

# Notes

## **A Note From Your Pastor:**

On behalf of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church parish, we extend our congratulations to you on your upcoming wedding and marriage. It is our hope that your marriage will bring you blessings throughout your lives. The staff at Blessed Sacrament is happy to assist you in these preparations at this important time in your life together.

This booklet is presented to you in order to guide you through the process of marriage preparation required by the Catholic Church. Wedding arrangements are certainly necessary and important but we hope that you will not lose sight that Marriage is a Sacrament – a sacred sign of your love for each other in Christ. Christ abundantly blesses your love. He enriches and strengthens you to undertake the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. Please accept our prayers and sincere best wishes for a happy wedding and a joyous married life.

Fr. Tom Mattingly

## Marriage Preparation

While it is understandable that a couple will be concerned that they are prepared for their wedding day, the Church's concern is that the couple be prepared for married life. The Catholic Church believes its pastoral responsibility is to assist couples in the Catholic understanding of marriage and be ready to embrace a marriage that is permanent, faithful and open to children. At no point does the Church or priest preparing the couple presume to decide whether a couple should marry or not. The Church's hope in this process is that these discussions will lead the couple to a more fruitful and joyous relationship as husband and wife.

Like most Catholic parishes, Blessed Sacrament requests that a couple allow at least six months for the preparation process. This process includes meeting with the priest, a premarital program and the collection of certain documents for a marriage file. It is essential that the couple be together during this process. If the bride and groom do not live in the same area, this may take some coordination. Completing this process is required so that the wedding can take place.

Generally the preparation process takes place where the Catholic party or one of the Catholic parties resides. If the wedding is to take place at a parish different from the one where the couple is being prepared, the priest preparing the couple will need to be told so that the process can be coordinated with the parish where the wedding will be taking place. In such cases more than six months may be required so that the process cannot only be completed but the marriage file received and reviewed by the parish where the wedding will be celebrated. Where there are different requirements of this process, the couple is always held to the requirements for the parish where the preparation takes place.

If either party has been married before, even if not in the Catholic Church, please inform the priest/deacon conducting the preparation as early as possible in the process.

It is the responsibility of the couple to provide certain documents to the parish during the preparation process.

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. The Catholic party/parties must provide a baptismal certificate that has been issued within the prior six months. You may obtain a certificate by contacting the Church of your Baptism. When asking for the certificate, be certain to tell them you are getting married and need all "notations" included. These are notations of the sacraments that the Catholic party has received since baptism.

A baptism certificate for the party who was baptized in another denomination is also requested. If no certificate is available, please let the priest/deacon preparing the couple know. These documents should be given to the priest/deacon by your second meeting.

2. Before the wedding, the couple must provide a Marriage License issued by the state in which the wedding is taking place. In Virginia this can be obtained at the local courthouse and is valid for use within 60 days. At Blessed Sacrament, we request this be brought to the office after you obtain it.

The priest/deacon who celebrates your wedding will assist you in completing the forms required for church records.

## PRE-MARITAL PROGRAMS

Couples being prepared at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church can attend pre-marriage retreats that are held twice a year in the spring and fall. Please contact the church for dates and times of these programs. Engagement Encounter is a program held over a weekend and is offered more frequently, usually in Richmond. Other parishes also offer such programs. The priest/deacon will be able to inform you about these programs. Any costs will be the responsibility of the couple.

## PREPARATION FOR “OUT OF PARISH” WEDDINGS

When a couple lives outside of the parish where they wish the wedding to occur, the preparation process should be initiated in the parish where the Catholic party or one of the Catholic parties resides. All the requirements of the parish where the preparation is taking place should be followed. The couple must leave time so that the marriage file can be prepared in time for the church where the wedding will take place to receive and review it. If you are being prepared elsewhere to be married at Blessed Sacrament, please have the priest overseeing the preparation contact the pastor of Blessed Sacrament to coordinate this process.

## CHURCH AND CEREMONY PREPARATION

### PLACE, DATE AND CELEBRANT OF YOUR WEDDING

Because marriage is a Sacrament, the normal place for a Catholic wedding to be celebrated is in a Catholic church, since the church more fully represents the ongoing sacramental life of the individual and the Catholic community. If the bride and groom are both Catholic the wedding can be at the parish church of either party. If only one member of the

couple is Catholic, the marriage is usually at the parish of that party. A couple can, for good reason, request that their wedding be at another Catholic parish. Having weddings at non-Catholic churches can be requested for a good reason. A wedding outside of a church is discouraged.

A couple may call to check to see if a particular day is open on the parish calendar, however the wedding cannot be scheduled until the couple meets with the priest/deacon of the parish.

Be aware that it is possible that other events may be scheduled the same day your wedding is planned. The pastor at Blessed Sacrament will make the decisions about scheduling weddings. There will always be sufficient time for all events to occur.

*A Friday wedding ceremony* may be scheduled between 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Only one wedding will be scheduled on a Friday. We do not schedule wedding Masses on Fridays.

*Saturday weddings* may be scheduled at 12:00 noon or 2:00 p.m. on a first-come basis. Other times may be negotiated depending on what other events are on the date. In the case of multiple weddings scheduled for a Saturday, only one wedding Mass will be scheduled, on a first come basis. Later times are difficult, as confessions are scheduled at 3:30pm and Mass at 5:00pm. Wedding parties are requested to leave the facility by 3:30pm on Saturdays.

Wedding rehearsals will be scheduled the evening before the wedding takes place, based on the parish schedule for the church.

*Visiting Catholic Clergy:* When a couple requests that a visiting Catholic priest/deacon preside at their wedding at Be aware that Virginia requires all clergy officiating at weddings be authorized to do so by the state. If the Catholic clergy you choose lives outside of Virginia, they may need to file a request with the state before being able to officiate at your wedding.

*Non-Catholic Clergy:* When one party of the couple being married is of another faith or denomination, their minister may participate in the ceremony with the priest/deacon. There are some restrictions as to how that minister can participate in the ceremony. You may discuss any questions or concerns with the priest/deacon in the preparation process. Should there be special reasons to be married in a Church of another denomination, a dispensation to do so may be requested.

## **WEDDING MASS OR CEREMONY**

The priest/deacon will assist you in planning your wedding liturgy. Normally planning the liturgy will take place in the parish where the wedding will occur. Options are permitted in the Marriage Rite that enable the bride and groom to choose readings and write the general intercessions for the wedding that will make the ceremony more meaningful to them and the gathered community. A source book to assist you will be provided during this preparation process.

If both the bride and groom are practicing Catholics, the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony normally takes place at a Nuptial Mass. An Interfaith Wedding is normally celebrated at a Marriage Ceremony that does not include communion, however, a Nuptial Mass may also be celebrated in certain circumstances.

## **WEDDING PARTY**

The sanctuary comfortably accommodates wedding parties of about 4-5 sets of attendants. Couples are asked to consider this, as larger parties tend to crowd the ritual space and the flow of the ceremony. It can be risky to include very young children in the wedding party since their reaction to being in front of a crowd can be unpredictable, depending on the temperament of the children involved. Please consider the temperament of the child and their ability to behave throughout the service before including them in your wedding party.

## **LECTORS**

Both the Nuptial Mass and the Wedding Ceremony include readings from Scripture and intercessory prayers. Up to three people should be chosen by the couple to read at the ceremony. Please choose people who are good public readers. It is preferred that New Testament readings be read by Christians.

## **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

When there is a wedding mass, the couple can choose Eucharistic Ministers trained in the Catholic Church to serve at the mass. The priest can also assign them.

## **WEDDING MUSIC**

Music is essential to the Catholic rite of marriage. It is important that any music selected supports the rite and conveys the sacred nature of marriage. Sacred music is most appropriate during the rite. Secular music, for the most part, is better suited for the other celebrations around the wedding (i.e. the reception).

All weddings require a sung psalm and alleluia before the gospel. Hymns and service music are an integral part of a wedding that takes place in the context of a mass. It is important that any musician at a Catholic wedding is familiar with the Catholic rite and is able to lead the congregation in all the music required. We prefer that an accompanist and soloist from our parish be used at the ceremony or mass. Other musicians familiar with the Catholic rite can be used at the discretion of the pastor and liturgy & music coordinator.

Please contact our parish liturgy and music coordinator to assist you with your choices of music at least **four months** before the wedding. This will assure that capable musicians are available for your wedding. Please do not delay in contacting the liturgy coordinator within this time. The parish liturgy and music coordinator must approve all wedding music, even if other accompanists or soloists are used. Failure to make these arrangements with the liturgy & music coordinator may seriously affect your wedding.

### **WEDDING PROGRAM/MASS SHEET**

If you desire to have a printed program/mass sheet for your ceremony, you must submit the proof to priest/deacon celebrant for final approval at least two weeks before the ceremony. Blessed Sacrament parish does not prepare wedding program/Mass sheets.

### **WEDDING PROCESSION**

The Church teaches that the bride and groom are the proper ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony. As such, both parties should participate in the opening procession.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

It is very important that all rehearsals and weddings start promptly. The tardy beginning of a previous rehearsal or wedding can seriously affect subsequent services. If for a good reason it is necessary to start late, the ceremony may have to be shortened. Please ensure every effort to be on time.

### **LENGTH OF REHEARSAL AND WEDDING**

As you plan your rehearsal dinner please allow 30-45 minutes for the rehearsal. Larger wedding parties usually require more rehearsal time.

Be sure to allow sufficient “drive time” to your rehearsal dinner or reception party from the church.

### **OTHER REGULATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **RICE, BIRDSEED, ETC.**

Due to insurance regulations and maintenance concerns, we must prohibit the use of rice, birdseed, rose petals, confetti or any other substance in the church or on church grounds. The bride and groom will be held personally responsible to see that this regulation is observed.

#### **WEDDING INVITATIONS**

When preparing and ordering your wedding invitations, please note that the address of the church is: 154 North Main Street.

There have been times when, due to situations beyond our control, we have had to alter arrangements concerning the wedding. Although this happens rarely, we request you do not print invitations before beginning the preparation process with the priest/deacon presides.

### **USE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS**

Anyone suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the church and church grounds. If the bride or groom is suspected of being under the influence of these substances the rehearsal or wedding will not take place.

### **WEDDING FACILITATOR**

Each couple is required to have a wedding facilitator, which is provided, by the parish for a fee of \$100.00. This individual to plan your wedding rehearsal/wedding day needs will contact you prior to your wedding. In addition, you may choose to have your own personal wedding coordinator as well. Keep in mind that personal wedding coordinators are not to overstep their boundaries. All decisions regarding the ceremony are up to the priest/deacon and parish wedding facilitator.

### **DRESSING AT CHURCH**

Dressing rooms are available downstairs in the church. The church will be available 2 hours prior to your wedding. It is the responsibility of the couple that all trash is placed in provided containers. We request that no food be brought into the church sanctuary.

### **FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS**

Due to the limited space on the altar platform, usually an arrangement in front of the altar suffices. Access to the building to decorate may be limited if another event is to take place prior to the wedding or if an event unexpectedly arises (e.g. a funeral).

Any items brought to the church must be removed from the church on the day of the celebration. The church will not be held responsible for any items left behind.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

Any photographer or videographer hired by the couple should be aware of the sacred nature of the marriage ceremony and should conduct him/herself in such a manner as not to be a distraction, both during the ceremony and when taking photographs outside the ceremony.

Photographs can be taken during the ceremony as long as there is no flash and the photographer stays outside the perimeter of the congregation.

Handheld video cameras can be used from the pews or a discrete location. Larger cameras, especially those mounted on a tripod, should be behind or to the side of the congregation.

Depending on the timing of the wedding and scheduling of the church, time for photographs taken before or after the ceremony may be limited. Please discuss this with the priest/deacon.

Please advise your photographer to check in with the priest/deacon celebrant before your wedding, and to discuss any special requests then.

**PARKING**

Parking is available in the municipal parking deck adjacent to the parish building. Parking is free, but please watch for 3 hour and 10 hour limits in various spots.

**MILITARY RITES**

Swords or any other weapons are prohibited, even if only ceremonial, from being worn or used in the church. Under certain circumstances, ceremonial swords may be worn or used on church grounds outside the church.

**CHURCH FEES***Facility Use:*

Participating members of more than six months	\$200.00
Non-Members	\$400.00
Wedding Facilitator	\$100.00
Altar Servers (for Masses only)	\$40.00

*Musician Fees:*

Parish Music Accompanist	\$150.00
Parish Music Soloist	\$75.00-\$125.00
Parish Instrumentalists	\$100.00 and up

Payment of the facility use fee (\$200 for parishioners and \$400 for non-parishioners) needs to be received when the date is reserved for the service (usually six months prior). It is not refundable. These fees provide for utilities, cleaning and other preparation costs for the rehearsal and wedding. These can be negotiated if they present a great hardship to any couple.

Checks for the wedding facilitator, musicians, and soloists should be made out directly to them no later than the night of rehearsal. The liturgy and music coordinator will be able to give you the names of these persons so that checks may be written to them.

Any additional donation to the priest/deacon or parish is at your discretion.

If you have any questions, please discuss them with the priest/deacon celebrant before the wedding weekend.

**CHURCH PHONE NUMBERS**

Fr. Tom Mattingly 540-434-4341 (M-F)

Fr. Tony 540-434-4341 (M-F)

Deacon Fred LaSpina 540-434-4341 (M-F)

*Liturgy & Music Coordinator:*

Jean DePiro 540-434-4341 (office)  
434-989-5405 (cell)

Office Hours: 9:00am – 3:30pm (M-F)