

**St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church**  
4900 Riley Road  
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564  
Phone: 228-875-0654 Fax: 228-875-6852  
Website: [www.stelseton.com](http://www.stelseton.com)

## **Marriage Policy**

### **Welcome**

The Church cares about you and wants you to have a good life together. These guidelines for Marriage Preparation and Wedding Ceremony will help aid your wedding process.

### **Marriage Preparation**

Marriage preparation is very important. You must make an appointment with the parish office, 875-0654, for an initial meeting with Father Sergio or Deacon Martin. There are several steps/programs available at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church for Marriage Prep. They are:

**“Focus” (Mandatory)** Deacon Martin or Deacon Michael at 875-0654

**“For Better & For Ever”** Please contact Nathan & Stephanie Pendleton 228-217-3777  
Chris & Bettina Young 288-365-5466

### **Documents You Will Need**

#### **Baptism Certificate**

You will need a recent copy of your baptismal certificate dated within six (6) months of the wedding date with all notations on the certificate.

#### **Marriage License**

Please make sure to apply in a timely manner. Please bring the license to the office one week prior to the wedding.

#### **Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire**

This information is needed for the Church’s permanent records.

#### **Possible Dispensation**

If there is a non-Catholic involved, we need to obtain a dispensation.

#### **Possible Annulment**

If either party was married previously, in any kind of ceremony, civil or church, and annulment must be obtained.

### **Wedding Ceremony**

#### **Sacrament**

The Catholic Wedding is not just a civil contract between two people, but a covenant where a man and a woman unite in a marriage of love, before God, for the rest of their lives. Therefore, the Catholic Wedding is a sacrament of the Church.

## **Other Priests, Deacons or Ministers**

Priests from other parishes or Ministers from other faiths are welcome to participate in the wedding ceremony at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church. A letter from the priest's home diocese is required stating that they are in good standing and are granted permission to come to our parish to celebrate a marriage. Also needed, is an approval letter from the Bishop of this diocese, granting permission.

## **Preparation**

### **A Helpful Suggestion**

When you book the church you should book the reception location at the same time. This will eliminate the need to frantically find a date to reschedule your wedding because the reception location could not accommodate you on the date of your wedding.

### **Fees**

There is no cost for use of St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church. It is customary to give a donation to the priest/deacon.

There is a fee for receptions held at Fannon Hall. Parishioners \$200.00; non-parishioners use of hall fee is \$300 and for use of the kitchen is \$100. At the reception, if you plan on serving alcoholic beverages of any kind, special forms and insurance are required (4) four weeks in advance. Check with Amy, the church secretary, at 875-0654, between the hours of Monday through Thursday 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.; Friday 8 am until noon for costs and contracts.

### **Time and Date of the Ceremony**

Weddings are to be scheduled at a time when there is no conflict with the normal worship hours. The worship hours will vary during special seasons of the year, such as Christmas and Easter.

Saturday weddings should be scheduled between the hours of 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. or 7 p.m. Weekday weddings can be scheduled when there is no conflict with other church services.

### **Readers**

You are responsible for selecting readers for the scriptures and the prayers of the faithful. You are responsible for making sure your selected readers are prepared (They have practiced the readings).

### **Photographer/Videographer**

It is important to instruct the photographer that pictures must be completed within ***thirty (30) minutes prior to the wedding ceremony and within one hour after the wedding.*** Pre-wedding pictures can be taken one & one half hours before the wedding.

The celebrant does not mind if professional photographers wish to shoot pictures during the ceremony as long as they are inconspicuous and do not interfere with the Rites of the ceremony, **do not come into the sanctuary.** The lighting is adequate to take pictures without flash during the ceremony.

## **Decorations and Environment**

St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church celebrates liturgical seasons with special hangings and decorations. We do have wedding banners.

If you wish to decorate the following rules must be followed:

1. The Altar itself may NOT be decorated. The area on the floor around the altar and in front of the ambo may be decorated. We have 2 tall planters to put flowers in that are available for use, underneath the banners.
2. If Unity Candle stands and Candelabras are rented, plastic protectors **MUST** be placed under them to protect the flooring.
3. No runners or petals (real or fake) allowed the aisles. This is a liability ruling. Elderly guests can easily trip or slip on these items causing falls and injury.
4. No glass, columns, pedestals or candles (free standing or attached to the pews) are allowed in the aisle.
5. No nails, tape, florist wire or florist clay may be used on the pews or the doors. Your florist has plastic hooks that will slip over the back of the pew. These can be decorated and will not mar or damage the pews or doors.
6. **No church floral arrangements or plants may be moved by anyone in the wedding party.** All wedding floral arrangements **MUST** have plastic under them to protect the flooring. All florists must pick up wedding decorations after the ceremony. If you wish to leave flowers for the weekend masses, please call Amy at 875-0654. If the flowers are staying, the couple's name will be placed in the mass flower book. All wedding decorations left in the church become the property of St. Elizabeth Seton and will be disposed of.
7. A kneeler will be provided for the bride and groom. Chairs without arms may be placed to be used by the bride and groom if so desired.

## **Music**

The wedding ceremony is a worship service. Music must be chosen with great care. We have two people who may be available for your wedding Allan Cahela at 228-327-3106; Edgar Hernandez at 601-880-3261 or John Ridgeway 228-233-6195. Either will be able to assist you with the following guideline to help you decide on your music:

1. Is the selected music technically aesthetic and expresses the intent of the sacrament?
2. Are the lyrics, images and music appropriate of a worship service?
3. The musician you choose will help you select the proper music to enhance your wedding ceremony.

4. No recorded music should be used for the wedding ceremony. The music used during the lighting of the Unity Candle is to be fitting with the rest of the music for your wedding ceremony. No Country Western, Pop music, etc. can be used. This type of music is appropriate for the wedding reception and could be used as the first dance of the married couple.
5. The celebrant will have the final word on the selection of music.
6. If there is a vocalist for the wedding, we request that the organist/musicians and vocalist rehearse at least **ONE WEEK** prior to the wedding rehearsal. Music practice cannot be done before or during the wedding rehearsal. They must be prepared by the time of the rehearsal, as this time is needed for the wedding party.

### **Rehearsal**

All members of the wedding party including the parents, ushers, readers and musicians are required to be there and on time. The celebrant may or may not be available to be at the rehearsal. Contact Richard Greenwold at 228-238-0037 or 228-935-8778 for rehearsal time.

### **The Wedding**

We require that the wedding party, already dressed, including parents and grandparents, be at the church at least (30) thirty minutes before the ceremony. The bride will wait in the cry room for the start of the ceremony

The time on the wedding invitation is the time for the bride to walk down the aisle. All of the introductory music, the seating of grandparents and parents, and the lighting of the unity candle must take place **BEFORE** this time.

**The grandparents will be seated (10) ten minutes before the wedding. The parents will be seated (5) five minutes before the wedding.**

**The wedding will begin on time even if members of the wedding party are absent.** Delayed weddings run into other services that follow.

*The marriage license and wedding rings are to be given to Richard Greenwold who will make sure the celebrant signs the wedding license and the rings are placed on the altar to be blessed. (Office will provide Richard the license)*

Ring bearers should have fake rings on the pillow. Young children are very unpredictable and may lose the rings under a pew on the way to the altar.

**Drinking of alcoholic beverages of any kind** before the rehearsal or wedding ceremony shows a lack of respect for the sacredness of the wedding ceremony. Please ask all the members of your wedding party to reserve this form of celebration for the rehearsal dinner and the wedding reception.

**Clean Up**

Members of the party are responsible for removing make-up kits, boxes, clothing, etc. from the church.

Blowing bubbles or throwing birdseed is permitted outside of Fannon Hall, if the reception is at this location but not outside the church.

The staff of St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church hopes that by sharing this information with you, that your preparation and wedding ceremony will bring great joy to both of you, your families and friends. We offer our prayers and best wishes for your future life together.

Thank you for choosing St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the Marriage Policy for St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church. I will abide by this policy for my Wedding Ceremony.

I also fully understand that absolutely no one may remove any flowers or plants from the Altar/Sanctuary.

I acknowledge receipt of the Together for Life Book where I will choose readings from.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_