

WEDDING GUIDELINES
St. Joseph's Monastery Parish

“Love is patient, love is kind, it bears all things,
believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things. Love never fails.”

1 Corinthians 13:4, 7-8

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We are delighted that you are planning to be married at St. Joseph's Monastery Parish. This is truly a happy and blessed time in your lives! You, the bride and groom, are the celebrants of the sacrament of Marriage, a sacrament that centers on your love for God and each other. Christ, Himself, blessed this moment by His presence at the wedding feast at Cana.

We offer this booklet to assist you in planning your wedding celebration. It outlines the regulations which reflect the laws and policies of the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and our parish. Please feel free to contact our wedding personnel with any questions you may have.

On behalf of our parish community, we offer you our congratulations on your engagement and best wishes for a joyous wedding day. May God bless you with His grace and peace.

From the Pastor. . .

Dear Friends in Christ,

Like most rituals, the celebration of marriage has many components. For some couples, an ethnic culture will make major decisions; for others, everyday culture with its many unquestioned assumptions is the norm. We may approach a wedding in a secular way or from a spiritual/religious viewpoint. There may even be a dreamlike, fantasy ideal, which contrasts with more practical matters. Some weddings are celebrated in the parish because of family tradition or because the church is a beautiful space conveniently located for family and friends.

Whatever the reason, when a couple stands together offering and receiving the gift of love to one another, it is a truly sacred and awesome moment. This booklet is presented to you so that the ritual you create will make a worthy and dignified celebration, representative of the mystery of your love, at which your family and friends have gathered.

We hope your wedding will be a joyous expression of your love and a lifelong vow of fidelity to one another in the Lord. Please accept our best wishes and prayers for a happy married life.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Father Mike". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Michael Murphy, Pastor

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MARRIAGE PREPARATION

As a lifelong commitment and sacred sacrament in our Church, marriage requires a serious level of preparation. The Archdiocese of Baltimore mandates all couples participate in a formal program of preparation arranged by their local parishes. In addition to the assistance provided by the officiating clergy, the following programs are also required:

Pre-Cana Preparation. Group gatherings of approximately 15-20 couples that typically meet for two sessions. A schedule of dates and places will be given to you when you meet with the priest/deacon. Early reservations are recommended, as the sessions fill up quickly.

Engaged Encounter Weekend. A retreat offering personal attention and guidance which are generally scheduled from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. These sessions are held at retreat houses throughout the Archdiocese.

A seasonal schedule of marriage preparation programs may be obtained by visiting the Archdiocese of Baltimore's website (www.archbalt.org under "Marriage Preparation"). Other preparatory programs, such as those suited for a second marriage are also available from the Archdiocese. The officiating clergy will discuss these programs with you and assist you in making the necessary arrangements. There is a fee for taking advantage of these programs. You will receive a certificate upon completion of the programs which will be filed in your marriage file.

SETTING THE DATE

Weddings must be scheduled with Father Murphy at least **six months prior** to your anticipated wedding date. It is recommended that you schedule a pre-nuptial meeting early on in your preparation. You should, at this time, receive the wedding guideline packet to assist you in your planning. Please call the rectory if you have not received your information. Please note that weddings are not normally celebrated during Advent and Lent, as these seasons allow our parish to focus on those elements of Christian life which differ from themes of the Sacrament of Marriage. If you were planning on having your wedding during this time, please discuss this with the pastor prior to setting a date.

If a priest or deacon from outside our parish has agreed to celebrate your marriage, he must call Father Murphy to confirm the date and obtain delegation to perform the wedding. Your chosen celebrant will be responsible for all paperwork unless other arrangements are made. Weddings are entered in the Marriage Register of the hosting church, therefore, St Joseph's Monastery Parish will prepare the certificate.

All essential paperwork, such as Baptismal Certificates, Statement of Understanding and Intention of Marriage, certificates of completions for the Archdiocese, etc., must be received six months prior to the wedding and no later than two prior to the wedding.

CHURCH OFFERINGS

In order to help defray costs incurred by the parish for your wedding (i.e., lights, heating or air conditioning, maintenance, etc.), there is a stipend of \$1,000.00. A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 is due at your first meeting with Father Murphy or within two weeks of booking St Joseph's Monastery for your wedding. No date will be reserved on the church calendar until we receive your deposit. The balance of the church fee of \$500.00, plus the organist and cantor fee is due one month prior to your wedding. No one, however, should decide against a church wedding because of financial difficulties. Please speak with Father Murphy if you have such difficulties.

Once the church has reserved your wedding and rehearsal dates, please inform the church immediately if there is a problem. In most circumstances, your stipend is nonrefundable depending on the situation and how promptly the church is notified.

WEDDING MUSIC

The first step in arranging wedding music is to submit a Wedding Music Reservation Form. It is advisable to submit your request at least 6 months prior to your wedding, or as soon as you have decided the date. Once this form is received, our Director of Music (DOM) will respond within 48 hours regarding music arrangements for your wedding. Under no circumstances may couples make any music arrangements without first submitting this form and speaking with the DOM. Your music selections will be confirmed by one month prior.

It is essential for couples to think liturgically when selecting wedding music. Catholic hymns and service music must represent the core of your music program. We embrace both traditional and contemporary styles, as long as they are in keeping with the sanctity of the Sacrament of Marriage. In addition to church music, we also permit the use of certain classical works as processional and recessional pieces. No other genres, such as pop music, show tunes, or others are allowed, nor do we permit the use of recorded or commercial music. The DOM can help couples with any questions regarding the selection of music.

Couples having a Nuptial Mass are required to use an organist and cantor. A cantor is recommended, though not required, for wedding ceremonies. Due to their experience and expertise, the organist and cantor will be hired by the DOM from the church's regular music staff. Requests to use a cantor from outside the parish must be made at least three months in advance and are subject to approval by the DOM. Cantors from outside the parish will need to meet with the DOM for a music rehearsal at a mutually agreeable time. Couples who desire other arrangements (string quartet, harpist, etc.) should consult with the DOM as early as possible regarding the feasibility of their request. The DOM will provide contact information for a substitute organist/pianist in the event the DOM is unavailable for your wedding.

Music fees vary depending on the type of service and rehearsal time involved. The DOM will be happy to discuss these fees with you at any time. Music fees are separate from the church's stipend and are due, together with your completed Wedding Music Program form, NLT 30 days prior to your wedding date.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The church calendar has special seasons. Throughout the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, the sanctuary has a particular atmosphere which must be respected. If the pastor agrees to celebrate a wedding during one of these seasons, plants and floral arrangements must reflect the atmosphere appropriate to that time.

You have chosen our church for our wedding because it is a sacred place of worship. Everyone who enters the church must respect all the services that are held there. The worship space at St. Joseph's Monastery Parish is an aesthetic setting for a wedding and does not require much in the way of decorations. The beauty of the church and that of the wedding party must be allowed to shine through. The wedding party is the primary decoration of the church.

- Mixing colored sands in clear containers to show unity of partners or family is not permitted during the ceremony, but may be worthy of the wedding reception.
- A Unity Candle is permissible, but no additional or rental candles are allowed in the church.
- No pedestals, pillars, trellises, arches, electric lights or other additions are allowed.
- Wagons (for children), carts, pet attendants, etc., are not permitted in the processional.
- Petals, confetti, glitter, rice, bird seed, popcorn, or any similar substance that would have to be swept or mopped away are not permitted to be scatter on the altar, in the aisles, or outside of our church.
- Birds, butterflies, or balloons may not be released inside or outside of our church.
- Food, beverages, water bottles, and gum are not permitted in the church (except for those required by infants).
- When you leave, you must remove and take all programs, film canisters, or other items brought into the church. We are not responsible for any items left in the church. Trashcans are available in the vestibule.
- All guests and members of the wedding party to turn off or mute their cell phones when the wedding ceremony begins.
- Electronic devices for playing music or games are not permitted.

WEDDING PARTY REMINDERS

Nothing may be added to the Official Catholic Wedding Ritual. We regard our church as sacred at all times. As guests in our church, we ask that you maintain the respect and decorum appropriate for the sacred nature of the wedding ceremony and the church. Loud conversation, foul language (spoken or printed on clothing), running about, and other inappropriate behavior is expressly forbidden. Attire for adults and children should be professional and in keeping with entering God's house. Men must remove hats/caps when inside the church. We thank you in advance for respecting our church.

Punctuality for meetings, the wedding rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony is a sign of courtesy to our clergy, musicians, wedding coordinators, and other staff members who may have appointments scheduled after your event. Please plan for traffic conditions, particularly if your wedding ceremony or rehearsal is scheduled on a Friday evening.

The Best Man and Maid and/or Matron of Honor, members of the bridal party, and other participants in the wedding liturgy need not be Catholic. It would be appropriate, however, for lectors, leaders of prayers, and Eucharistic Ministers to be Catholic.

Flower girls or ring bearers must be at least six years old. If children in your wedding party are apprehensive about the procession, they may be paired with an adult and then seated with a family member or friend.

Immediately after your wedding, you may return to the front of the church for photographs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On your wedding invitations, we suggest the church address be listed as follows:

St. Joseph's Monastery Parish Church
3801 Old Frederick Road at Monastery Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21229

(The church's parking lot is on Monastery Avenue. Handicapped Parking is available.)

We hope this information has been helpful as you consider choosing St. Joseph's Monastery Parish Church for your wedding. Please sign and return the Wedding Guidelines Agreement to the priest/deacon who is officiating your wedding ceremony.

There is an example you can use in the back of the booklet of a program for a Catholic wedding with a Mass or a Ceremony.

WEDDING GUIDELINES AGREEMENT

We have read the policies and procedures for celebrating our marriage at St. Joseph's Monastery Parish Church. We understand the contents and agree to abide by them. All questions and concerns have been answered prior to our signatures on this form.

Groom Signature

Date

Bride Signature

Date

Priest/Deacon Signature

Date

St. Joseph's Monastery Parish

Wedding Music Reservation Form

Please return to:

St Joseph's Monastery Parish
Attention: Mrs. Rebecca Obniski
251 South Morley Street
Baltimore, MD 21227

Or Email to SJMPWeddings@gmail.com

Please complete all parts of the form and mail or email it to the parish rectory (address above) or fax the completed form to 410.233.4974, attention: Music Ministry. Once your form is received, our Director of Music will be in contact you **within 48 hours of receipt** regarding music arrangements for your wedding. **Under no circumstances should couples make any arrangements regarding music or musicians before contacting the Director of Music.**

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Celebrant (if other than Father Murphy): _____

Wedding Liturgy will be a (please check preference) Nuptial Mass Wedding Ceremony

We would like to reserve the following music personnel (check all that apply):

- *Organist/Pianist
- *Cantor
- Instrumentalists (Please specify)
- We would like to make other arrangements **(please specify; request subject to approval)**.

*Required for Nuptial Mass

For complete information regarding music policies, please visit our wedding music web page:
<http://www.sjmp.org/weddingmusic.html>.

Date Received: _____

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
(DOM)

Wedding Fees at Saint Joseph's Monastery.

When planning your wedding, there are so many things to take into consideration. One of the biggest challenges is creating a budget. While every couple wants their wedding to be beautiful and memorable, keep in mind that when planning your Catholic wedding ceremony, the most important part is the vows that you exchange before God. By asking to celebrate your wedding in the church, it is an expression of your faith that God is at the center and heart of your wedding. Everything else is secondary.

Church Fee - \$1,000.00.

A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 should be made when setting the date for your wedding. The final payment of \$500.00 should be paid one month prior to the wedding. Please make your checks out to Saint Joseph's Monastery Parish.

Musician Fees

Ceremony Only. The Ceremony consists of scripture readings, the exchange of vows and rings (everything except for the Mass).

Cantor - \$175.00

Accompanist - \$200.00

Nuptial Mass. Exchange of vows within the context of the Mass.

Cantor - \$200.00

Accompanist - \$225.00

We ask that payment be made directly to the Cantor and Accompanist one month prior to your wedding.

Stipend for Clergy - \$200.00 - \$250.00. It is customary to offer a gift to the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding. If this gift is given in the form of a check, the check should be made out directly to him.

Why Does the Church Have Fees?

Likely, one of the reasons you chose to have your wedding at Saint Joseph's Monastery is the incredible beauty of the church. We take great pride in our parish church and work hard to maintain the beautiful, historic décor. Fees are necessary to help us meet the cost of opening and operating our church for events like your wedding. Heating, cooling, and lighting a structure this size costs more in a building as old as ours and the fee helps us cover those costs.

We NEVER want fees to be a reason for you to decide against having your wedding in our church. We understand that some couples may have financial constraints. Please make Father Mike aware when you first meet with him. He will be glad to discuss your situation with you and work out an arrangement.