

# Guidelines for Weddings at Saint Jean Baptiste



## **Congratulations!**

You have reached a point in your lives where you wish to commit yourselves to each other before God in the sacred bond of matrimony. We rejoice with you and want your wedding day to be truly special, the foundation of your life together.

## **A Sacred Commitment**

In the Catholic Church, the exchange of vows between two people is not a private affair, but a public act of believers in the presence of God's church. The readings and music you select and the various ways in which you choose to involve your family and guests will make your ceremony all the more memorable and meaningful. Since you are preparing to celebrate a sacrament of the church, we encourage you to use this time before your wedding not only to take care of practical details, but also to deepen your love for each other and renew your relationship with God through personal prayer, regular participation in public worship, and the sacrament of reconciliation.

To be considered a member of Saint Jean Baptiste Parish, you need to have registered with the church no less than six months in advance of your marriage and be a member in good standing, i.e., actively involved in the parish and be a contributor.

## First Steps in Arranging for Your Wedding

1. Contact the Pastor or a priest/deacon of the parish staff to arrange for an appointment no less than six months in advance of your marriage. Please arrange this appointment through the Parish Office at 212.288.5082, ext. 10.
2. At the meeting, the Pastor or priest/deacon will discuss the necessary documents needed for your wedding: a certificate of baptism for each person; First Communion and confirmation documents for each person; and Letters of *Freedom to Marry* and *Permission to Marry* at Saint Jean Baptiste.
3. Contact Kyler Brown, the Director of Music Ministries, at 212.570.2130 to advise him of the date and time of your wedding.
4. Make sure you explain Saint Jean Baptiste Church's policies regarding the use of cameras, video equipment, and flowers to your wedding planner, photographer, videographer, and florist prior to making your selections. This information follows below.

The following guidelines have been drawn up for your information and assistance as you consider having your marriage here and as you plan the details of your wedding.

## Church Requirements

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament. (*Code of Canon Law*, 1055)

Freedom to Marry: For a marriage to be validly celebrated in the Catholic Church, both parties must be free to enter into marriage. If either of you has had a previous marriage (and the spouse of that marriage is still living), it will be necessary to discuss the details of that marriage with a priest/deacon of the parish staff to determine not only whether your plans to be married here can proceed but also whether you can be validly married in the Catholic Church. If a previous marriage was terminated by the death of a spouse, the death certificate will have to be included among the documents requested as part of the preparation of your marriage.

Differing Faiths: If either of you is a baptized member of a Christian church other than the Catholic Church, proper permission (*Mixed Religion*) must be obtained by the assisting priest/deacon from the archbishop through the Chancery. If either of you is a member of a religion other than Christian or has no religious affiliation, the proper dispensation (*Disparity of Worship*) must be obtained by the assisting priest/deacon.

## Marriage Preparation

Certificates: The priest/deacon assisting you with the preparation of your marriage will explain the various certificates, letters, and documents that must be obtained (cf. number 2 above). Among the certificates required is a baptism certificate issued by the church of baptism within the six months previous to the marriage.

Preparation Program: Three marriage preparation programs of differing formats are offered by the Archdiocese of New York. You are required to attend one of these programs.

The priest/deacon will briefly describe the programs and the manner of registering. Also, he will give you a brochure that explains the programs in greater detail and indicates their dates, times, and locations. You can also [register online for a marriage preparation program](#). To insure attendance at the program of your choice, registration should be done as early as possible.

Pre-marriage Inquiry: A few months before the wedding and once the required certificates are obtained, the priest/deacon will conduct with you, individually, the pre-marriage inquiry. This seeks essential information regarding your background and your preparedness for marriage.

## Seasons, Days, and Times for Weddings

Marriage may be celebrated throughout the year. However, because Lent is a penitential season, we do not generally schedule weddings between Ash Wednesday (usually around the middle of February) and Easter Sunday (usually around the beginning of April) except for a serious reason, e.g., the serious illness of a parent. Church norms suggest that weddings during Lent should be simpler in nature.

Weddings at Saint Jean Baptiste Church take place on Friday afternoons and on Saturday at 10:00/10:30, 1:30/2:00, 3:00/3:30. Because there is a 5:30 Mass most days of the year, we are not able to schedule weddings at 4:00, nor do we have weddings on Sundays due to a full complement of parish Masses.

The day and time for the wedding rehearsal, usually on the day or evening before the wedding day, is arranged with the priest/deacon assisting your marriage preparation. The church closes at 6:15 p.m. If your rehearsal is scheduled after 6:15, please come to the Parish House at 184 East 76th Street. Only the wedding party need attend the rehearsal.

Note: Please be considerate of your guests and of the possibility that another ceremony may follow your wedding, and start your wedding on time.

## Officiant

The priest/deacon who officiates at your marriage acts as the witness who accepts your vows in the name of Christ and the church. Ordinarily, the officiant is the person who assisted your preparation for marriage. A priest or deacon who is a relative or a close friend may concelebrate or officiate.

## **Music**

Six weeks, at the minimum, before your wedding, you should arrange to meet with Kyler Brown (Music Office: 212.570.2130), the Director of Music Ministries and organist, to determine the music for your wedding. You have at your service a full complement of staff singers and instrumentalists to choose from at Saint Jean ♦s. It is expected that friends or family members wishing to perform music will do so at the reception.

Music chosen for you wedding should be selected from the vast treasury of sacred music. Secular works such as the *Bridal Chorus* from Wagner ♦s *Lohengrin* or the *Wedding March* are not permitted.

## **Flowers, Decorations, and Assorted Items**

Flowers can accentuate the beauty of the church for your ceremony. Most often, these are placed in the sanctuary and/or on the ends of the pews. However, your planning should provide adequate time for these to be removed immediately after the wedding unless you intend to donate the floral arrangements to the church. Insurance and fire code restrictions do not allow anything with a lit flame or glass in the seating area and center aisle. A good location for candelabra is in the sanctuary. Please do not move anything in the church environment.

Because Saint Jean Baptiste Church is a place of prayer open to the public and has no facilities for the cutting and arranging of flowers, floral arrangements and decorations should be assembled off-site in advance.

Your florist or limousine service can provide a white runner for the center aisle if desired. However, because the center aisle is beautifully carpeted, an additional runner is not necessary, and can be a safety hazard due to tearing or tripping. Also, for safety reasons, the throwing of rice and rose petals on church property is not permitted.

## **Photography and Videography**

Photographing and videotaping the ceremony is permitted. However, so that the photographer and videographer not be a distraction to the congregation or detract from the reverence appropriate to the wedding liturgy, we request that you familiarize them with the following:

1. The photographer and videographer must not interrupt the progress of the entrance procession or position themselves where they will impede the movement of the members of the wedding party.
2. Photographers must exercise discretion both in the number of photos taken and in where they place themselves to take photos. *Photos are not permitted during the homily or the period following the Presentation of the Gifts until the distribution of Communion begins.* Also, photographers must not delay the wedding from starting at the scheduled time.
3. Videographers are to take a stationary position outside the sanctuary (the altar area). Since the church lighting provided for the wedding liturgy is sufficient for video recording, *additional lighting is not permitted.*

Please note: Since Saint Jean Baptiste Church is not only a parish church but also a Eucharistic shrine, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will normally resume immediately after your wedding. Therefore, please advise your photographer that it may not be possible to have a photo session in church after your wedding, unless permission is given by the Pastor or the priest/deacon of the parish staff arranging the wedding.

## Wedding Stipend

An offering of \$2,500 is requested of all couples who wish to celebrate their marriage at Saint Jean Baptiste. *This includes the liturgy itself, the cost of utilities, the use of the church, and the fees of the organist, cantor/vocalist, and custodian.* This stipend is in line with what other churches on the Upper East Side ask. Exceptions due to financial considerations are possible, but must be approved by the Pastor.

Please note: A deposit of \$750 is necessary to reserve a date in the church calendar. This deposit will be applied to your offering, the balance of which is due four weeks prior to your wedding. Failure to do so will be regarded as cancellation of your wedding. Should you be obliged to cancel your wedding after handing in your offering, it will be returned to you minus \$500 of the deposit which is non-refundable.

## Etiquette

Every effort should be made to begin your wedding liturgy at the time scheduled. Late arrival of the wedding party through negligence inconveniences a great many people: your guests, the officiant, the musicians, the sacristan, etc., and may interfere with a church service scheduled to follow your wedding.

Insurance liability prohibits the throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed, or flower petals on the front steps and sidewalks of the church. Be sure to communicate this to any guests who might be inclined to observe this custom. Alternatives include small bells or bubbles or music as the couple exits the church.

In the sacrament of marriage, a man and a woman ♦ who at baptism become members of Christ and hence have the duty of manifesting Christ's attitudes in their lives ♦ are assured of the help they need to develop their love in a faithful and indissoluble union, and to respond with generosity to the gift of parenthood. As the Second Vatican Council declared: through this sacrament, Christ himself becomes present in the life of the married couple and accompanies them, so that they may love each other and their children, just as Christ loved his church by giving himself up for it. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 48; cf. Eph 5:25).

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **SAINT JEAN BAPTISTE CATHOLIC CHURCH 184 EAST 76TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10021**

Lexington Avenue at 76th Street

Phone: 212.288.5082  
Facsimile: 212.717.8397

Pastor  
Fr. Anthony Schueller, S.S.S.  
212.288.5082

Sacristan  
Br. Austin Coleman, S.S.S.  
212.288.5082

Director of Music Ministries  
Mr. Kyler Brown  
212.570.2130

Parish Office  
Miss Angelica Contreras  
212.288.5082, ext. 10

## **SAMPLE PROGRAM**

Prelude *Concerto* Johann Sebastian Bach

Processional *Trumpet Voluntary* Henry Purcell

First Reading *The creation of man and woman* Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

Readings should be chosen from *Together for Life* B1-B8.  
A friend or family member comfortable with public speaking may read this.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 103:1-2, 8, 13, 17-18a

Responsorial psalms should be chosen from *Together for Life* C1-C7.  
Normally, the soloist/cantor of the church will sing this. It can be read if you prefer.

Second Reading *The greatest of these is love* 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

Readings should be chosen from *Together for Life* D1-D10.  
A friend or family member comfortable with public speaking may read this.

Gospel Acclamation 1 John 4:8, 11

The Gospel Acclamation should be chosen from *Together for Life* E1-E4.  
Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

Gospel *Love, the greatest commandment* Matthew 22:35-40

Readings should be chosen from *Together for Life* F1-F10.  
The Gospel is read by the priest/deacon.

Homily

Rev. Anthony Schueller, S.S.S.

Rite of Marriage

General Intercessions

Presentation of the Gifts *The Gift of Love*

Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

Memorial Acclamation

Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

Great Amen

Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

The Lord's Prayer

Led by the priest.

Lamb of God

Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

Communion *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* Johann Sebastian Bach

Sung by the soloist/cantor of the church.

Final Blessing

Led by the priest/deacon.

Recessional *Water Music Suite (Hornpipe)* George Frederic Handel

Played by the organist.

Note: In preparing a program for your wedding, only a general overview of the order of worship should be given. The text under each heading above is for your planning. This gives an idea of the format of a Catholic wedding Mass or ceremony.

*Revised: May 1, 2009*