

**St. James the Apostle**  
**Sacrament of Marriage Policies**  
*(Revised October 18, 2025)*

**Requirements for Celebrating at St. James**

- ❖ Either the bride or groom **must be a registered & practicing member** of St. James the Apostle.
  - Non-registered couples, desiring to be married at St. James the Apostle, **must register at St. James the Apostle**. St. James the Apostle will provide all liturgical aspects of a wedding.
- ❖ Engaged couples must make their initial contact with the Sacramental Coordinator **at least 6 months prior to the date of the wedding**.
  - A wedding date cannot be scheduled until it has been established that **both parities are free to marry** in the Catholic Church.
  - **If either party was previously married**, you must provide documentation attesting to freedom to be married in the Church. The priest or deacon can assist you with this process if an annulment might be required for a prior marriage.
- ❖ **If a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic**, before the Sacrament of Marriage can be celebrated, the Catholic party will be asked to promise to have any children born to their union baptized and raised in the practice of the Catholic faith.
- ❖ **If the bride or groom is under 19 years of age at the time of the wedding**, both must be interviewed by a counselor from Catholic Charities. If the recommendation by the counselor is positive, the preparations may proceed.
- ❖ We do not have permission from the Diocese of Joliet to celebrate weddings outside the church building.
- ❖ The priest, deacon or wedding staff can **only make arrangements with the engaged couple themselves**, rather than with another well-meaning family member.

## **Requirements for the Rite of Marriage**

### ❖ **Mass or Service?**

- It is presumed that a marriage between two Catholics, who are properly disposed to receive the Eucharist, will take place within the context of Mass.
- Ordinarily, unless by exception, the Sacrament of Matrimony between a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian of another denomination (e.g. Protestant) is celebrated outside the context of a Mass within the context of a Liturgy of the Word Service without the Eucharist.
- If one party is non-baptized, the marriage is celebrated within a Service.

### ❖ Weddings are scheduled on **Saturdays at 1:00 PM** with the rehearsal scheduled the Friday evening before the wedding at 5 PM.

- Friday evening weddings may be scheduled by special request.
- Weddings are not celebrated on civic holidays or Holy Days of Obligation.

### ❖ Selections from Sacred Scripture will be chosen in consultation with the Music Director according to the *Rite of Marriage* and the *Lectionary for Mass*.

- We do not have permission from the Diocese of Joliet to use non-scriptural readings, internet downloads, or vows composed by the couple themselves.
- We do not have permission from the Diocese of Joliet to use non-sacred (secular) music before, during, or after the wedding in the Church building.
  - No pre-recorded or secular (non-religious) music is permitted.

### ❖ Family members or friends may serve as readers during wedding. Each reader must be a practicing Catholic. Non-Catholic Christians from another denomination (e.g. Protestant) may read the petitions.

- Illinois law dictates that the **official witnesses** (Best Man & Maid/Matron of Honor) **must be at least 18 years of age.**
- **Children in the wedding party must be at least 4 years old.**
- Illinois law **annuls** any marriage attempted if either the bride or groom are inebriated before or during the wedding.

### ❖ Required offerings should be provided **at least one week before your wedding.**

- **Fees and Offerings:**
  1. \$500.00 Church Usage Fee
  2. \$150.00 Presider Donation
  3. \$150 Music Director Stipend
  4. \$100 Cantor (vocalist) Stipend

❖ Church Restrictions due to Insurance Liabilities:

- No unity candles, extra candles, hurricane lamps, trellises, canopies, arches, candelabras or topiaries may be used in the church.
- Aisle runners are not permitted.
- Flowers and other decorations may not be placed on, behind or beside the altar. Furniture and existing floral arrangements in place in the current church environment may not be altered, moved or removed.
- The throwing of petals (real or artificial), birdseed or rice, the launching of balloons, butterflies, birds or other items/materials are not permitted inside or outside the church.
- Strollers, wagons, carriages and animals (unless it is a service animal as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act) are not permitted in the wedding procession.
- Photographers/Videographers are not allowed in the sanctuary. Drones are not permitted.
- The use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or any weapons are not allowed inside or on the grounds of the church campus. No food or beverages are permitted in the church.

### **Required Documentation Checklist**

- ❖ After your wedding date has been confirmed, all marriage preparation should be completed and documentation provided according to the deadlines listed below before your wedding date.
  - ☐ Completion of the Prenuptial Questionnaire under the guidance of a priest or deacon during the first clergy meeting.
  - ☐ Attendance and completion of an Engaged Encounter Program (in person or online). Certificate of completion must be provided no later thirty days before your wedding date.
  - ☐ Attendance and completion of a Natural Family Planning Class (in person or online). Certificate of completion must be provided no later thirty days before your wedding date.
  - ☐ Completion (online) and review (in person) of your FOCCUS Inventory.
  - ☐ A new copy of your baptismal certificate with confirmation notation from the church of record, dated no sooner than 6 months before your wedding date.
  - ☐ Witness Affidavit forms completed by 2 witnesses for both the bride and groom in the presence of a priest or deacon from any parish mailed directly to Saint James no later than 30 days prior to your wedding date.
  - ☐ A DuPage County Marriage License. Please note that the license is valid for 30 days prior to your wedding date.
  - ☐ Attendance at a meeting with the Music Director to plan your wedding liturgy no later than 30 days prior to your wedding date.