

**Celebration
Of the
Sacrament of
Marriage**



**Cathedral
of
Mary Our Queen**

5200 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21210

“Married Christians, in virtue of the sacrament of Matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church; they help each other to attain holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children; and they have their own special gift among the people of God.”

—Introduction to the Rite of Marriage, #1

I. INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your desire to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage. May the Lord bless your lives together with much happiness and joy. The Cathedral Parish community welcomes this opportunity to assist you as you prepare to enter into this sacrament of your vocation - your marriage in the Lord. In our Catholic spiritual tradition, we recognize that the marriage celebration takes place not only in a church, but also in The Church - the community of Christian faith that includes not only you, your family and your friends, but also the whole Church - your brothers and sisters in Christ. We offer the following information and guidelines to help your preparations for this most important commitment of life and faith.

There are three basic areas of preparation that will need your attention. These three areas are: Documentation, Marriage Preparation Process, and Liturgical Planning.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Scheduling your Wedding

Couples are to contact the Parish Office at least six months before any wedding plans may be made. It is most important that arrangements are made first with the priest/deacon before any other arrangements are finalized (i.e. reception facilities, caterers, etc.). Weddings can be held in the Main Church of the Cathedral or in the Lady Chapel, located behind the main sanctuary at the west end of the Cathedral.

Due to the great number of events held at the Cathedral throughout the year, weddings may be held at the Cathedral only on Saturdays at 10 AM, 12 NOON, or 2 PM.

Wedding rehearsals are typically scheduled Friday evening at 6:30 PM. Other times may be requested or required depending upon the Cathedral schedule.

Because of the large number of weddings at the Cathedral, the clergy staff are able to witness only the weddings of parishioners of the Cathedral. Non-parishioners must contact a priest or deacon to be responsible for their wedding and be present for the rehearsal.

Couples whose wedding is to be witnessed by a priest or deacon who is not on staff at the Cathedral must request permission from one of the Cathedral parish clergy:

1. No reservation for a wedding will be considered final until the officiating priest or deacon has confirmed with the Cathedral Parish priest/deacon handling the wedding, preferably in writing, that he will officiate at the wedding.
2. After the date and time for the wedding and rehearsal has been finalized, the couple must schedule a meeting with a Cathedral parish priest/deacon in order to review the Cathedral wedding procedures.
3. After the above has been completed, all remaining paperwork and other requirements are the responsibility of the priest or deacon who will witness the marriage, unless other arrangements have been made.

Fees

The fee for use of the Cathedral for a wedding is \$1200.00. The date and time of the Wedding Liturgy is confirmed when a deposit of one-third of the total wedding fee has been received. The remaining two-thirds of the total wedding fee is to be received no later than two months prior to the wedding.

In light of the large amount of time and effort that planning a wedding requires on the part of the presiding priest or deacon, it is suggested that the couple make a personal offering of \$150.00 to the celebrant.

Fees for musicians are in addition to the fee for use of the church. Basic fees are \$250.00 for the organist and \$150.00 for the cantor/soloist. Additional charges may apply. See the section on liturgical music for more details. These fees should be paid to the Cathedral no later than two months prior to the wedding.

Music Reserve Policy:

We appreciate a timely start to your wedding. Our policy is to collect a separate check, payable to Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, in the amount of \$200.00, that will be held in reserve. The check will be cashed if your wedding begins 15 minutes after the scheduled start time. You will be notified by email if the check is cashed; otherwise, the check will be shredded the Monday immediately following your ceremony.

Additionally, please note that since musicians often have commitments after your wedding, should your ceremony begin 30 minutes after the scheduled start time, we cannot guarantee their availability for the entire ceremony.

All fees are subject to change.

III. DOCUMENTATION

The priest/deacon who will officiate at your wedding is responsible for coordinating the preparation of the following items with you:

- Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire: a brief series of information questions that your priest or deacon will complete with you.
- Baptismal Certificates: for each Catholic person, a recently issued certificate (i.e. within six months of the wedding) should be obtained by contacting the parish church where the baptism took place. For non-Catholic baptized Christians, simply a duplicate copy of an original certificate (or a letter indicating place, date, and other information) will suffice.
- Permissions/Dispensations: a simple form the priest/deacon will complete in order for a Catholic person to marry a non-Catholic person.
- The Catholic Church requires that any previous marriages be annulled before a couple may enter into a new marriage. This process may be lengthy and if necessary should be completed before scheduling a wedding at the Cathedral.
- If the Celebrant will be a visiting priest, delegation will not be granted until all paperwork has been completed.
- Certificate of Marriage Preparation (details below)
- Civil Marriage License: A civil marriage license must be obtained for **Baltimore City** from the Clarence Mitchell Courthouse, Room 628, 100 N. Calvert Street. One of the parties must appear in person to apply for the license. The license is good from 2 days after the application is made until six months from the date of issue. For more information, please call the Marriage License Bureau at (410) 333-3780.

IV. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Participation in an Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Process is required for all couples wishing to be married in the Church. The goal of this preparation activity is to help couples better understand themselves, each other, and the responsibilities of entering into marriage in the Lord. You may choose to participate in any one of the following programs:

- Engaged Encounter Weekend
- Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Sessions
- Sponsor Couple Programs

The *Engaged Encounter* retreat weekend and the *Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Sessions* are both sponsored by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Information about these programs is available at: www.archbalt.org. The *Sponsor Couple Program* at the Cathedral matches engaged couples with specially trained married couples for one-on-one marriage preparation. For further information, please contact the Parish Office at (410) 464-4000. For couples in a re-marriage situation, the Archdiocese sponsors a separate *Re-Marriage Preparation* program. Information is available from a priest or deacon. Marriage preparation should be complete at least three months prior to the wedding date. A certificate will be issued upon completion of the process that will become part of your required documentation.

V. LITURGICAL PLANNING

The priest/deacon will provide you with the booklet “Together for Life” which provides the optional prayers and Scripture readings (along with commentaries and a planning guide) for preparing the wedding liturgy.

When both parties are Catholic, the celebration of the marriage should take place within a Mass. If one of the parties is not Catholic, the celebration usually takes place at a ceremony outside Mass. The normal order of worship for a wedding is as follows:

- Introductory Rites
 - Entrance Procession
 - Sign of the Cross and Greeting
 - Opening Prayer

•Liturgy of the Word

- Old Testament Reading
- Responsorial Psalm (*usually sung*)
- New Testament Reading
- Gospel Acclamation (*usually sung*)
- Gospel Reading
- Homily

•Rite of Marriage:

- Introductory Address and Statement of Intentions
- Exchange of Consent (vows)
- Blessing and Exchange of Rings

If the wedding is celebrated at a Nuptial Mass, then it continues as follows:

- Prayer of the Faithful

•Liturgy of the Eucharist:

- Presentation of the Gifts (*musical selection*)
- Eucharistic Prayer (*with sung acclamations*)
- Nuptial Blessing
- Communion (*musical selection*)
- Prayer After Communion
- Final Blessing
- Recessional (*Organ /Instrumental*)

If the wedding is celebrated outside Mass, then it continues as follows:

- Prayer of the Faithful
- Nuptial Blessing
- The Lord's Prayer
- Final Blessing
- Recessional (*Organ /Instrumental*)

Other events in the Liturgy

Some couples choose to include a Unity Candle, Presentation to the Blessed Mother, exchange of coins, or other cultural symbols in their wedding celebration. Except for the Presentation to the Blessed Mother, which takes place after Communion, these additional exchanges would take place after the Exchange of Rings. If a couple chooses to include any of these, they will need to provide the appropriate candles, flowers, and/or cultural symbols. All necessary items should be brought to the wedding rehearsal. The unity candle must be a wax-based candle. Nothing is provided by the Cathedral.

Music for the Wedding

Music plays an integral part of the Liturgy of the Church. The Cathedral of Mary Our Queen has a national reputation for its excellent music program and attention to music at weddings is no exception.

Music selections for your wedding must be made in consultation with the Cathedral Director of Music, Wm. Glenn Osborne. The required services of the Cathedral Director of Music and a Cathedral Cantor will ensure that your wedding music is prepared with the utmost attention to detail and the sacred nature of the Liturgy.

Use of additional instruments and/or singers will increase the fees for the music. Fees for each musician can range from \$100.00 to \$250.00 per player and may require extra rehearsal time with the organist at \$75.00 per hour. Should you wish to have an organist other than the Cathedral Director of Music, the organist must be approved by the Cathedral Director of Music, and the couple is obligated to pay the standard \$250.00 fee to the Director of Music for consultation time and supervision of the other organist's practice time. Whether you prefer to simply have an organist and cantor present, or to be more elaborate with an organist, brass, strings or even a choir, we are here to help.

Couples should contact the Cathedral Music Office at (410) 464-4020, to set up an appointment to plan the music for the wedding liturgy. Couples usually meet with the Director of Music to discuss options and finalize plans three to four months prior to the wedding date. Keeping in mind the sacred nature of the liturgy, some musical selections are not appropriate for use in the church. All musical selections and musicians must be approved by the Director of Music Ministry.

Programs

Any program for the celebration would be the responsibility of the couple. If a program will be used, it should be brought to the Cathedral at the rehearsal. The Cathedral Music Director, Wm. Glenn Osborne, will provide musical titles to be included after the music consultation and can offer other guidance on how to list liturgical items.

VI. LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Lectors

It is proper for a lay person to proclaim the First and Second Readings from scripture and to announce the petitions of the Prayer of the Faithful. Couples should invite members of

the family or other close friends to serve in this capacity. The nature of the Word of God requires that such persons be persons of faith and effective public speakers. They should be given copies of the readings in advance and be present at the rehearsal.

Altar Servers

Altar servers are only scheduled to serve at weddings if requested by the couple or by the officiating priest or deacon. If so, an offering of \$25 should be given to each altar server the day of the ceremony. If the couple wishes to have family members or friends participate as altar servers, they should discuss this with the officiating priest or deacon and the servers must be present at the rehearsal.

Gift Bearers

If the marriage is being celebrated in the context of Mass, family members or friends may be invited to present the gifts of bread and wine as the altar is being prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

If the marriage is being celebrated in the context of Mass, family members or friends who are trained and active Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in their home parish may be invited to serve. This should be discussed well in advance with the officiating priest.

Official Witnesses

The official witnesses (Best Man and Maid or Matron of Honor) may be of any faith. Their names must be given to the officiating priest or deacon for inclusion in the marriage records.

Ring Bearers and Flower Girls

In order for the marriage ceremony to retain its dignity and sense of the sacred, only children five (5) years and older are permitted to serve as ring bearers or flower girls. Ring bearers and flower girls are required to be at the rehearsal.

Wedding Coordinators

All activities within the Cathedral are run by Cathedral staff. The services of a wedding coordinator are not needed at the rehearsal or the wedding.

VI. USE OF THE CATHEDRAL

Environment

The use of rice, confetti, birdseed, balloons, flower petals, etc., is absolutely prohibited inside and outside the Cathedral. The re-arrangement of sanctuary and chapel furnishings is not permitted. Runners are not permitted because they pose a safety hazard. Food and drink may not be brought into the Cathedral.

Flowers

All floral arrangements should be delivered to the Cathedral at least two hours prior to the start of the ceremony. Use the green door entrance on the north side of the Cathedral. Flowers should be given as memorials on the occasion of a wedding, and remain in place in the sanctuary for the entire weekend of your wedding.

Pew decorations are welcome. Tape is not to be used on the pews for ribbon bows or other decorations as it destroys the wood finish. Bows may be slipped on with a ribbon loop if desired. Candle stands that clamp on the back of pews may not be used for the same reason. No decorations are permitted on the candlesticks, pillars, or doors.

Photography/Videography

Photographs and/or video may be taken during the marriage ceremony, but always inconspicuously and from outside the sanctuary area. Only the official photographer and/or videographer may take pictures at the ceremony. Please note that the use of auxiliary floodlights and strobe lights is prohibited in the Cathedral. Twenty minutes for photography immediately after the recessional is permitted inside the Cathedral if the wedding started on time.

Arrival on Wedding Date

Men of the bridal party should arrive no later than **one** hour prior to the scheduled start time to serve as ushers for wedding guests. Women of the bridal party should arrive no later than **one-half** hour prior to the scheduled start time. We regret that there are no dressing facilities at the Cathedral.

Weddings are expected to start on time at the Cathedral. Any wedding that starts late may be shortened to fit within the allotted time.

Receiving Lines

Because of the limited amount of time between weddings and other parish functions, receiving lines are not permitted following the wedding.



***May almighty God, with his Word of blessing,
unite your hearts in the never-ending bond of pure love.***

***May your children bring you happiness,
and may your generous love for them
be returned to you many times over.***

***May the peace of Christ live always in your hearts and in your home.
May you have true friends to stand by you, both in joy and in sorrow.***

***May you be ready and willing
to help and comfort all who come to you in need.
And may the blessings promised to the compassionate
be yours in abundance.***

***May you find happiness and satisfaction in your work.
May daily problems never cause undue anxiety,
nor the desire for earthly possessions dominate your lives.***

***But may your hearts' first desire be always
the good things waiting for you in the life of heaven.
May the Lord bless you with many happy years together,
so that you may enjoy the rewards of a good life.
And after you have served him loyally in his kingdom on earth,
may he welcome you to his eternal kingdom in heaven.***

Blessing from the Rite of Marriage