

## **Diocese of Jackson Weddings**

### ***Parish Wedding Policies***

*Weddings are a joyous celebration in the life of a parish, but oftentimes they can pose challenges in maintaining the sacredness of the space and the ceremony. In light of this, Pastors, Lay Ecclesial Ministers and Pastoral Ministers should make every effort to remind couples and their families, prior to the rehearsal and ceremony, of the dignity and sacred nature of the celebration and the space in which it is held.*

*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. Below are diocesan policies that are to 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.

### **A. Rite of Marriage and Sundays:**

- In the Diocese of Jackson weddings Masses on Sunday or Saturday evenings after 4 p.m. are strongly discouraged. The Rite for Marriage Outside Mass should be used.
- 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.
- During Advent and Lent, Wedding Masses on Sunday or Saturday evenings after 4 p.m. should not be celebrated. The Rite for Marriage Outside Mass should be used.

### **B. The Mass and mixed marriages:**

- In the Diocese of Jackson wedding Masses are strongly discouraged between a Catholic and a non-Catholic because of the occasional tensions that may arise around exclusion from Communion. The Rite for Marriage Outside Mass should be used.

### **C. 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*)

### **D. Unity Candles:**

- The practice of incorporating Unity Candles into the ceremony is to be stopped. 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 never in the church.

## **E. Photographers and Videographers**

- *Photographers and Videographers should not be allowed to take over the church and sanctuary. Photographers should never be allowed in the sanctuary or near the altar before, during and after the ceremony. Each should be given specific instructions as to how long, where and when they are allowed to setup, make photographs, etc.*
- *Because the ceremony is a sacred moment in the life of the entire parish community, photographers should refrain from using flash photography during the actual ceremony.*
- *No inappropriate poses are to be allowed in the church. If absolutely necessary, these may be taken at the reception unless the reception is on church property.*

## **Children 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. In the Diocese of Jackson the minimum age for child participants is First Grade.*
- *Pets are never allowed to participate in wedding ceremonies.*

## **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. Strapless dresses, plunging necklines, and open backs should not be chosen.*

## **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.*

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