

## **WEDDINGS AT OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH** **[Revised November 2023]**

### **Reasons for Our Policies**

Our policies are written to anticipate many of the most common difficulties that arise today during the planning and celebration of weddings. We know that you want your wedding to be perfect and that you have probably been planning this day in your imagination for many years; we also know that some of the things you may have imagined might not coincide with the expectations set forth in these wedding policies. We ask you to remember, though, that while your wedding is an intensely personal moment for you, it is not a private event; rather, it is a public celebration of one of the seven sacraments given to the Church by the Lord Jesus. For this reason, the priest, deacon, and staff have a solemn duty to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the mind of the Catholic Church and in conformity with liturgical law.

Our policies are written to help you understand what is possible and what is not possible during the short ceremony that begins your lifetime of sacrificial love in the sacrament of holy matrimony. The sacred liturgy of your wedding is above all else an act of divine worship, and our policies are designed to make your wedding a beautiful and memorable encounter with Christ the Lord for you, your family, and your friends. If you have any questions about these policies, please feel free to call the office.

### **Who can be married at OLM?**

For a couple to be married, the bride and groom must be free to marry (e.g., no prior marriages without annulments), psychologically mature, and capable of consenting to the marriage. The bride and/or the groom must also be registered at a Catholic church.

Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage if this can be done without grave inconvenience. Cohabiting couples must separate for at least six months prior to the wedding. If this requirement poses a difficulty, please contact the office to arrange a phone call or meeting with the pastor. In accordance with Diocese of Charlotte regulations, the nuptial Mass may be celebrated as part of the liturgy of matrimony

only if both the bride and the groom are practicing Roman Catholics. Special permission must be obtained for a Mass to be celebrated at a wedding between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic.

If one is seeking marriage after one or both parties have been in a marriage which has ended in divorce, marriage preparation may not commence until a decree of nullity (i.e., an annulment) has been obtained. Once the Church has issued a decree of nullity, when the previously married party has not yet entered the second union, both parties should participate in pre-marital counseling and evaluation (when it is deemed necessary and beneficial). When the couple has lived in a civil marriage which has continued over some years and shown signs of stability, the priest or deacon may use his pastoral judgment in providing the preparation for marriage which seems most suited to the needs of the couple.

If both are not Catholic, either the bride or the groom must be. If the marriage includes a non-Catholic, appropriate permissions will be required.

### **What if the couple is already civilly married?**

Civil marriages themselves are not recognized by the Church as a true marriage in the eyes of God. If the couple is already civilly married, but are now seeking a sacramental marriage, this process is called a “convalidation.” Usually, convalidations are celebrated more simply. Please call the parish office to arrange a meeting with the pastor to discuss.

### **Guidelines for those who are not registered members?**

Non-member couples are welcomed to be married at the parish with written permission from the couple's pastor. At least one must be Catholic. In order for non-members to book a wedding date, the couple's pastor must write a letter addressed to the pastor/administrator stating:

- The bride and/or groom are registered members of his parish.
- The pastor or someone he designates will conduct the couple's marriage preparation.
- The name of the clergy member who will be officiating the ceremony if the couple is supplying their own clergy (Local clergy may or may not be available to officiate the wedding.).
- A request that a specific wedding date be added to the church's wedding calendar.

This letter must be received before a wedding date can be added to the church's wedding calendar. Weddings are never scheduled tentatively until this confirmation is received. Once the letter is received, confirmation will be sent by the church's office to the priest and the couple.

### **When can weddings take place at OLM?**

Call the church office for possible dates and times. Please note that Sunday weddings cannot be a nuptial Mass. The church is available two hours prior to the ceremony and an hour after, unless there is a parish Mass scheduled during that time. In such a case, the church needs to be vacated and cleared at least 30 minutes prior to the Mass. Weddings 4pm or later on Saturday do fulfill the Sunday obligation.

### **What facilities may be used at OLM?**

The wedding coordinator will confirm what spaces will be available.

The parish hall may be used for Saturday receptions as long as it does not interfere with a Saturday Vigil Mass. Please note that in the event that the parish hall is used for a wedding reception, the wedding party must purchase Special Events Liability Insurance coverage from the diocese.

### **Should the wedding be celebrated inside or outside of Mass?**

Weddings may be inside or outside of Mass. It is recommended that weddings inside Mass be reserved for when both the bride and groom are Catholic. The final decision about this matter is made by the pastor/administrator.

The Rite for Celebrating Marriage during Mass is the preferred form of the Catholic wedding liturgy when both the bride and the groom are Catholic. The Rite of Marriage states that the celebration of marriage "normally should be within the Mass"; receiving Holy Communion together strengthens the couple's love, and lifts up all present into communion with Christ and one another (#6). The marriage covenant the couple makes reflects the covenant that Christ established with us through his sacrifice on the cross.

The Rite for Celebrating Marriage outside Mass is generally the preferred form when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic. A couple may celebrate their marriage during Mass with the permission of their pastor, but this option is generally discouraged because the person who is not Catholic may not receive Communion.

### **What is allowed during the wedding ceremony?**

As stated above, the wedding is not a private event; rather, it is a public celebration of one of the seven sacraments given to the Church by the Lord Jesus. For this reason, the priest, deacon, and

staff have a solemn duty to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the mind of the Catholic Church and in conformity with liturgical law.

At the wedding, the texts of Sacred Scripture must be proclaimed from the ambo (pulpit), and the person who performs this function is called a lector. Most couples choose one or two persons from among their families and friends to perform this duty. Those whom you select should be good public speakers and must be at the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the church; all lectors must be Catholics in full communion with the Church.

Swords and other displays of military honor are not permitted, either inside or outside of the church. Military displays may take place only at the reception after the wedding.

### **How is the church reserved and a wedding date decided?**

To schedule your wedding, please contact the office. Before a date can be reserved: 1) your eligibility to be married is first verified by the pastor/administrator, 2) the signed acknowledgement of wedding policies is submitted to the parish office, 3) the deposit is submitted to the parish office, 4) and for non-members a letter from their pastor as stated above.

### **What must be done before the wedding?**

A wedding is a simple ceremony lasting only a few minutes; a marriage is a lifetime commitment of sacrificial love in a solemn and sacramental covenant. Wedding preparation and marriage preparation are different things, and preparing for the marriage is by far more important. Someone at the church will explain the requirements for marriage preparation that must be completed before the celebration of the wedding.

### **How much does a wedding cost at OLM?**

Checks are made payable to Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church.

For Parishioners (to qualify for the parishioner rate, the bride/groom, their parents, or grandparents must be registered and active at the parish)

Church Rental (and non-musical services): \$1,000

Organist: \$250

Cantor: \$200

Clergy Stipend: TBD

For Non-Parishioners :  
Church Rental (and non-musical services): \$2,000  
Organist: \$250  
Cantor: \$200  
Clergy Stipend: TBD

The bride/groom are responsible for music and printed programs, and the fee for the diocesan marriage preparation workshop. The office can supply suggested names for musicians and printers.

Please note that the wedding fee does not include the cost of Special Events Liability coverage, which is required if the wedding party will be using the parish hall for a reception or dinner. The cost of this coverage is \$100 per event. The application for insurance is available from the church office, and should be filed at least three weeks prior to the event.

Couples for whom the church wedding fee would be a burden are welcome to speak with the pastor/administrator.

### **The Bridal Gown and the Dresses of Bridesmaids**

Please remember that your wedding is a sacred celebration taking place in a consecrated place of divine worship. Bearing in mind the reverence and decorum required by the sacred liturgy, we ask that your wardrobe selections reflect the modesty and noble simplicity which the Church expects. The shoulders of all women in the bridal party should be covered. Strapless attire is not appropriate for the bride, bridesmaids, mothers of both the bride and groom, and the flower girls. If there is any question regarding the appropriateness of the bridal party's attire, please ask the wedding coordinator.

### **Who plans the wedding liturgy?**

Weddings are public liturgical actions of the Church, and the celebration of weddings is governed by liturgical law. The basic form of the wedding liturgy is given by the Church, and no variation from that form is permitted. Within that basic form, the selection of the Scripture readings and prayers is made by the priest or deacon who will preside at the wedding, after consultation with the bride and groom. A list of possible readings is found at the end of this document.

To assure conformity with the Church's wedding liturgy, a final draft of the wedding program, if one is to be used, should be submitted to the wedding coordinator for review and approval not less than three weeks prior to the wedding date.

## **Flowers, Candles, and Liturgical Furnishings Guidelines**

The furnishings for the sacred liturgy are provided by the church; this includes all vestments, books, candles and candlesticks, kneelers, chairs, and other elements as needed.

Can you use a unity candle? In the sacred liturgy of the Church, candles are always a symbol of Christ. Since the use of “Unity Candles” (a recent innovation of American Protestant worship services) represents the bride and groom rather than Christ, these types of candles are therefore not used at the wedding liturgy (but nothing prohibits their being used at the reception).

The bride/groom are responsible for all flowers, corsages, and boutonnieres. Immediately following the wedding, all flowers are to be removed. If you wish for some to remain for the weekend Masses, please inform the wedding coordinator. You may ask your florist to provide floral pew markers, provided that they are tied to the pew. The use of tape, nails, and tacks is not permitted.

Aisle runners, rice, birdseed, bubbles, balloons, glitter, and sparklers are not permitted either inside or outside the church at any time.

## **The Music for your Wedding**

It is recommended that at least three months before your wedding you begin communicating with the wedding coordinator regarding music. The office will direct you to someone who will guide you through the selection of fitting music for your ceremony and who will assist you in making arrangements for instrumentalists and/or cantors. While the parish’s organist will be present to play the organ for your wedding, they will not be present for your wedding rehearsal. Please keep in mind these simple guidelines in selecting your wedding ceremony music:

- No recorded music is permitted. Popular music is not to be performed or sung in church, either before or during the wedding.
- All music is to be sacred Catholic music. Keyboards and guitars are not permitted.
- Parish guidelines require that the organ be the primary or one of the primary instruments for all weddings. Other instruments (trumpet, strings, harp, etc.) may be used in combination with the organ or may alternate with the organ.
- Please do not contact other outside instrumentalists, organists, or cantors without first contacting the wedding coordinator. The parish does have an organist and cantor.

## Suggestions for Wedding Music

### Processionals:

- Canon in D-Pachelbel
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring-Bach
- Trumpet Voluntary-Clarke also called the Prince of Denmark's March
- Trumpet Tune-Purcell
- Trumpet Tune-Stanley
- Rigaudon-Campra
- Rigaudon--Böhm

### Recessionals:

- Hornpipe Water Music Handel also called Allegro Maestoso
- The Rejoicing Royal Fireworks-Handel
- Prelude to a "Te Deum"-Charpentier
- Rondeau-Mouret
- Psalm 19-Marcello

### Music for preludes, Offertory:

- Air (Water Music)-Handel
- Arioso-Bach
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring-Bach
- Largo Winter Four Seasons-Vivaldi
- Air-Suite in D-Bach
- Sheep May Safely Graze-Bach
- Heroic Music- Telemann

### Responsorial Psalms:

- Psalm 128
- Psalm 33
- Psalm 34
- Psalm 103
- Psalm 112
- Psalm 145
- Psalm 148

### Seating of the mothers, Communion:

- Ave Maria-Bach/Gounod or Schubert
- The Gift of Love-arr. Hopson
- Panis Angelicus-Franck
- Wedding Hymn-Handel

## **Visiting Clergy**

Visiting Clergy in good standing are most welcome to perform a nuptial Mass or wedding ceremony. If a visiting priest intends to be the principal celebrant of the marriage, he must make his intention known in writing to the pastor/administrator at least three months prior to the wedding. The request will be honored on conditions that he possesses diocesan faculties and is willing to:

- Request in writing, permission to officiate at your wedding. The letter should be addressed to the pastor/administrator and mailed to the parish.
- If the priest or deacon resides outside the Diocese of Charlotte, he must mail his diocesan faculties from his Bishop to Bishop Peter J. Jugis at 1123 South Church Street Charlotte, NC 28203 with a notation of the date and location of the wedding. He may also email his faculties to [Chancery@rcdoc.org](mailto:Chancery@rcdoc.org).

Visiting clergy are welcome to use the vestments of the parish, but are encouraged to bring their own amice and alb.

If you desire to invite a non-Catholic clergyman to participate in the wedding liturgy, you must first submit a written request to the pastor/administrator, giving the name, title, and address of the clergyman you want to invite. Non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic wedding by their presence in the sanctuary, but they cannot preside at the liturgy. This means, among other things, that the Catholic priest or deacon must receive the wedding vows and impart the nuptial blessing.

## **Programs**

Before you print your wedding program, the final draft must be reviewed and approved by the pastor/administrator, not less than three weeks prior to the wedding.

If Mass is being celebrated, please include in the printed program the Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion which is found at the end of this document.

The program should also include an instruction to your guests not to use flash photography and to silence their devices during the wedding. A sample instruction is found at the end of this document.

## **Lectors**

At the wedding, the texts of Sacred Scripture are proclaimed from the ambo (pulpit), and the person who performs this function is called a lector. Most couples may choose one or two



persons from among their families and friends to perform this duty. Those whom you select should be good public speakers and must be at the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the church; all lectors must be Catholics in full communion with the Church. There is no pressure to choose lectors from your guests as the church is willing to supply lectors.

### **Guest Registry**

Guest registries are permitted; however, they may not be an obstruction to the procession or any point of egress.

### **Bride's Room**

While there is no bride's room at the parish, there are spaces available for the bridal party.

Please remember that public areas remain opened during the wedding, and the church cannot accept responsibility for any items that are lost or stolen.

### **Food, Smoking, and Alcohol**

No food or drink is permitted at any time inside the church nave and sanctuary before, during, or after the wedding and rehearsal. Smoking is permitted outside and not by the doors of the church.

The wedding party must refrain from using any alcoholic beverages before both the rehearsal and the wedding. As full faculties are required for the validity of exchanging vows, the priest or deacon celebrating the wedding reserves the right to cancel the wedding if alcohol is detected on the breath of the bride/groom and remove from the church anyone else under the influence of alcohol. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to preserve the sacred character of this event by not abusing alcohol.

### **The Rehearsal**

Wedding rehearsals are scheduled through the wedding coordinator. The rehearsal will last about one hour. The priest or deacon who will celebrate the wedding and the wedding coordinator are in charge of the rehearsal. The bride and groom must both be present and participate in the rehearsal; no proxies or stand-ins are allowed. All bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearers, and lectors must be present at the rehearsal to practice the wedding liturgy.

## **The Marriage License**

The bride and groom should bring the marriage license to the rehearsal. The priest or deacon will complete this legal document with the bride and groom and their witnesses before the rehearsal begins. No wedding is permitted without this document.

It is very important that the marriage license document be left inside the church office immediately following the wedding. The parish is responsible for filing this document with the Clerk of Court.

For couples seeking a convalidation (blessing) of a civil marriage, a certified copy of the marriage license is required prior to the convalidation.

## **Photography**

The requirements for photography may be different from your experience of weddings at other churches. Please give careful attention to these policies and requirements during the planning session with your photographer.

The photographer may arrive at the church two hours before the wedding, but no earlier. All photography, both interior and exterior, must be completed within an hour of the conclusion of the wedding, unless there is a parish Mass following in which case the church must be vacated 30 minutes prior to the parish Mass.

We ask that guests refrain from taking photos/videos during the wedding ceremony.

Absolutely no flash photographs are permitted during the wedding liturgy. The photographer is not permitted to walk about in the sanctuary (altar area) or the area immediately in front of it during the wedding.

After the wedding, the photographer may gather the entire wedding party inside the church on the steps of the sanctuary (altar area) for formal pictures. Informal or “fun” photographs are inappropriate for inside the church and should be taken outside or at the reception.

None of the sanctuary or altar furnishings may be moved for the purpose of any photographic session, and absolutely nothing may be placed on, or removed from, the sacred altar.

If videography is to be made, all of the above restrictions also apply.

**Cleaning**

Cleaning costs are covered by the fee for using the church.

**Damages**

The couple is financially responsible for any damages to the property during use.

**Refund Policy**

Full payment of the church rental is required upon scheduling. A full refund is available for cancellations up to six months prior to the scheduled wedding date. Thereafter, only 50% of the payment will be refunded.

**Our Lady of the Mountains Wedding Policy Agreement**

We, \_\_\_\_\_(Groom) and  
\_\_\_\_\_(Bride) agree to abide by the  
**marriage policies of Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church. We understand that  
failure to follow these policies could result in a delay or sweater of our wedding even after  
the date has been set.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Groom                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Bride                      Date

Once signed, please detach this page **only** and forward it to the church office, along with the payment which reserves your wedding date on the church calendar.

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church  
315 North Fifth Street  
Highlands, NC 28741

For office use only:

Date payment received: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment received by: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Possible Scripture Readings for the Wedding Liturgy**

These readings are all taken from the New American Bible, and that is the only translation permitted for use in the sacred liturgy. The readings selected will be prepared by the church staff and placed on the ambo (pulpit) for the use of the lectors, so it is not necessary that they bring Bibles or photocopies of these readings with them to the wedding. Please review these readings and select your choices. The priest or deacon reserves the right to choose the Gospel reading. The final choice of all the readings is reserved to the cleric who will preside.

### **Old Testament Reading (first in order)**

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

Tobit 7:6-14

Tobit 8:4b-8

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34

### **Psalm (second in order)**

Psalm 33

Psalm 34

Psalm 103

Psalm 112

Psalm 128

Psalm 145

Psalm 148

### **New Testament Reading (third in order)**

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

Ephesians 5:2a, 25-32

Philippians 4:4-9

Colossians 3:12-17

Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 John 3:18-24  
1 John 4:7-12  
Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

**Gospel Reading (fourth in order)**

Matthew 5:1-12a  
Matthew 5:13-16  
Matthew 7:21, 24-29  
Matthew 19:3-6  
Mark 10 :6-9  
John 2:1-11  
John 15:9-12  
John 17:20-26

**Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion**

For Catholics, reception of Holy Communion is a most sacred act as we believe that the Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ Himself. Therefore, before receiving Holy Communion, Catholics should be in full doctrinal communion with the Church and should have made a good sacramental confession if they have been conscious of any mortal sin. Out of respect for others' faith traditions, the Catholic Church does not have intercommunion and so does not extend an invitation to Holy Communion for those who are not Catholic. The Catholic Church does, however, extend an invitation for those who would like to receive a blessing and to join us in a prayer of spiritual communion. If you would like to receive a blessing, please approach the priest at the time of Holy Communion with your arms folded across your chest as a sign of your intention.

**Instruction Regarding Photographs and the Use of Electronic Devices**

Out of respect to the sacredness of the Marriage Rite, it is asked that all cell phones and other electronic devices be silent, and no flash photography be taken during the ceremony. Thank you.