

St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church



Wedding Guidelines

2023

520 West Holding Avenue Wake Forest, NC 27587 919-570-0070

Welcome!

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding and for choosing St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church. The purpose of these guidelines is to help you plan your Sacrament of Matrimony at our church.

A wedding ceremony lasts about one hour, while a marriage lasts a lifetime. Wise people, therefore, spend much more time preparing for a marriage than a wedding. Be wise, prepare well!

Please use these Wedding Guidelines and share them with your Presiding Priest. There is information included about Diocesan Requirements, Fees, and other things to consider when celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Catherine of Siena.

To begin your process, please fill out the wedding inquiry on our secure website scswf.org. Next, the Parish Administrative Assistant will call you to schedule your first meeting with the priest. In addition to meeting the priest, you will be required to meet a minimum of three times with your mentor couple.

Meeting with the Priest

- Couples can confirm the dates and times of your proposed wedding.
- Ideally be prepared to submit necessary paperwork to be married in the Catholic Church.
- Receive a copy of *Together for Life* to help you plan the wedding Liturgy (Note - there is a checklist on the back of the *Together for Life* booklet that must be returned to the Parish Administrative Assistant at least two weeks prior to your wedding).

Wedding Fees

Weddings/Convalidation fees for a registered parishioner is \$750. A parishioner is someone who has been registered and regularly contributing at the parish for at least six months before starting wedding preparation classes with a priest. If a couple would like to be married here and has been registered for less than six months or financially contributing, they will be required to pay the non-parishioner fee of

\$1,250, unless they choose to select another date at a later time. A \$350 Marriage Preparation Only Fee will apply to couples having their wedding outside of our parish and preparation only. The wedding fee includes administrative expenses, materials, workbooks, and compensation for the Music Director, Cantor, Sacristan, and Altar Servers, all of which St. Catherine The Parish Administrative Assistant will provide more details about St. Catherine of Siena wedding fees. The Marriage Preparation only wedding fee includes materials, and administrative expenses.

A gift to the Priest is not covered in this fee. A gift is a gift. It is not required but recommended if the priest has served you well.

A \$200 non-refundable deposit is required to secure your wedding date. The remaining balance of the fee will be due one month prior to the Wedding.

If you or both parties getting married requires an annulment(s), the wedding date cannot be officially set until the annulment(s) are received.

Diocesan Requirements for the Sacrament

Baptism Certificates

Catholic parties must obtain a current copy of the baptismal certificate issued within six months of the wedding. Have the baptism certificate(s) sent to the Wedding Administrator.

Marriage Preparation Workshop

The Diocese of Raleigh has several Marriage Prep workshops scheduled throughout the year. Each couple must attend one of these as part of their marriage preparation. You will learn about the Sacrament of Marriage and the Catholic teachings surrounding marriage and meet other couples who are preparing for marriage. The schedule can be viewed from The Catholic Diocese of Raleigh website: <https://dioceseofraleigh.org/marriage-and-family-life/marriage-preparation>

The Marriage License

Your marriage license must be obtained through the Clerk of Courts in the State of North Carolina. Out of state residents must obtain a North Carolina Marriage license to be married in this state. An application for a marriage license should be made no less than eight working days nor more than 60 days prior to the date of the ceremony. The license is valid for 60 days. Both applicants must appear in person, bringing with them a **certified copy** of their birth certificate. To obtain a marriage license, call the following offices:

- Wake County, call 919-856-5460
- Vance County, call 252-738-2110
- Franklin County, call 919-496-3500

The Marriage License must be brought to the wedding rehearsal and given to the priest or wedding coordinator in order for the wedding to take place the following day.

Planning for your Marriage Liturgy at St. Catherine

This is a special time for you as you prepare the many details of your entire wedding day. It is our hope that your marriage liturgy, thoughtfully prepared in words, music, and gestures, will be a sign to your family and friends of the faith, hope, and joy that is ours in Jesus Christ. As they gather together with you to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage, you will be a sign to them of God's saving love and generous self-giving in Christ.

A Catholic Wedding

The Catholic Catechism, Section 1621 states: "In the Latin Rite, the celebration of marriage between two Catholic faithful normally takes place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal mystery of Christ. In the Eucharist, the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself forever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up. It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of the own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church made present in the Eucharistic

sacrifice, and by receiving the Eucharist so that, communicating in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ, they may form but 'one body' in Christ."

General Outline of the Mass

Because the Sacrament is celebrated within the Mass, the Liturgy is very similar to a weekend Mass:

Liturgy of the Word

- First reading from the Old Testament, response: Thanks be to God
- Psalm, which is sung by the Cantor
- Second reading from the New Testament, response: Thanks be to God
- Gospel, initial response: Glory to You, Lord, and final response: Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

Rite of Marriage

Prayers of the Faithful, response: Lord, hear our prayer

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Offering of Peace, handshake is customary with response: Peace be with you.

Holy Communion

- If you plan to have a program (optional), you may wish to include the following text if you expect guests who are non-Catholic:

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one." (Jn 17:21)

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion.

A drafted program must be turned in to the Music Director at least 2 weeks prior to the wedding for approval.

- If Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are required, St. Catherine of Siena will provide them at your request, per the Diocesan Guidelines.

- The best man and maid of honor must sign the marriage license immediately after wedding. This can be done formally on the altar with a photographer or done informally in the sacristy.

Choosing Your Liturgical Music

The Director of Music has right of first refusal for English-speaking weddings. She will contact the couple early in the process to go over the music liturgy within their Mass or ceremony. Music must be in harmony with the sacredness of the occasion. Just as Altar flowers must be fresh (not artificial), music must be live and not recorded, and provide for the sacredness of the occasion. An appropriate list of music will be provided to the couple when meeting with our organist. Music must be chosen no later than one month prior to the wedding date. If music has not been selected prior to one month before the wedding date, music will be selected for you. The Director of Music will provide the organist, Cantor and Soloist and approve all music. The Cantor plays an important part in the Liturgy of the Word – proclaiming God’s word in the assembly and leading the singing of those gathered to worship and celebrate. Any additional musicians must be approved by the Music Director.

Using Celebrants outside of the Raleigh Diocese

Visiting Priests outside the Diocese of Raleigh must have their Diocese send the Priest’s Celebret to the Office of the Vicar General for the Diocese of Raleigh. St. Catherine’s must receive approval from the Vicar General’s office prior to including a visiting Priest. You can reach the Vicar General’s office at (984) 900-3405.

How the Wedding Coordinator Can Help You

St. Catherine’s has a team of Wedding Coordinators experienced in the direction of weddings ensuring a smooth processional and recessional ceremony. Outside wedding coordinators or directors are welcome to help distribute flowers and attach corsages and boutonnieres; however, the Wedding Coordinator from St. Catherine’s will work with the celebrant during the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding.

A Wedding Coordinator will contact you within 30 days of setting the date to go over the guidelines and answer any initial questions. You will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator to help you in the months preceding the wedding and on the

wedding day. She will contact you 3-4 months prior to the wedding date to discuss the details of the wedding and to prepare for the rehearsal and the ceremony. At that time, the Wedding Coordinator will answer any questions you have and will become your point of contact for future questions regarding the liturgical or ceremonial details. She can help you with the following:

- Assist with boutonnieres, corsages, and bouquets.
- Help place pew bows on appropriate rows.
- Direct the Ushers in seating your guests.
- Coordinate processional timing with the Director of Music.
- Direct the bridal party for the procession.
- Fluff the bride's veil and gown and arrange the bride's train before processing into the church.
- Seat late arrivals.
- Please notify the Wedding Coordinator if you have any family members who are Eucharistic Ministers.
- Presentation of a flower bouquet to Our Lady can be added after Holy Communion and before a final blessing. Background music is normally selected for this 2-3-minute devotions.

Choosing Your Wedding Day and Time

Weddings can only be held on Saturdays at 1:00 pm. Rehearsals are scheduled with your Wedding Coordinator. Rehearsal times are subject to change at the discretion of the Priest.

Photographers and Videographers

Photographers and Videographers must remain in the nave of the church during the processional and recessional. They must not advance past the first pew toward the altar. No flash photographs are to be taken during the ceremony or Nuptial Mass. During the Eucharistic Prayers, no pictures may be taken. The Wedding Coordinator will be available during the ceremony to provide additional guidance if needed.

Video recording is permitted only from the side sections using a still camera on a tripod. Video photographers are required to follow the same policies and procedures as still photographers.

You are responsible for making this information available to your photographer(s).

Decorations and Flowers

If you choose to use flowers in the church during your ceremony, a single flower arrangement below the altar is sufficient. You may also present flowers to Our Lady of Guadalupe (in the west transept) after Communion. Furthermore, below are guidelines around additional decorations and customs:

- Altar flowers must be fresh (not artificial) and remain in the church.
- Florists may deliver the flowers after 9:30 am. They need to call the church to confirm the time in case there is a scheduled Mass that day (e.g., funeral, wedding, or another Sacrament).
- Check with your Wedding Coordinator if you would like to use the parish's pew clips for ribbons at the end of the pews.
- Throwing flower petals on the aisle before the bride enters is permitted, however, the flower girls or other attendants must pick up the petals after the Mass or ceremony.
- Décor for liturgical seasons of Lent, Advent, and Christmas can be quite extensive and cannot be freely moved or changed without the express permission of the Sacristan.
- Aisle runners are not permitted.
- Flower Girls and Ring Bearers must be of age and ability to walk on their own down the aisle.
- No device for transport down the aisle during the ceremony is permitted (i.e., wagons, carts, strollers).
- Pets are not permitted to be part of the ceremony.
- Candelabras or unity candles are not permitted.
- Throwing rice or birdseed outside is not permitted. Bubbles are allowed outside of the church only.

- Pictures inside the church must be complete within 30 minutes of the conclusion of the ceremony,
- Receiving lines after the ceremony are not possible.

The Rehearsal

The entire wedding party should attend the rehearsal and be in the Church at least 20 mins before the scheduled time. Readers of the Scriptures and others who will be at the wedding should also attend. Optional gifts for the priest and church should be brought to the rehearsal, as well as the programs, if you choose to have them. You MUST bring your Marriage License to the rehearsal. The priest will keep the License in his office overnight so there is no chance that the wedding has to be cancelled due to a lack of a marriage license.

Additional Considerations

No food or drink of any kind may be brought into the Church or any of the facilities. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere on the Church property. It is your responsibility to see that this policy is enforced by informing your wedding party, family, and guests. No gum chewing, please.

Be certain that all personal paraphernalia, camera cases, pocketbook/makeup bags, vases, and boxes are ALL collected after the ceremony. Please assign someone to this final detail.

Out of respect to the Church as the sacred place that it is, we ask everyone to behave and dress in a manner that is appropriate at both rehearsal and ceremony.

A Final Note

Planning your marriage liturgy is a chance to prepare a deeply religious experience for you, your family, and friends. But remember: Good liturgy never happens by accident. These policies and guidelines are meant to help you celebrate this important milestone. We hope this booklet helps your marriage become a true

celebration of faith and assists you in setting the tone for the celebration of a holy event that is of the greatest importance in your lives.

Marriage Preparation Contact Information

St. Catherine of Siena Church

Phone: 919-570-0070

Fax: 919-570-0071

Pastor: Rev. R. Martin Firtzgerald, rmartinfitz@gmail.com

Parochial Vicar: Reverend Matthew Nwafor, frmatthewn@scswf.org

Pastoral Administrative Assistant: Melanie Cabrera, mcabrera@scswf.org

Director of Music: Ed Magistrado, emagistrado@scswf.org

Wedding Coordinator- Ann Garrett, ann.o.garrett@gmail.com or

Leslie Wehner, lwehner@scswf.org

Flocknote: All couples and mentor couples will need to sign up for our Couples of Christ Group on St. Catherine of Siena Flocknote App. Please call the parish office for more information.

Please sign & date that you have read all of St. Catherine of Siena Wedding Guidelines and to email mcabrera@scswf.org:

Bride _____ Date _____

Groom _____ Date _____