



# CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART

## Wedding Guidelines

*The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a sacred rite. With you, we want you to be happy going into your wedding day and hope that you will reminisce upon it joyfully and gratefully throughout your lifetime. Together, we also desire to praise and bless God for your marriage as well as respect and honor this holy sacrament, our sacred space, you, and your guests by offering only the best and most solemn choices from our rich, Roman Catholic tradition.*

### I. PREPARING FOR YOUR WEDDING DAY

1. Any couple is welcome to schedule his/her wedding at the cathedral; however, at least one of you must be Roman Catholic.
2. Please be in touch with Ian Richardson at the cathedral office to schedule your wedding and begin preparations.
  - He may be reached at [irichardson@richmondcathedral.org](mailto:irichardson@richmondcathedral.org)
3. A priest or deacon directly affiliated with this cathedral will celebrate your wedding, though your own officiant is welcome.
4. At least one year, advanced notice is needed to allow sufficient time for required preparation.
5. Please set a precise date for your marriage/reception plans only *after* a confirmed date is made on the parish calendar.
  - Please be aware that your first choice of date and time may not be available.
6. Marriage preparation involves meetings with the celebrant who will preside at the wedding *and* the required Marriage Formation session offered by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond.
  - Information regarding these sessions can be found by visiting:  
<http://www.cdrcmfl.org/marriage-preparation>

7. In the event that one of you has been *previously* married, s/he needs to consult with the officiant *prior* to proceeding with remarriage plans.
  - The required Church process must be completed *before* a date can be set for marriage.
8. Both bride and groom need to provide copies of baptismal certificates dated within six (6) months of booking the wedding. (***Please note: We do not accept original baptismal certificates or copies of originals***)
  - Roman Catholics may obtain baptismal certificates from the church of their baptism.
  - Those baptized in another Christian tradition should obtain their certificate/letter showing complete baptism information.
9. You will be asked to have two people who know you well (preferably your parents or other relatives) to fill out a form (Affidavit of Free Status—found on our website) which states, to the best of their knowledge, there is no reason why you cannot be married.
  - ***These must be witnessed and signed by a priest.***
10. Catholics who seek to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage are expected to be regular participants in the sacramental life of the church.
  - Where this is not the case, the priest or deacon will explore his or her relationship with the Church and their readiness to enter into the marriage covenant.

## ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

*This is a marriage between a Roman Catholic and a person baptized in another Christian tradition, a non-baptized person, a person from another faith tradition, or a person with no faith tradition.*

1. In ecumenical marriages, the clergy will discuss the Church's expectation that the Catholic person will teach the Catholic faith to his or her children, providing for their baptism and Christian upbringing.
2. Respecting the recommendations of the Roman Catholic Church, ecumenical marriages will always take the form of a wedding ceremony, *not* a Mass.
3. When the marriage takes place in the church of the Roman Catholic party, the involvement of the non-Catholic's minister or rabbi is welcome in celebrating the Liturgy.
  - When a minister of another church is involved, the priest will communicate preparations with the minister.
4. Under special circumstances, the Bishop's permission may be sought for a minister or rabbi to celebrate the marriage in the church or synagogue of the partner who is not Roman Catholic.
  - In such cases, the priest may be present at the Liturgy.
5. Your wedding may be celebrated on a Saturday at 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m.

- So that we may adequately prepare for the following liturgy, the church must be vacated by 12:30 p.m. following an 11:00 a.m. wedding; and by 3:30 p.m. following a 2:00 p.m. wedding.
  - This includes time for post-ceremony photography and clean-up.
  - Please notify your professional photographer in advance of this time constraint.
6. The rehearsal date and time are determined by your wedding date and time (*please arrive early*).
    - The Cathedral allows one hour for rehearsal the evening before your wedding day.
  7. *After the Wedding*: The Maid-of-Honor and Best Man must meet the coordinator to sign the *Actum Matrimonii*.

## II. LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Please be in direct consultation with your officiant (priest or deacon) and the Cathedral's Director of Music & Liturgy (DM/L), who will assist you in your preparations and choices of sacred scripture and sacred music.
2. Please meet with your officiant *before* meeting with the DM/L.
  - a. During this time, you will gain familiarity with the liturgical norms of the Church.
  - b. Your close participation throughout the planning process is welcome.
3. As you move closer to your wedding date, please choose responsible members of your wedding party in advance to fulfill ministerial roles, ensuring they are prepared for their respective liturgical duties ahead of time with necessary materials. (e.g. Readings.)
4. Please contact the DM/L in advance to schedule a Wedding Music Planning Meeting by writing to Daniel Sañez at [dsanez@richmondcathedral.org](mailto:dsanez@richmondcathedral.org)
  - a. There is no such thing as *too* early.
  - b. At this meeting you will choose appropriate, sacred music for your ceremony.
5. The DM/L must approve your wedding program.
6. The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is blessed to have excellent professional, liturgical musicians who deeply value the liturgy and are sensitive to and well-versed in the rites, traditions, and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - a. Please take advantage of the artistic resources offered to you by this cathedral.
  - b. Only staff musicians from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart will perform at your wedding: during the prelude or the actual ceremony.
  - c. Permission may be given at the discretion of the DM/L to close relatives or friends of the couple *who are skilled, experienced musicians* to perform at your wedding.
    - i. In this instance, they may perform one (1) piece, either at the prelude or during the ceremony.
  - d. If a rehearsal is necessary, this may take place one hour prior to the scheduled wedding, no extra charge.

- i. Additional rehearsal(s) are charged \$150/hour, paid by the hour or fraction thereof, *in addition* to the DM/L's/Organist's fee.
  - ii. Other fees will apply as circumstances arise.
- e. If you want instrumentalists at your wedding (e.g. trumpet, brass quintet, strings, flute, etc.), *please* make these wishes known to the DM/L.
  - i. Please withhold final decisions regarding music at your wedding until you have met with the cathedral DM/L to discuss your music options.
  - ii. Please note that you are responsible for compensating instrumentalists.
- 7. ***Please remember: the cathedral is a holy, sacred space—not a venue.***
  - a. While your wedding is truly a celebration, it is first and foremost a *sacred liturgy*.
- 8. You and your guests are expected to observe fitting behavior, decorum, and socially accepted norms of propriety in keeping with this holy sacrament of the Church and conduct yourselves in a manner that respects our beloved, sacred space. Therefore:
  - a. Please ensure that your guests understand the solemn nature of your ceremony and the sacredness of our space.
  - b. Loud, excessive noise-making, hooting, chatter, profanity, and excessive cell phone use within the church—including tasteless selfies and personal photography, yelling, bawdy, lewd or otherwise distasteful, inappropriate, and rude behavior—are *strictly prohibited* at any time during the rehearsal and the ceremony.
    - o Such behavior will be immediately addressed by members of the cathedral staff publicly.
  - c. There is a *zero tolerance* policy concerning alcohol and illegal substance use. If you or any of your guests consume alcohol or use illegal substances anywhere on the cathedral grounds—or, if you or any of your guests are found under the influence at any time anywhere on the cathedral grounds—we *will cancel your wedding without warning and report all illegal activities to the authorities.*

### III. ON-SITE GUIDELINES

1. While wedding planners are welcome as guests to your rehearsal and ceremony, the Cathedral Wedding Coordinator is *required* for all weddings at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and will be responsible for everything occurring within the church.
  - a. Our coordinator will ensure the cathedral is ready for your use, conduct your rehearsal in conjunction with the celebrant, and assist you on your wedding day.
  - b. Your Cathedral Wedding Coordinator will prepare the space and be present to assist.
  - c. The Cathedral Wedding Coordinator can advise you, answer any questions, or give

directions on your behalf.

- d. Please follow directions given by our Cathedral Wedding Coordinators.
2. Please bring your wedding programs to the wedding rehearsal.
3. Brides and grooms: please arrive dressed and in the church at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the ceremony.
4. The church will be available ninety (90) minutes before your wedding.
  - a. This time may be used for placing flowers, taking photos, etc.
5. The cathedral facility includes a reconciliation chapel.
  - a. This chapel may be used as a waiting room (*not* for dressing) for the bride and her attendants.
    - i. There are **no** dressing rooms.
    - b. Please remember: Food and beverages are not allowed in the chapel space. (However, food may be consumed in the parish hall.)
6. The placement of flowers must allow for the marriage rite's full celebration.
  - a. Flower arrangements may be placed in two locations:
    - i. in front of, or to the left of, the pulpit and/or
    - ii. near the Paschal Candle at the main entrance.
  - b. Flowers must arrive at the cathedral ready to be placed.
    - i. There is no time for the preparation or arrangement of flowers.
  - c. Flowers from the wedding may be taken by the couple or donated to the church for parish liturgies.
7. After your wedding has concluded, all materials (ribbons on pews, flowerboxes, vases, wedding programs, etc.) must be removed from the church by the wedding party or people designated by the couple.
8. Pew markers are acceptable.
  - a. Runners are not permitted.
9. Professional photographers and videographers are welcome to the wedding and may take additional pictures before or after the ceremony, schedule permitting.
  - a. All photographers and videographers are expected to observe generally accepted professional standards, assuring that the religious nature of the celebration is respected.
  - b. Once again, this is a sacred occasion: Failure to heed these directions may result in a photographer or videographer being asked to leave the premises.
10. To preserve the dignity of the sacrament, *guests* should refrain from photography during the celebration.
11. For safety, health, and legal reasons, the cathedral does not allow dropping or throwing of flower petals, bird seed, rice, confetti, bubbles, or any other items anywhere on the cathedral grounds.



## IV. FEES

**1. Church Facility:** This fee is due when the wedding date is confirmed on the cathedral's calendar and reserves your date and time.

- \$1,600.00 (May - September)
- \$1,100.00 (October - April)

### 2. Cathedral Clergy

- An offering to cathedral clergy may be made at the discretion of the couple. (\$200.00 suggested donation)
- An administrative fee of \$250.00 is required if cathedral staff need to find an officiant, unaffiliated with the cathedral on your behalf

### 3. Cathedral Wedding Staff

- Director of Music and Liturgy - made payable to the Cathedral \$400.00
- Cathedral Cantor - made payable to the Cathedral \$300.00
- Wedding Coordinator - made payable to the Cathedral \$300.00
- (if applicable) Clerical Administrative Fee - made payable to the Cathedral \$250.00 (*as stated in #2 above*)

*The fees for Cathedral Wedding Staff are paid four weeks in advance of the wedding date and may be included in one payment.*

*Please direct all questions regarding your wedding to Ian Richardson,  
Worship Assistant at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.  
[irichardson@richmondcathedral.org](mailto:irichardson@richmondcathedral.org)*

Please mail payments to:

Cathedral of the Sacred Heart • 823 Cathedral Place • Richmond, VA 23220

## V. SIGNED AGREEMENT

By signing here, you acknowledge that you have thoroughly read, fully understand, and agree to the guidelines and fee information of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. If any of these guidelines are not fulfilled or respected, we may cancel your wedding. Please indicate that you have read and understand the Guidelines and all the fee information with your signatures below. *Thank you.* We look forward to your wedding day.

*Bride-to-be* \_\_\_\_\_

*Groom-to-be* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Wedding Guidelines for the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, revised August, 2018)*