



St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church

One Family United in Christ

Dear Engaged Couple:

On behalf of our entire parish and staff, I would like to congratulate you on your decision to marry in the Church and welcome you to our parish's preparation program. Your desire to marry in the Catholic Church is a sign of your faith and your desire that the Lord be the foundation of your future life as a Christian married couple. To help you in planning for your wedding, and more importantly, your marriage, I have included with this letter a summary of our policies concerning preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church and specifically in our parish of St. Alphonsus. Please read over these policies carefully since they will answer many of the questions you may have about how to proceed.

Since an important part of preparation for marriage is your own participation in the life of the Church, I encourage you during the months prior to your wedding to be regular worshipers at your local church. By doing this, you will experience a familiarity with our local parish and with God, who is the source of all blessings for family life. The months of engagement prior to marriage can be a very rich time of spiritual growth and of renewal in faith and prayer. Do not hesitate to pray as a couple for the Holy Spirit's guidance during your engagement!

I ask that six months to one year prior to your wedding date you contact the Parish Office at 225-261-4650 to begin your preparation. Celebrants available for your wedding are Father Jason Palermo, Deacon Robert Kusch, or Deacon Ronnie Hebert. May the Lord guide and bless you in the months ahead.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jason Palermo
Pastor

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

I. THE FIRST STEP

The first step is to call the church office (225-261-4650) between the hours of 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM on Monday through Friday to schedule the church for your anticipated wedding. (Many couples schedule the church one year in advance to make sure of getting the date they prefer; however, we do not schedule weddings more than a year in advance.) Please understand that the final approval for celebrating the sacrament of marriage in the Catholic Church can only come after the completion of the preparation program. Scheduling a wedding for a particular date should not be construed as permission to be married. It is a tentative date only!

Marriages at St. Alphonsus are ordinarily scheduled on Friday between 6:00 - 7:00 PM and on Saturday at 10:30 AM, 1:00 PM, or 6:30 - 7:00 PM. Due to the many activities of our parish, there can be no more than one wedding each weekend except in unusual circumstances as determined in consultation with the priest. **Normally, only parishioners of St. Alphonsus are permitted to be married at St. Alphonsus Church.**

CHURCH WEDDING STIPEND

The stipend to be paid to the parish is **\$500** for registered parishioners. Either the bride or groom must be registered in our system to receive the parishioner rate. The out-of-parish (non-registered) wedding stipend is \$700.

Checks should be made out to St. Alphonsus Catholic Church.

This stipend should be attached to the signed back sheet of these policies and returned to the Church Office in order to book your wedding date.

Please note that the stipend for the church **does not include** the fee for the organist or cantor. These fees should be given to the coordinator in separate labeled envelopes at your rehearsal. Please refer to the section on ***Music*** in these policies regarding fees for these services.

Church stipend **does not include** the fee for the wedding coordinator.

Coordinator fee is \$250. This is to be paid directly to the coordinator at rehearsal.

It is customary and appropriate to give the priest/deacon celebrating your wedding a monetary gift. The amount of the gift is at the discretion of the couple. This can also be given to the coordinator at your rehearsal to pass onto your officiant for you.

*Please read over the policies for weddings at St. Alphonsus. ****Policies may change depending on state and diocese restrictions at time of wedding.**** If you have any questions you may call the parish office, and we will be glad to assist you. The last page of the policies is to be signed and returned to the parish office for our files with your church fee. Please keep the policies to guide you through the planning of your wedding.*

Last Revised: February 2025

II. THE SECOND STEP

Six months to one year prior to your wedding date you will need to contact the priest or deacon you are asking to officiate at your wedding.

If you wish to have a clergyman from another parish officiate at your wedding, it is his responsibility to provide the preparation. Of course, we will expect him to follow the wedding policies of our parish.

The main reason for contacting the parish a number of months in advance is that our parish community provides the following experiences to aid in your marriage preparation:

1 - ***The Pre-Marital Inventory***. This is a series of questions to help you identify areas of your relationship that could benefit from further discussion. It is **mandatory** to take the online PMI assessment before meeting with the priest/deacon. The priest/deacon will go over the results of this survey with you.

Couples will be asked to complete item #1 and the initial paperwork with Sara Puissegur at the Church Office, and then choose **one** option from # 2, #3 or #4.

2 - ***Called to Love Retreat***. This is a diocesan program which begins on Friday evening and concludes with a Mass on Sunday afternoon. This retreat gives an overview of Catholic values pertaining to marriage and family life with a strong spiritual focus.

3 - ***The Engaged Encounter Retreat***. This is a diocesan program which begins on Friday evening and concludes with a Mass on Sunday afternoon. Modeled on the very successful Marriage Encounter Weekend for married couples, this program is highly recommended for couples who are interested in finding ways to deepen the relationship they have already built.

*Registration for both retreats: <http://www.mfldiobr.org/marriage-preparation.html>

4- ***Sponsor Couple Program***. A number of married couples of our parish community have gone through special training in order to serve as your aids in marriage preparation. One of these couples is willing to meet with the two of you in their home...usually for 4 or 5 evenings. *This can replace weekend retreat.*

** *Limited availability of sponsor couples. This option is not guaranteed.*

III. DOCUMENTS THAT WILL BE NEEDED

There are certain documents that we will need for our parish records:

- 1 - **A newly issued baptismal certificate.** (NOTE: **NOT a birth certificate**). Contact the church of your baptism and have them send a new copy WITH all notations to St. Alphonsus. **The baptism certificate must be dated within six months of the wedding date.** (This document is required only of Catholics.)
- 2 - **Civil marriage licenses** must be obtained ***no less*** than 72 hours before the marriage ceremony and ***no more*** than 24 days prior to the wedding. You are responsible for obtaining your civil license packet from the East Baton Rouge Clerk of Court's Office and bringing it to the Church Office by the Wednesday before your wedding date.

IV. PLANNING THE CEREMONY

WEDDING COORDINATOR

St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church employs a Wedding Coordinator that will assist you at the rehearsal and on the day of your wedding. You will pay the \$250 Coordinator fee directly to her at your rehearsal.

READINGS

When you are ready to plan your wedding ceremony, you will be given a booklet, "Together for Life." This contains the marriage ritual and a selection of recommended Scripture readings. You are encouraged to choose the Scripture readings that best express your hopes for marriage. You can select readers for the First Reading, Second Reading, and the Prayers of the Faithful. Your officiant will read the Gospel and give a brief Homily.

MUSIC

In choosing music for your wedding, please remember that the music must be sacred music consistent with the sacramental nature of the event. ***Taped music is not allowed.*** All music to be used for your wedding as well as choice of a cantor must be approved by the parish in compliance with existing Diocesan and parish policies.

The church contracted cantor/music director will be happy to help you in the selection of appropriate music and musicians. Fee for the organist and cantor is \$225 per person. It is strongly recommended that you use a vocalist/cantor that works at St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church. Use of a vocalist/cantor other than one from St. Alphonsus parish will result in extra fees (due to required rehearsals). **It is your responsibility to contact David Aguillard to plan your wedding music and to select your musicians.** Contact David Aguillard at 225-776-7353 (cell phone). This should be done **at least 4-6 months before** the wedding.

FLORAL AND CHURCH DECORATIONS

Since there are often other liturgical celebrations planned for the same day as a wedding, **the church will be reserved for you beginning 90 minutes before your wedding is scheduled to begin.** * *On Saturday evenings, you cannot enter the church or decorate before 5:15 PM due to 4 PM Mass.* *

Floral/greenery arrangements are appropriate and are to be placed in the Sanctuary. Containers and display items for floral arrangements are the responsibility of the wedding party and should be obtained from the florist or from rental agencies. It is the responsibility of the couple to remove all decorations, flowers, and any other items brought into the Church / Choir Room immediately following the ceremony. (Exception: If flowers are to be left for the weekend Masses, the florist may pick up display items on Monday or Tuesday - after 9:00 AM)

Use of decorations in the aisles is discouraged. No floral arches or floral/greenery displays are allowed near the altar or in the aisles.

You may put pew markers on the end of the pews. Pew markers may be attached with ribbon, rubber bands, or plastic hangers. Taping or stapling markers to pews is forbidden.

If you wish to leave your floral arrangements for the parish to enjoy at the weekend Masses, please notify the parish office (225-261-4650) as far in advance of your wedding ceremony as possible.

FLOWERS TO MARY & MOTHERS (Optional)

If you would like to do this, you must order the correct amount of long-stem roses/flowers from your florist and have that brought to the Church with the rest of your floral order. These are NOT provided by St. Alphonsus. Let your coordinator and musicians know if you plan to include this.

AISLE RUNNER

NO aisle runner is to be used.

No rice, confetti, bird seed, or flower petals is to be used at the church (inside or outside). If you are having a flower girl, she may not drop flower petals or anything else in the aisle of the church. We suggest giving her a small bouquet or sign to hold instead.

THE BRIDAL PARTY (ATTENDANTS)

St. Alphonsus limits the number of attendants in the Bridal Party to **16 (8 Bridesmaids & 8 Groomsmen maximum)**. There is limited space on the altar steps. *This does not include your ring bearer and flower girl.*

CHILDREN IN THE BRIDAL PARTY

If you chose to have children in your wedding party (Flower Girl/Ring Bearer), **they should be at least 4 years old** and well-behaved. Children under age 4 must have an adult escort them down the aisle. No more than four children total. Once children process down the aisle, they are to be seated with their parents or a chaperone.

DRESSING AREA

The Choir Room is reserved for brides and bridal attendants wishing to dress at the church. You have access to this room an hour and a half before the ceremony starts.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs may be taken during the wedding ceremony provided the couple has discussed this with the celebrant prior to the wedding. If you wish to remain after the ceremony to take pictures, we ask that this be done as quickly (20-minute maximum) and orderly as possible.

(NOTE: Before the wedding begins, the photographer should speak to the Officiant or Wedding Coordinator. Fr. Jason asks that you limit the use of Flash photography during a Nuptial Mass.)

THE REHEARSAL

Typically scheduled the evening before your wedding around 5:30-6 PM unless there is a conflict. Wedding rehearsals should take 45 minutes, and they must begin on time and end on time. It is wise to tell your friends an earlier time to make sure they are here for the rehearsal. We will not wait for those who arrive late. **Please confer with Sara Puissegur at the Church Office to confirm your rehearsal date and time.**

ALCOHOL-FREE CAMPUS

There is to be no drinking of alcoholic beverages by any members of the wedding party prior to the rehearsal or the wedding itself.

IMPORTANT PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Interfaith Marriages - Canon law and the diocesan policy for marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic indicates that the wedding ceremony is to be celebrated **without Mass** since intercommunion is not permitted.

Previous Marriages - If either party has a previous marriage, this should be discussed with the priest as soon as possible, **even if the previous marriage did not take place in the Catholic Church.**

We hope this information will aid your wedding planning. If you have additional questions, please call the parish office (261-4650) and ask to speak to Sara Puissegur.

SUMMARY / CHECK LIST

- Schedule wedding and rehearsal six months to one year in advance
- Sign and return back page of policies to Church Office with full church stipend **(\$500 - in parish fee) (\$700 - out of parish fee)**
- Newly issued copy of Catholic baptismal certificate(s) – Certificate must be dated ***within six months of wedding date.*** (Catholics only)
- Six months to one year prior to wedding - Contact the Parish Office to begin marriage preparation. Call 261-4650 to begin paperwork with Sara.
- At least 4-6 months prior to wedding - Contact church cantor David Aguiard to plan music and select musicians.

REMINDER: The church is available to you 90 minutes prior to the time your wedding is scheduled to begin (not before 5:15 PM on Saturdays).

A church wedding coordinator will also be available at this time.

- Inform florist, photographer, and others involved in the wedding of the guidelines. If leaving the floral arrangements with the church, please inform the parish office at least a month prior to the wedding.
- Unity Candle is optional - No other candles can be used.
- Decorations in the aisles are discouraged except pew markers.
- Civil license (obtain no less than 72 hours prior to wedding) - bring to Church Office at least 2 days before your rehearsal.

FEE SUMMARY

The following are the fees expected when celebrating a wedding at St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church:

Pay When Booking:	Church Fee	\$500.00 (in parish)
	or	\$700.00 (out of parish)
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Pay at Rehearsal:	Wedding Coordinator	\$250.00
	Organist	\$225.00
	Cantor	\$225.00
	Priest/Deacon	<i>At discretion of couple</i> (suggested gift \$100 - \$200)

Any unpaid fees or donations should be given to the Wedding Coordinator in separate, marked envelopes on the night of the Wedding Rehearsal. She will hand them out to your musicians and officiant before the ceremony.

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI CATHOLIC CHURCH WEDDING POLICY
AGREEMENT

I certify that I have read and agree to comply with the above policies of St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church.

Bride's Name _____

Groom's Name _____

Date of Wedding _____

Check # _____

Date of Check _____

Please bring this page and payment to the St. Alphonsus Church Office **or** mail this form with the church fee to:

ATTN: Sara Puissegur
St. Alphonsus Church
14040 Greenwell Springs Road
Greenwell Springs, LA 70739-3302