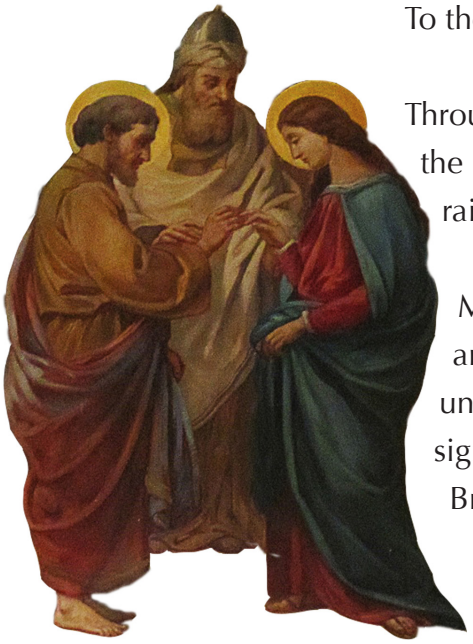
WEDDING
policies and procedures
THE BASILICA OF SAINT JOSAPHAT



To the Bride and Groom:

Through the love you have for one another, you have made the mature decision to become husband and wife and to raise a Christian family.

Marriage is a sacrament, a sacred action by which a man and a woman are joined to each other in Christ. That union stands against all earthly powers or deterrents as a sign of the fidelity and permanence of Christ's love for His Bride, the Church.

The Conventual Franciscans and the pastoral staff at the Basilica of Saint Josaphat want your wedding day to be an important, prayerful and memorable day. To accomplish, we offer these policies and procedures. Please follow them carefully in your planning so that your wedding and the dignity of the church's liturgical traditions are not compromised.

We wish you many blessings. May the Lord truly be the strength, support and love that binds your life together.

Sincerely,

The Conventual Franciscans
and the Pastoral Staff of
the Basilica of Saint Josaphat

Marriage Instruction

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee requires all couples entering marriage to participate in an instructional process. The pastoral staff at the Basilica offers the following policies for marriage preparation:

- Six months before the wedding, it is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to initiate the marriage preparation process.
- **Basilica Wedding Policies & Procedures** reviewed prior to the taking of the FOCCUS Inventory.
- **FOCCUS—**Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study—a comprehensive questionnaire completed by the engaged couple. A follow-up meeting to discuss responses is held with a married couple that is part of the marriage preparation staff.
- **Engaged Enrichment Program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee**. Prompt registration and completion of this is expected. Visit www.johnpaul2center.org or see the enclosed brochure for more details. A certificate of completion must be to given to the Basilica Parish Office.
- **Music consultation session** with the Basilica Director of Music. This consultation may also be done by telephone/email.
- **Meetings with a priest from the Basilica** to facilitate the process of clarification and discernment in preparing for marriage. Forms will be completed as set forth by Canon Law and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
- **Preparation of the wedding liturgy** with the officiant of the Nuptial Mass/Wedding Ceremony.
- Parishioners are expected to attend Mass on a regular basis, be actively involved, and show regular support of the parish community.
- Couples living outside of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, or those not registered at the Basilica, must have their marriage preparation and all paperwork completed at the parish church where they are registered.

Required Documents

For Catholics

- Letter of permission from the pastor of either the Bride or Groom, if neither is a registered parishioner of the Basilica Parish.
- Baptismal Certificate from the church of Baptism issued within six months of the wedding date.
- Proof of freedom to marry may be required.

For Non-Catholics

- Baptismal Certificate from the church where Baptism took place.
- A dispensation from the Archdiocese is needed for a Catholic to marry a non-baptized person.
- Proof of freedom to marry may be required.

For Those Previously Married

- Death Certificate, if a former spouse is deceased.
- Official Decree and Letter from a Diocesan Marriage Tribunal, if a Church annulment was granted regarding a previous union.
- Civil Marriage Certificate and Divorce Decree for all previous unions.

For Those Seeking to Sacramentalize an Existing Civil Union

- Civil Marriage Certificate.

Nuptial Mass/Wedding Ceremony

The priest assisting the couple in preparing for marriage will help them to plan the liturgy. The Basilica provides a book to assist in the choice of scripture readings, prayers, and music.

Due to the great solemnity of the occasion, the sacrament of Marriage is typically celebrated within the Mass (Nuptial Mass). In the case of a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, a Nuptial Mass is usually not celebrated. In the case of a marriage between a Catholic and someone not baptized, the Nuptial Mass is not allowed.

Date & Time of Wedding

Weddings are celebrated in the Basilica on Saturdays at 11:00 AM and 1:30 PM.

Weddings are not allowed at the Basilica during the following times:

- Season of Advent
- Season Christmas
- Season of Lent
- Thanksgiving weekend
- Weekends during which major parish events take place (e.g., First Communion, Graduation, Loaves & Fishes Gala, etc…)

Wedding Rehearsal

A rehearsal will be scheduled for the evening before the wedding and will last about one hour.

It is expected that all those directly involved in the wedding (e.g., attendants, readers, etc.) will be present and on time for the rehearsal. Though not the actual wedding ceremony, all that attend the rehearsal should come neatly and modestly dressed.

The Bride, the Groom, and the two witnesses should arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal to sign the necessary documents and take care of all fee payments.

For the rehearsal, everyone must enter the Basilica through the *Pope John Paul II Pavilion at the 7th Street Parking Lot*. Please make sure everyone knows this is the only entrance open for rehearsals.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is typically not offered at the rehearsal. Nonetheless, the couple is strongly encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding as a most appropriate preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Wedding Rings

The wedding rings are the sole responsibility of the Bride and Groom. Wedding rings may not be stored on Basilica property before the wedding. The actual rings should not be placed on a pillow to be carried by a ring-bearer. They should be given to the Sacristan before the wedding begins.

Wedding Attendants

State law requires two witnesses over the age of 18 years. It is not necessary that these witnesses are Catholic; however, they must not be lapsed Catholics or persons who in any way could be a source of scandal. It is customary that the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor serve as these witnesses.

The wedding party should not consist of more than 10 bridal attendants and 10 groomsmen. The wedding party is seated in the front pew(s) during the ceremony. Children under the age of 5 years should not participate as members of the wedding party.

Bridal Dresses and Appropriate Attire

Bridal dresses worn in the Basilica should cover the shoulders. Strapless dresses or those with "spaghetti straps" for brides or attendants are not appropriate in a sacred space and are not permitted.

No Private Dressing Areas Available

The Basilica does not have private dressing areas available. Likewise, there are no secured areas for storing anything during the wedding. The public restrooms located in the Undercroft must remain accessible to everyone at all times. The bride and groom and all involved in the wedding are strongly encouraged to come to the Basilica already dressed for the wedding.

Parents of the Bride and Groom

It is customary for the father of the Bride to escort her to the altar. This is not required and is left to the decision of the Bride and Groom, in consultation with the officiant. The parents of the Bride and Groom are seated in the pews immediately behind the wedding party.

Altar Servers

Altar Servers will be assigned to assist at the wedding. If the Bride and Groom have friends or relatives who regularly serve at Mass, they may request that these individuals be appointed to serve at the Nuptial Mass. These servers must attend the rehearsal.

Readers at the Wedding Liturgy

The distinction of proclaiming Sacred Scripture should not be taken lightly. Any person chosen must have the ability to read in a public setting. Those chosen should have a sense of understanding and belief in the text they are proclaiming. These Readers must be present at the wedding rehearsal.

Signing of the Civil Documents

The civil documents are signed in the sacristy during the wedding rehearsal. No documents are ever signed at the altar or during the wedding ceremony.

The Officiant

A friend or relative who is a Roman Catholic priest in good standing may officiate at the wedding. A written request listing the name and current assignment of the priest must be submitted to the pastor of the Basilica at least one month prior to the wedding date so that proper permission may be given. If the priest is from outside the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, he must present the Basilica with a current *celebret*, which will then be forwarded to the Chancery Office.

Unity Candle

The use of a unity candle is not an officially recognized rite of the Church and is therefore not permitted during the wedding liturgy at the Basilica. The unity candle may effectively be used during the meal prayer at the reception.

Proper Decorum in the Basilica

The Bride and Groom are to request that their guests observe the reverence proper to a sacred space. Please make special note of the following points:

- The receiving line takes place at the reception hall, not at the Basilica.
- The use of rice, confetti, flower petals, birdseed, bubbles, balloons, projectiles, or other devices inside or outside the Basilica is prohibited.
- Thirty (30) minutes will be allowed for photographs after the wedding ceremony. A proper attitude for any sacred space must be maintained. The Basilica does not become a photographer's studio—nothing may be removed or rearranged in the sanctuary.
- The Basilica's celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation begins at 3:00 PM; therefore, a quiet and prayerful environment must be maintained.
- **Smoking, eating, and drinking (alcohol or any other beverage) are not permitted in or around the Basilica.** The Bride and Groom should inform all relatives and guests of this regulation.

Payment of Fees

All fees should be paid in full at least two weeks prior to the wedding date.
A detailed invoice will be provided. Please refer to the Schedule of Fees for further information.

Please note that the priest does not receive any portion of the invoiced fees. It is at the discretion of the Bride and Groom to give a gratuity to the priest who prepares them and/or officiates at their wedding.

Wedding Flowers and Décor

The Bride and Groom must inform their florist of Basilica flower policies by giving the florist a copy of the current guidelines.

- Floral décor must not overshadow the sacredness of the wedding ceremony.
- **Flowers brought to the Basilica for decoration are to remain in the Basilica after the ceremony.**
- Seasonal flowers and décor (e.g. Christmas, Easter, etc.) will remain in place during all wedding ceremonies. There are no exceptions.
- Florists should contact the Basilica Parish Office the day before the wedding to arrange deliveries. These deliveries should occur no earlier than one hour prior to the ceremony.
- Floral deliveries should be made by entering through the Pope John Paul II Pavilion, at the Seventh Street Parking Lot.
- The florist is responsible for placing flowers in consultation with the Basilica Sacristan.
- No decorations may be attached to pews, walls, doors, altars, or other church furnishings with any kind of tape, putty, tacks, etc.
- Flowers and other decoration may not be placed on or in front of the altar.
- Unity Candles are not permitted.
- Asparagus fern is not allowed.
- Aisle runners are prohibited, as is the dropping of flower petals.
- The florist is responsible for removal of all equipment, supplies, etc. used for the wedding.

Photography/Videography

The Bride and Groom must inform their photographer/videographer of Basilica policies by providing a copy of the current guidelines.

- Proper decorum must be maintained before, during, and after the rehearsal and ceremony.
- **The Basilica is not a studio.** Photographers (videographers) must exercise the utmost discretion. Photography is allowed during the celebration only if one remains as unobtrusive as possible.
- Flash photography is not allowed during the wedding.
- Photographers/videographers must not interfere:
    - Processions are never to be stopped or slowed down for poses.
    - The center aisle is not to be used by photographers once the procession begins.
    - Photographers are not allowed in the sanctuary or the area immediately surrounding it. (The sanctuary area is defined as the area elevated by steps.)
- Photographers/videographers are not allowed in the organ gallery during the wedding.
- Photographs/videos are for the personal use of the Bride and Groom only. They are never to be used for commercial purposes.
- **THIRTY (30) MINUTES MAXIMUM WILL BE ALLOWED FOR PHOTOS AFTER THE WEDDING.**
- The Basilica's celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation begins at 3:00 PM on Saturdays. Therefore, at this time a quiet and prayerful environment must be maintained.
- All staged photographs are to be taken in front of the main altar and never behind it.
- Staged photographs are to have the subject(s) in a respectful standing position in front of the altar.
- The Grand Pulpit is never to be used for any photographs or as a platform from which to take pictures/videos.
- **Sanctuary furniture and other appointments must never be removed or rearranged at any time.**
- Photography/videography unrelated to the wedding is not permitted.

LITURGICAL MUSIC

Planning of music for every wedding at the Basilica involves working with and employing the Basilica Director of Music. Any and all desired outside musicians must be approved by the Director of Music at least two months prior to the wedding. If an outside organist is desired, or if the organ is not used, the fee for the Director of Music is still due. **There are no exceptions to this policy.**

The Basilica Director of Music will:

- Obtain cantors and/or instrumentalists
- Arrange necessary rehearsals
- Determine any need for transposition of music
- Review wedding programs and booklets
- Be the organist at the wedding

Any and all non-Basilica vocalists and/or instrumentalists are required to submit a recording (by email or CD) and a *curriculum vitae* for review by the Basilica Director of Music at least two months before the wedding date. The Director of Music has the right to approve or deny requests for specific musicians and/or vocalists. There are no exceptions to this policy. If this procedure is not followed, the request for outside musicians/vocalists will not be considered.

The task of selecting music to be used at a Catholic wedding is sometimes difficult. It is not always easy to draw a line between sacred music and secular music, church music and popular music. Because a particular song mentions God and/or love, does not mean it is automatically suitable.

Popular songs ordinarily do not have the characteristics necessary to qualify them as expressions of faith, which enhance the wedding liturgy—a communal celebration of the love of God for the Church. Such songs, which are limited to human, personal love, might be sung at the wedding reception, but not during the liturgy itself. The Bride and Groom should not request that secular, theatrical, or popular songs be used at the wedding.

Music Consultation

Only the Bride and Groom may attend the music consultation. Parents and friends may offer their suggestions to the couple before the appointment. The consultation with the Basilica Director of Music may take place via telephone/email. Wedding programs/booklets must be approved by the Director of Music before they are printed

Music Fees

Payment of all music fees is to be made at least two weeks prior to the wedding date. An itemized invoice detailing all music expenses will be prepared. Failure to pay these fees at least two weeks prior to the wedding will result in the cancellation of all music at the wedding. If requested, the Director of Music will contract professional instrumentalists of the highest caliber. A contracting fee of $25 per instrumentalist will be charged.

No outside musicians are allowed with the Basilica Choir. Outside musicians are strongly discouraged at all times. If couples insist, a high-quality audition recording of the music requested for the wedding must be received at least TWO MONTHS prior to the wedding date, along with a $25 non-refundable application fee for each musician requested. Acceptance is not guaranteed. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in de facto non-allowal. If accepted, an additional fee of $75 per outside musician will be due to cover communication, music copies, keys of music, and mandatory rehearsal.

the BASILICA of Saint Josaphat

A Ministry of the Conventual Franciscans

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