

**Guidelines for Marriages at  
Saint Louis de France Parish  
Swansea, Massachusetts**

**General Guidelines:**

1. **Congratulations** on your decision to be married! Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage offers us a special **opportunity to deepen our faith** and to grow closer to God's family the Church. Our parish family of Saint Louis **extends to you the assurance of our prayerful support** at this time.
2. It is presumed that either the **bride or the groom is a member of Saint Louis de France Parish**. For those who are not, a letter of permission from one of the parties' proper pastor is required. It would be our hope that Catholics are faithful to the weekly celebration of the Eucharist. Since this is a new beginning, **we invite those who do not regularly attend the weekend Eucharist to make it a regular part of their lives**.
3. The Guidelines for the Diocese of Fall River in regards to the Sacrament of Marriage state that those wishing to marry are to notify the parish priest at least a minimum of eight months before the requested wedding date. **It is highly recommended that anyone wishing to marry contact Father Dave at least one year before the requested date** since there are many different requirements for the couple to fulfill and participate in. Further, **the couple is required to have an initial meeting** with the parish priest **in order to secure a wedding date**.
4. Church law requires that both parties be free to marry. Therefore, **no wedding date can be established or confirmed over the phone, nor can it be arranged by anyone other** than the parties themselves. Both parties are required to be present for this initial meeting. **Couples are asked to meet with Father Dave after whatever weekend Mass they attend. Please Note:** For pastoral reasons weddings are not celebrated on Saturdays any later than 1:00pm for a wedding Mass and 1:30pm for a wedding liturgy outside of Mass.

5. As soon as a wedding date is secured, **the couple is required to take part in the Marriage Preparation Program of the Diocese** of Fall River, as part of their spiritual preparation for Marriage. At the initial meeting Father Dave will provide you with a card which contains the information you need to schedule this session. **Please Note:** Attending the **Marriage Preparation workshop should be done no later than eight months before** the wedding date.
6. The Foccus Marriage Survey is also a Diocesan requirement for all couples. Completing the Foccus survey is normally done prior to attending the Marriage preparation session. Please either call or email our parish office to schedule the Foccus session.
7. Once the Marriage Preparation workshop has been completed **the couple is asked to contact the parish office (508) 674-1103 or [sldfo@comcast.net](mailto:sldfo@comcast.net) to arrange an appointment with Father Dave** to complete the required Diocesan documentation. **Please Note:** Arranging **this appointment needs to be completed no later than four months before** the wedding date.
8. There is also the need for planning the Liturgy of your Wedding. When you meet with Father Dave you will be given a pamphlet (*"Together for Life"*) to assist you. The options involved will be gone over with you and you will be asked to complete the form in the rear of the book. This information will be needed by Father Dave to plan your celebration.

**Marriage License:**

Likewise please note that **each couple must obtain a valid Marriage License** from any city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The process of obtaining this license should be undertaken no later than one month prior to the intended wedding date. **The license is to be given to Fr. Dave at a weekend Mass or delivered to our parish office at the rectory** as soon as it is received by the couple.

**Please note: Parish policy requires that the marriage license be brought to the parish office no later than 2 weeks before the wedding date.**

**Music:**

1. **As soon as you secure a wedding date, you are required to contact a liturgical (Church) musician** to provide music for your wedding. Matthew Dion 774-488-6071 or Edward (E.J.) Viveiros 508-496-6998 are available to you for weddings. Please contact one of our liturgical musicians after you have secured a wedding date to be sure of their availability and to arrange a time to meet with them to plan the music for your wedding.
2. Also, any additional accompaniment needs to be confirmed by the liturgical musician that has been contracted for the wedding liturgy. Please Note: Secular (Non-Church) music is not suitable or appropriate for the liturgical celebration of Marriage. Please see the liturgical musician, or Father Dave regarding any questions or for more information.

**Flowers and Decorations:**

1. It is the usual custom that the **couple provide two flower arrangements for the altar** at the time of their wedding. It is also the expected practice that these flowers remain in the Church after the wedding.
2. **Any other type of floral arrangements should be discussed with Father Dave** prior to contacting the florist. For example: Candles placed within any floral arrangements may not be lit due to town fire regulations and parish policy. Please be sure to discuss your plans with Father Dave well in advance of your wedding date.
3. Flower deliveries and/or setups by **florists are required to be scheduled** in advance. Please call our parish office at 508-674-1103 to schedule a time for flowers to be delivered and/or arranged prior to the wedding.

You are permitted to provide bows and/or flowers for the pews if you so desire. **For reasons of safety, we do not encourage “aisle/carpet runners” to be used in or out of Church.**

#### **Photographers and Videotaping:**

The photographer, as well as, the person videotaping, **is required to speak with the wedding coordinator before** the Liturgy begins. The photographer is welcome to take pictures throughout the celebration, as long as the celebration is not disrupted in any way. In no case is the photographer or videotaper allowed within the inner sanctuary area.

#### **Rice Throwing:**

It is also parish policy that the **throwing of flower petals, rice, bird seed and/or confetti is not allowed** within the Church building or outside on the grounds.

#### **Offering to the Church:**

**The offering for the Church is a donation of two hundred dollars. The fee for the wedding coordinator is one hundred twenty five dollars.** Both are expected when the wedding license is brought to the parish office 2 weeks in advance of the wedding date. If there is any financial difficulty in providing the offering and fee, please be sure to speak with Father Dave.

#### **Wedding Coordinator:**

Shay Austin-Leary is our parish wedding coordinator and can be reached at [shay@alainnevents.com](mailto:shay@alainnevents.com) or by calling 401-835-3262. **Shay will contact you the month of your wedding.** She will arrange a meeting with you to go over the details for your celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. Shay is a tremendous help regarding all aspects of the Church celebration.

#### **Wedding Rehearsal:**

1. Shay will direct your rehearsal with the options you have chosen. **All who will be attending the**

**rehearsal are expected to be on time.** This is important since it is always possible that another rehearsal may follow your own. The cooperation and participation of all present is very much appreciated.

2. Those who attend the rehearsal should be: The bride and groom; best man and maid of honor; the brides maids; the ushers; ring bearers; flower girls; and the father/parents of the bride. In addition those who are doing the readings and/or bringing up the gifts for the celebration should attend as well. Parents of the groom, grandparents, and any other party that will be formally seated or participating in any way should also be present for the rehearsal.
3. A note in regards to ring bearers and flower girls: If you do select very young children for these roles (*under age 7*), you run the risk of their not understanding where to go and what to do. Experience has made this very clear to any person involved in wedding preparations. Please consider an older child in fairness to them.

#### **Wedding Celebrant:**

Other priests and deacons are always welcome here at Saint Louis and are most welcome to celebrate your wedding. Please mention this to Father Dave well in advance of your wedding date so that all civil and church requirements and permissions can be taken care of.

#### **Our warmest wishes and prayers for you:**

We congratulate you on your upcoming wedding and urge you to consider the sacredness of marriage. Besides being a very meaningful social occasion for you and your families, it is a profoundly sacred reality, as you are receiving the sacrament of marriage. By your marriage in the Church you are making a public statement of your faith and your love and fidelity to each other and to Christ, within the community of the Church. Please take this time to spiritually prepare yourselves for living out the sacrament of marriage.

# Marriage, You, And Saint Louis de France Parish



Saint Louis de France Parish  
56 Buffington Street  
Swansea, Massachusetts 02777

*Mailing address:*  
PO Box 70 • Somerset, MA 02726

Parish Office: 508-674-1103  
email: [sldfo@comcast.net](mailto:sldfo@comcast.net)  
[www.stlouisdefrance.net](http://www.stlouisdefrance.net)