



Parish Wedding Guidelines

(Revised July 2020)

1. Important Diocesan Guidelines

The proper venue for a wedding is the parish church, mission church, or a functioning chapel.

The proper Diocesan and legal paperwork must be completed prior to the wedding.

At least one witness should be a practicing Catholic. Both witnesses should be living a good, moral life.

The wedding vows should be those prescribed in the ritual.

2. Scheduling the Wedding

A wedding must be scheduled no fewer than six (6) months in advance to make sure adequate time is given to marriage preparation.

No wedding may be scheduled on the parish calendar until the couple meets with the parish priest.

Weddings are not generally scheduled on Sundays; however, the pastor may make an exception in the case of pastoral necessity.

Weddings are not generally scheduled in Lent; however, the pastor may make an exception in the case of pastoral necessity. If a wedding does take place in Lent, the decorations, music and overall tenor of the ceremony ought to reflect the solemnity of the season.

3. Stipend

The fee for a wedding at St. Martin de Porres or one of our mission churches is **BZ \$250.00**

The pastor may adjust the fee based on financial necessity.

The fee must be paid *prior to* the day of the wedding. The fee may be paid at the parish office or to the officiating priest. Please make sure you are given a receipt.

4. The Time of the Wedding

The wedding ceremony ought to begin at the scheduled time.

The wedding will begin after the scheduled start time as soon as the bride, groom, and witnesses are present in the church. The priest is not obliged to wait on family members or friends running late.

5. Liturgical Guidelines

The attire and the behavior of the wedding party should reflect the dignity and sacredness of the Rite of Marriage. For example:

- Dresses should be modest and dignified,
- Men should not wear hats during the ceremony,
- Members of the wedding party should not chew gum during the ceremony,
- Cell phones should be turned off and put away throughout the ceremony,
- Talking during the ceremony should be kept to a minimum; the attention should be on the Sacrament taking place,
- No food or drink is allowed, other than water as the church can get hot.

There is no limit on the number of attendants for the wedding ceremony.

6. Music Guidelines

St. Martin's does not provide musicians or cantors for the wedding. If the couple is interested in having members of the parish choir provide music, the couple must make the arrangements themselves.

If a couple wishes to provide their own music, the parish has the capacity to plug a cell phone into the sound system. Or else the parish can have a CD player available. In this case, the bride and groom ought to find someone to play and stop the music at the appropriate times.

All music during the wedding ceremony ought to reflect the sacredness of the Sacrament. This means no graphic or explicit languages or images.

We encourage couples to choose sacred/ religious music or Gospel music. Examples would be songs that speak of the mysteries of the Christian Faith, Christian love, or that put Biblical texts to music.

7. Decorations

The couple should arrange the best time with the officiating priest for decorating the Church. Couples should be aware that we sometimes have multiple weddings on a given day, which may present challenges for decorating.

The Church's décor (banners, decorations, etc.) may not be changed or moved.

The couple is responsible for removing the decorations and cleaning up any trash left in the Church immediately following the wedding ceremony.

Tacks may not be used to hang any decorations on the pews or walls. Tape may be used, but care should be taken to remove the tape completely when taking down the decorations.

The throwing of rice or flower petals, blowing bubbles or the like is not permitted at any point during or after the wedding inside the church. Because of the ceiling fans, the petals tend to scatter around the whole church, which makes it very challenging to clean up. Even if the couple is willing to provide volunteers after the ceremony, flower petals and the like are still not permitted! (Guests are eager to go to the reception, so they do not do a thorough job cleaning the church!)

The Church has limited furniture for "extra" rituals, such as unity candle or pictures of loved ones. What we have on hand may be used; however, the couple ought to consider bringing their own tables and cloths for any such extras.

8. Photographer and Videographer

Photographers and videographers are not to enter the sanctuary area (the raised area around the altar) when taking pictures.

The bride and groom must obtain the officiating priest's permission if they wish to schedule a time for pictures in the church before the ceremony, or if they wish to take pictures in the church after the ceremony.

9. Accountability

The bride and groom shall be held responsible for the actions and behaviors of all the guests, florists, musicians, and photographers.