

THE BASILICA *of* SAINT MARY
NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI

WEDDING GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Initial Contact

At least six months prior to your anticipated date, the future bride and groom must contact with the St. Mary Basilica office to schedule a meeting with a priest and establish the following:

1. Your ability to marry at St. Mary's
2. Date and time of the celebration
3. The type of ceremony that will be performed (i.e. If a Mass will be celebrated or not)
- 4 Other attending/responsible Catholic clergy
5. A pre-approved program for marriage preparation

After this initial meeting, you should then contact:

The Director of Sacred Music

Matthew Buller
107 South Union Street
Natchez, MS 39120
matthewjbuller@proton.me
337-634-3077

The Director of Sacred Music will assist you in choosing appropriate music for the ceremony. All other musicians and/or soloists must be approved by the Director, and their fees are paid in addition to those given within this packet. Singers may also be available from the Basilica Choir, please inquire.

The Wedding Director

Carolyn S. Eidt
15 Oakhurst Drive
Natchez, MS 39120
carolyneidt@att.net
601-431-2430

The Wedding Director is familiar with Diocesan and Parish policies governing weddings as a well as the use of the Basilica's facilities, and will work with you to ensure that all details are in place before the wedding date. Any outside wedding consultant you may hire shall consult with the Wedding Director, and must follow her directions.

Fees

The Sacraments of the Church are freely available to all who seek them, and the Church does not charge fees for the administration of any sacramental rite. For those with financial need, the facilities of the Basilica are always available at the expense of the parish. However, for those who are able, it is responsible that the couple seeking marriage also take on the financial burden of such a celebration. Those fees are outlined below —

- \$100 Cleaning fee
- \$300 Director of Sacred Music, payable directly to him
- \$300 Basilica Wedding Director, payable directly to her

- \$2000 Non-parishioner rental fee for the Basilica Church

- \$150 Rental fee for St. Therese Hall and Bridal Room

- *A *Non-Parishioner* is a person who does not meet at least one of these qualifications:
1. Registered member of the parish at least 1-year prior to engagement
 2. Has a parent who meets qualification 1.
 3. Is a graduate alumnus/alumnae of Cathedral Catholic School.

Required Marriage Preparation

All couples are required to complete formal marriage preparation as outlined by the Diocese of Jackson. This is preferably done with the priest or deacon who will officiate for the wedding ceremony. If the couple is not a resident of Natchez or the surrounding area, they must consult their local pastor regarding preparation.

Documentation of the preparation and any other necessary paperwork, according to the Diocesan guidelines, must be received by St. Mary Basilica at least six (6) weeks prior to the wedding date.

Scheduling and Planning the Wedding Ceremony

Rehearsal

The Basilica Wedding Director or the officiating priest will oversee and direct the rehearsal. The rehearsal may be held any time from 5:00PM to 7:00PM the day before the wedding. The Wedding Director will ensure the rehearsal starts on time and ends within one hour.

Before the rehearsal, the order of the procession should be decided, along with who will attend the bride and groom as members of the wedding party. The Wedding Director is able to assist in these decisions.

Please bring your marriage license, the Organist's fee and the Director's fee with you to the rehearsal.

Wedding Days and Times

- Saturday daytime weddings must be finished by and the Church vacated no later than 4:00 PM.
- Saturday evening weddings may not start before 7:00 PM.
- Friday evening wedding times may be discussed with the Rector.

The Basilica is not able to schedule weddings on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Palm Sunday weekend, Holy Week, Easter Sunday weekend, or Corpus Christi weekend. Furthermore, the Basilica holds the right to not schedule weddings on Solemnities, Diocesan, or Parish festival weddings. Weddings may be scheduled during Lent, but please make note of the regulation given below regarding decorations.

Modesty of Dress

Brides should keep in mind that the ceremony is taking place in a sacred space. Dresses for the bride and bridesmaids should reflect a sense of modesty and respect for the sacredness of the ceremony. Strapless dresses are not allowed for either the bride and the bridesmaids. Wide straps and cap sleeves are acceptable. It is preferred that at least the bottom half of the back is covered. Appropriate draping must cover strapless dresses, plunging necklines, and dresses exposing the top-half of the bride or bridesmaid's back.

Flower Arrangements

All flower arrangements must be appropriate for the Liturgical Season. Any Basilica decorations (including flowers) which are already in place may not be removed. During the Christmas Season and during the weeks following Easter Sunday, the Basilica invests in a significant amount of flowers which are arranged for these special days and may not be removed.

It is requested that flower arrangements placed on the high altar remain in place after the wedding, since the parish will not have purchased other arrangements for the same weekend. However, weddings which take place during the seasons of Advent and Lent are allowed two small arrangements on the high altar which are removed immediately after the wedding. All other arrangements may always be removed afterwards.

Pew Markers

Pew markers are allowed and should be attached in a way that does not damage the pew. No tape or wire is allowed. Pew markers may not contain greenery or berries that could drop on the floor and damage the carpet.

Candles

The Basilica provides all candles and candleholders. No additional candleholders may be brought from outside. The usage of the 'Unity Candle' is not permitted by the Catholic ritual.

Other Basilica Decorations

The Basilica does not allow the usage of aisle runners, columns, candelabras (other than those provided), hurricane glasses, or trellises.

The furniture in the Basilica may not be moved in any way. All kneelers will be provided by the Basilica. No additional furniture may be brought into the Basilica.

The outside railings may be decorated with fasteners that will not scratch. These decorations must be removed immediately after the ceremony.

The usage of real rose petals during processions is not permitted. No throwing of rice or birdseed, no use of sparklers or any other novelties are allowed when the couple exits the Church. Exception is made for Military traditional honor guard ceremonies and rites.

Photography and Videographers

The Basilica is a sacred space and should be respected as such.

- No suggestive poses or extra props are allowed.
- Photographs in the Basilica before the ceremony must be completed one hour before the ceremony begins.
- Photographs of the entire wedding party may be taken in the Basilica after the ceremony.
- During the ceremony the photographer may take pictures of the bride proceeding up the aisle and of the bride and groom exiting the sanctuary.
- At no point may the photographer enter the sanctuary (i.e. the raised portion of the church behind the communion railing), or walk across the front of the pews.
- Photographers and videographers should consult with the Wedding Director prior to the ceremony.

Alcohol and Narcotics

On Basilica property

Absolutely no alcohol or illegal drugs of any kind are tolerated on Basilica property. If alcohol or illegal drugs have or are being used, the individuals will be asked to leave and will be prohibited from participating in the wedding rehearsal and/or the ceremony itself. In the case of illegal narcotics, the proper authorities will be notified. This regulation applies to the rehearsal, the wedding ceremony, photographs prior to or after the ceremony, and in any of the halls or bridal room.

Intoxication

For the couple to morally and lawfully consent to matrimony, they must possess full faculties of reason. The usage of alcohol and narcotics impairs reason, therefore, if the Priest or any member of the Basilica staff discovers that the bride and/or groom, is intoxicated or under the influence of narcotics immediately prior to the ceremony, it is required that the officiant refuse to marry the couple.

In such a case, the Officiant may be available to celebrate the marriage with two witnesses present the following morning before the couple leaves for their honeymoon. There is no exception to this rule.

If a member of the bridal party is discovered to be intoxicated, they will be prohibited from participating in the wedding. Furthermore, their state may also bring into suspicion the state of the bride and groom themselves and could also result in the refusal of the officiant to perform the ceremony.

The Basilica is not responsible for any financial burden associated with the cancellation of a wedding due to drug or alcohol use.

Contract

For any marriage to be scheduled in the Basilica, the couple must agree to and sign all of the above regulations:

I AGREE to abide by the above regulations and understand that non-compliance with any Basilica wedding policy may result in the alteration or cancellation of the wedding ceremony at St. Mary's.

Bride

Date

Groom

Date