

DIOCESE OF JACKSON WEDDINGS DIRECTIVES

HIGHLIGHT: The Diocese of Jackson has promulgated a newly revised marriage policy handbook. Please refer to that in addition to these directives below for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage.

Parish Wedding Policies:

Each parish should establish wedding policies and follow them. These policies should address such issues as wedding coordinators, photographers, times of weddings, placement of flowers in the church, etc. These diocesan policies should be incorporated into all parish policies.

Sacred Space:

Weddings must take place in a sacred space. In the Diocese of Jackson a sacred space is defined as a recognized church or chapel of the diocese.

Rite of Marriage and Mass:

In the Diocese of Jackson weddings Masses on Sunday or Saturdays after 2 p.m. should not be celebrated. The Rite for Marriage Outside Mass should be used. Those who would prefer an evening Wedding Mass should schedule on another night such as Friday.

The seasons of Advent and Lent are solemn penitential seasons. If marriages are to take place during these seasons, couples should be reminded that wedding plans should respect the special nature of the liturgical season by refraining from too much pomp or display with regards to music, altar decorations and size of wedding party.

The Mass and mixed marriages:

In the Diocese of Jackson, the Rite for Marriage Outside Mass should be celebrated between a Catholic and a non-Catholic because of the occasional tensions that may arise around exclusion from Communion.

Music: (*Ordo Missae, 40-46*)

Only music that is sacred and liturgical in nature and origin should be used. Secular music is not to be used in a church setting.

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of the community. It should be sung or recited by the entire congregation and never be performed as a solo even at a nuptial ceremony. (*Ordo Missae, 126*)

Unity Candles:

The practice of incorporating Unity Candles into the ceremony is **not liturgically correct**. There is no place for it in the ritual and therefore should not be added. Unity candles may certainly be used at the reception, but not in the church.

Children and Pets as Participants

Because of the dignity and sacredness of the moment, children who participate as ring bearers and/or flower girls should be mature enough in age and demeanor.

Pets are never allowed to participate in wedding ceremonies. Service dogs may be used in their proper capacity, but not as ring bearers or flower dogs.

Modesty of Dress

Brides should be reminded that the ceremony is taking place in a sacred space. Dresses for brides and bridesmaids should reflect a sense of modesty and respect for the sacredness of the ceremony and the space.

Rice, birdseed, etc.

The practice of throwing rice, birdseed, flower petals, etc., on church property (church steps, parish centers, parking lots, wherever) is to be stopped completely.

Updated May 2017