

Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Wedding Guidelines

The priest and the parish staff will do all we can to make your wedding day a joyful and memorable day.

1. The date for the wedding cannot be confirmed until the engaged couple has a personal interview with the parish priest. It is not advisable to reserve a reception hall or photographer until the date has been confirmed by the priest.
2. It is a requirement of the Diocese of Columbus that all couples participate in a Pre-Cana program before marriage. (It is also strongly encouraged that the couples attend a Natural Family Planning class together before the wedding.) Please check with the priest for details and dates.
3. All Catholics must obtain a copy of their baptismal certificate. The copy must be dated within six months of the date of the marriage. The priest will inform you of any other document or questionnaires that are required for marriage.
4. A wedding between two Catholics takes place during a Nuptial Mass. Ordinarily a Nuptial Mass is not celebrated when only one party is Catholic.
5. The Unity Candle is not used during wedding Masses at Saint Thomas Aquinas Church since the Eucharist is the primary sign of unity and this candle is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage.
6. If you have a friend or relative who is a Catholic priest or deacon in good standing, you may have him witness your marriage provided permission is obtained from the parish priest of Saint Thomas Aquinas.
7. Attire is to be appropriate for the bride & groom and the wedding party. It is the policy of Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish that modest fashions, covering the shoulders, upper arms and neckline, are required for both men and women.
8. DATES AND TIMES FOR WEDDINGS
Weddings are usually celebrated on Saturdays at 10:00 am or 2:00 pm. Other days and times (for good reasons) are possible at the discretion of the parish priest. Weddings are not celebrated at Saint Thomas Aquinas Church during the season of Lent or during the Easter Triduum.
9. Saturday afternoon wedding parties must clear the Church by 4:00pm. The church needs to be made ready for 4:00 pm Confessions and the 5:00 pm evening Mass.
10. FEES FOR WEDDINGS
 - a. For active parishioners of Saint Thomas Aquinas, there is no fee for the use of the church.
 - b. It is customary to give a \$200 stipend to the priest or deacon performing the ceremony.

- c. A fee of \$200 is to be paid to the parish Director of Music before the day of the wedding. He will not be considered “booked” for the wedding until this fee is paid.
 - d. It is customary to give a stipend to the priest or deacon witnessing the vows (if different from the priest or deacon officiating the ceremony), as well as to any altar servers.
11. Contact the Director of Music after confirming a date and time for your wedding. He will help you choose music that is appropriate. We expect the Director of Music to play for all weddings. If there is to be a singer at the wedding, that person is paid directly by the wedding party in an amount agreed upon by the singer and the bridal couple. The singer must contact the Director of Music as soon as possible to rehearse the music. All music for weddings must be approved by the Director of Music.
12. **RESPECT FOR CHURCH PROPERTY/CONFORMITY WITH LITURGICAL NORMS OF CATHOLIC CHURCH**
 The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the do's and don'ts of weddings at Saint Thomas Aquinas Church.
- a. You are to advise the photographer and/or videographer of the following guidelines.
 - 1. For an afternoon wedding, the wedding party must be out of the Church by 4:00 pm.
 - 2. No flash except during the procession
 - 3. Must remain stationary during the ceremony
 - 4. Never allowed in the sanctuary (the elevated area where the altar is)
 - 5. No umbrellas
 - 6. Not allowed in the gallery / choir loft
 - b. Florists should arrange floral displays tastefully. No flowers are permitted on the altar of sacrifice. If candelabras are used, the florist must put a large enough piece of Plexiglas sheet underneath to catch the dripping wax. Flowers are considered a gift to the church and remain following the wedding unless otherwise instructed.
 - c. Flower girls may not toss real or silk flower petals while walking down the aisle.
 - d. Bridesmaids may not carry lit candles down the aisle.
 - e. Throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. is not permitted inside or outside of the church. As they are a liability and prone to an accidental fall, the use of aisle runners is not permitted.
 - f. Please leave the church and all areas used by the wedding party the way you found them (i.e. please dispose of flower boxes, dress bags, pop cans, water bottles, gum, etc.)
 - g. Consumption of alcohol by the wedding party (especially the bride and groom and their witnesses) on the day of the wedding prior to the ceremony will not be tolerated and could result in the cancellation of the wedding.
13. **RENTAL OF ST. THOMAS ACTIVITY CENTER**
 Please contact Mary Ann Ewart at (740) 319-0265 concerning fees and policies. The center can only be rented after you have a confirmed date and time for your wedding.
14. You must remember to bring your civil marriage license **TO THE REHEARSAL**. A priest or deacon cannot legally officiate at your wedding without the license.