

St. James the Apostle
Sacrament of Marriage Policies
(Revised February 2, 2026)

Requirements for Celebrating a Wedding at St. James

- Either the bride or groom **must be a registered & practicing member** of St. James the Apostle.
 - Non-registered couples, desiring to have their marriage celebrated 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 their desired wedding date. **It is preferred for engaged couples to make their initial contact nine months prior to the date of the wedding.**
 - A wedding date cannot be scheduled until it has been established that **both parties 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 deacon or field advocate can assist you with this process if an annulment might be required for a prior marriage.
- **If the couple consists of a Catholic and a non-Catholic**, before the Sacrament of Marriage can be celebrated, the Catholic party will be asked to promise to have any children born in their marriage baptized and raised in the practice of our 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.
- Marriage preparation includes a \$150 dollar materials & expenses fee.

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, a marriage 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 typically scheduled on **Saturdays at 1:00 PM** with the rehearsal scheduled the Friday evening before the wedding at 5 PM. If you require a different day and/or time, please discuss this with the Sacramental Coordinator.
 - 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 or Sacramental Coordinator 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.
 - Family members or friends may serve as readers during the convalidation. Each reader must be a practicing Catholic. Non-Catholic Christians from another denomination (e.g. Protestant) may read the petitions.
 - We do not have permission from the Diocese of Joliet to use non-sacred (secular) music before, during, or after the convalidations in the Church building.
 - No pre-recorded or secular (non-religious) music is permitted.
- 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.** This includes poinsettias at Christmas, and Easter lilies at Easter. The use of tacks, staples, or objects that may damage the surface of the pews is prohibited.
 - 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 convalidation 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.

- **Photography Guidelines**
 - Photographers may arrive no earlier than an hour before the start of the wedding ceremony.
 - Photographers must be mindful of the sacred space of the church. This includes being reverent, following all directions issued by the Wedding Liturgy Coordinator/Sacristan, not entering the sanctuary area, and refraining from activities that would distract others from the Mass (e.g. running up and down the aisles).
 - **Flash photography is absolutely prohibited.**
 - Photography is permitted for thirty minutes after the ceremony, but must be done by 3 PM at the latest.

- **Day of Wedding Guidelines**
 - The Wedding Party may arrive no earlier than 60 minutes before the wedding. **Please come dressed, with hair done, and makeup completed, if applicable.**
 - The wedding party should be in the narthex and ready to process down the aisle ten minutes before the scheduled start time of the wedding.

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.
 - Completion (online) and review (in person) of your FOCCUS Inventory.
 - Attendance and completion of our parish's Marriage Preparation Program, as specified by the Sacramental Coordinator. Paperwork proving completion must be provided no later than thirty days before your convalidation date.
 - Attendance and completion of a Natural Family Planning Class (in person or online). Certificate of completion must be provided no later than thirty days before your convalidation date.
 - A new copy of your baptismal certificate with confirmation notation from the church of record, dated no sooner than 6 months before your convalidation 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 convalidation date. (Unless the couple is already known to the priest or deacon).
 - Wedding Liturgy Selection Form - a link to this form will be sent to you by the Sacramental Coordinator once you have completed all of the other paperwork listed above, for you to select readings, hymns, and other details pertaining to your Nuptial Mass.
 - Marriage License - this must be provided at the wedding rehearsal so that the priest knows we have the permission of DuPage County to witness your marriage.