis.org