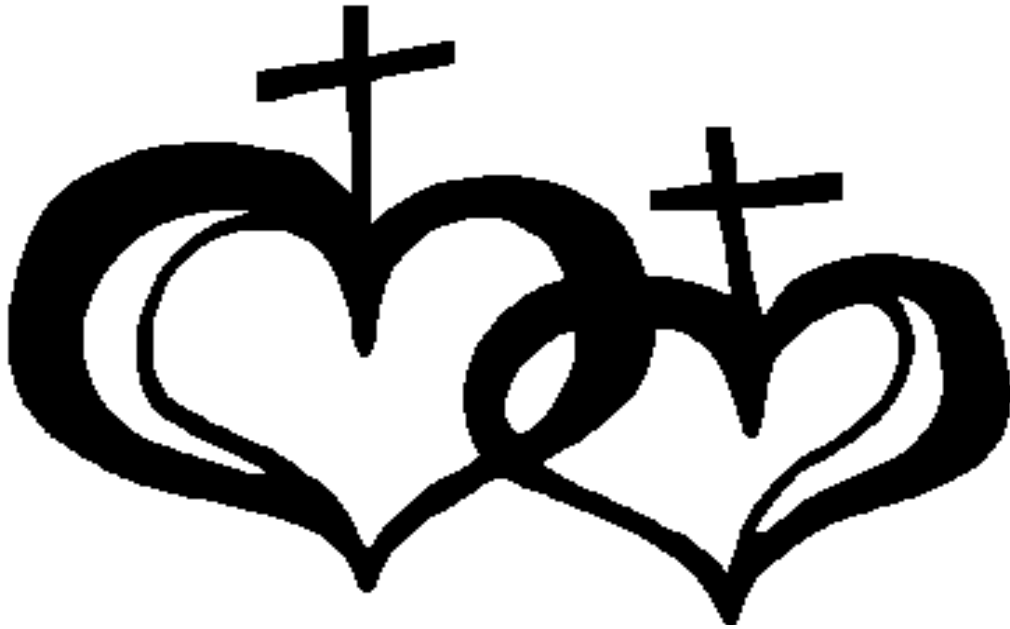


*Guidelines*  
*For The Celebration of Marriage*



Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

1427 West Braddock Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22302

(703) 998-6100

Please direct all questions about these guidelines to:

**John McCrary**

Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgy

703.998.6100 ex 103

[jmccrary@bscva.org](mailto:jmccrary@bscva.org)

**Marie Niernberger**

Coordinator of Arts & Liturgical Environment

703.998.6100 ex 104

[mniernberger@bscva.org](mailto:mniernberger@bscva.org)

*Marriage:*  
*A Celebration of the Church*

**PRE-CANA PREPARATION** should be scheduled as soon as you become engaged. You will be assigned a priest for marriage preparation when you register to receive the sacrament of marriage. Sacramental preparation lasts six months. It must be completed prior to your requested wedding date. It includes a diocesan Pre-Cana focus test and a retreat. Retreats are scheduled monthly by the diocese.

We are delighted that you will be celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. Like all Sacraments, marriage is a gift instituted by Christ that gives us His saving grace. Therefore this is a both a celebration for you, your families and friends; AND a celebration for the whole Church. The Church is involved with you in the preparation for marriage, in the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and in your living of the marriage covenant that you established before God and the community.

**A LITURGY PREPARATION MEETING** should be scheduled about three months before the celebration of the marriage liturgy. Call the Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgy to set up an appointment to plan the liturgy. Before the meeting, you should become familiar with the liturgy section of your marriage preparation book, which offers extensive commentary and guidance for planning the wedding liturgy. The Blessed Sacrament priest that you are working with will provide you with a copy of this book. If you do not receive please contact John at [jmccrary@bscva.org](mailto:jmccrary@bscva.org).

# *The Marriage Liturgy*

## **WELCOMING GUESTS.**

Before the liturgy, we recommend that you arrange for a warm and hospitable welcome for those who will be participating in the marriage celebration. It would be ideal for the bride and groom, along with their parents, to welcome guests at the door of the church as they arrive. Ushers should also be stationed at the door of the gathering space to welcome guests and to distribute programs for the liturgy. They can then escort guests to their seats for the liturgy.

## **ENTRANCE RITE.**

The marriage liturgy begins with the entrance of the ministers and the wedding party. The details of the procession will be worked out at the wedding rehearsal. A single piece of music is played for the entrance procession. There is no break in the music at the entrance of the bride. After the entrance and the greeting by the priest, the assembly may be invited to join in an opening hymn.

## **LITURGY OF THE WORD.**

There are traditionally three readings at the marriage liturgy. These are to be chosen from the readings listed in the marriage preparation book. One of the readings is always the Gospel, which is read by the deacon or priest. The first and second readings are read by persons designated by the Bride and Groom. These two readers should be Catholic. The cantor sings a responsorial psalm after the first reading.

## **THE RITE OF MARRIAGE.**

After the homily, the priest will invite you to come forward with your two witnesses for the Rite of Marriage: consisting of a welcome, the scrutinies, the exchange of vows, the blessing and exchange of rings, and the general intercessions. The rite of marriage concludes with the Universal Prayer. A person whom you designate can read the intercessions, this person does not have to be a Catholic. You will find samples for the intercessions your marriage preparation book.

## **THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST.**

If you are having a celebration of marriage during mass, then the Liturgy of the Eucharist follows just like at Sunday mass. If you are having a celebration of marriage outside mass, then this section is omitted.

**WEDDINGS DURING ADVENT & LENT.** Weddings that are celebrated during the seasons of Advent and Lent should reflect the special nature of these seasons. The liturgy should be simpler and more reflective of the tone of the season than during other times of the year.

# *Music*

## *In the Celebration of Marriage*

### **MUSIC ENHANCES THE LITURGY**

The music for the marriage celebration is not merely a decorative aspect, but truly enhances the liturgy by helping our hearts and emotions to enter more fully into prayer. Music enhances our prayer and adds to the overall flow and beauty of the liturgy. For this reason, we invite you to plan the music in the liturgy with great care.

To schedule an appointment to plan the music for your liturgy, please call:

#### **John McCrary**

Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgy  
703.998.6100 ex 103

[jmccrary@bscva.org](mailto:jmccrary@bscva.org)

### **SELECTION OF MUSIC.**

The selection of music is guided by the same principles that are used in selecting music for normal parish liturgical celebrations. The whole assembly sings some parts of the liturgy, and others are played or sung without active participation of the congregation.

All of the music selected for the wedding must be appropriate for the celebration of Holy Matrimony. No purely secular or popular music is used. No recorded music is ever used. (The "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's *Lohengrin*, popularly known as "Here Comes the Bride", is not considered appropriate for the procession at the celebration since it focuses on the bride alone, to the exclusion of the groom).

### **MUSIC FOR THE ASSEMBLY.**

Just as at Sunday Mass, the singing of the congregation is an integral part of the liturgy, so too at the wedding, people are called upon to join in song.

## **MUSIC FOR THE ASSEMBLY...**

### **...AT THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE DURING MASS.**

The whole assembly sings the following parts:

Gloria

Responsorial Psalm

Gospel acclamation

Acclamations for the Eucharist (Holy, Memorial, Amen)

Sign of Peace (Lamb of God)

In addition, the assembly may sing a hymn after the entrance; a sung response for the General Intercessions; a hymn during Communion; and a hymn after Communion.

### **...AT THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE OUTSIDE MASS.**

The whole assembly sings the following parts:

Gloria

Responsorial psalm

Gospel acclamation

In addition, the assembly may sing a hymn after the entrance; a sung response for the General Intercessions.

## **MUSICIANS. Blessed Sacrament REQUIRES that the musicians for your liturgy come from our music ministry.**

Ordinarily, the musicians will include at least a parish organist and a parish cantor. The Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgy can also help you arrange for additional instruments, such as trumpet, flute or violin. Sometimes special arrangements can be made to use one or another of our parish choirs at a wedding. Arrangements for the musicians and discussions of the stipends are handled at the liturgy-planning meeting.

**ORGANIST - \$250**

**CANTOR - \$200**

**INSTRUMENTS (trumpet, violin, cello, flute, etc.) - \$200 (each instrument)**

**CELEBRANT** – There are no fees or stipends for the priest or the deacon celebrant; however, if you would like to offer them a gift for their time and help to you, you can ask the Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgy for advice.

**ALTAR SERVER(S)** - \$20 each (Payable in cash on the day of the wedding).

## *Other Concerns*

**REHEARSAL.** You will schedule your rehearsal with the priest who will be presiding at your wedding. Be sure to notify the parish receptionist of this time so it can be recorded on the parish schedule to avoid any conflicts.

**CHANGING/WAITING ROOM.** The *Staff Room*, located within the parish office, is available to the women of the bridal party for changing clothes and immediate preparation for the wedding. The men of the party can wait/prepare in the Music Room located on the opposite side of the church near Quinn Hall.

**SAFETY/SECURITY.** We have had theft problems in the past. We, therefore, must ask you to keep all valuables with you at all times. Nothing is to be left in either the staff room or the Music room during the ceremony itself.

**STARTING TIME.** It is expected that the marriage liturgy will begin at the scheduled time. As a general rule, our weddings are scheduled at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. If you have scheduled a 3 p.m. wedding, you must have all activities (*photography, clean-up*) concluded by 4:30 p.m. so we may begin preparation for the 5 p.m. Vigil Mass. The Bride and Groom are expected to present in their respective rooms half an hour before the ceremony is scheduled to begin.

**ALTAR SERVERS.** At a marriage celebrated during Mass, two altar servers from the parish assist the priest. At a wedding outside Mass, there is one parish altar server. A stipend of \$20 is traditionally given to each server.

**STIPENDS/DONATIONS.** Donations are graciously accepted, but there are no fees or stipends for the use of the church or for the reservation of space.

**LIMOUSINE/EXITING VEHICLES.** Your Limousine or exiting vehicle is permitted to wait in the Fire Lane at the Braddock Road entrance to the church (the cherry tree courtyard). This is also the more attractive entrance for photographs.

# Photography

A professional photographer is welcome to take pictures before, during and after the marriage liturgy.

## **FLASH PICTURES ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN DURING THE LITURGY.**

The liturgy begins as the presider begins "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." During the liturgy, we ask that the photographer use great care not to be a distraction. There will be no lighting 'rigs' set up or placed in or around the sanctuary before the end of the liturgy.

## **THE PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER WILL NOT WALK IN OR ACROSS THE CENTER AISLE, AND WILL NOT WALK ON SPACE SURROUNDING THE ALTAR, ORGAN AND CHOIR SPACE.**

The click of the camera should never be heard during a reading, a prayer or a period of silence. The altar, candles, lectern and other furnishings are NOT to be moved for picture taking. We ask that you give your photographer a copy of these guidelines.

You are most welcome to return to the worship space after the recessional for pictures. We ask that the pictures be completed and that the wedding party leave the church 90 minutes after the scheduled **start** time of the wedding.

Please be sure to have your photographer contact the main celebrant either *after* the rehearsal or *before* the ceremony with any questions that you have about these particulars.

## **VIDEOGRAPHY.**

You are welcome to have someone videotape the marriage liturgy. We ask that the video camera(s) be left in a *stationary position* during the liturgy, and that the operator of the camera observe the same courtesies that are asked of the still photographer. Lights may NOT be used with the video camera. We ask that you give your videographer a copy of these guidelines.

# *Environment and Art for the Marriage Celebration*

For an appointment to discuss your ceremony flowers and decorations please contact:

**Marie Niernberger**

Coordinator of Arts and Liturgical Environment,

(703) 998-6100 x 14

[mniernberger@bscva.org](mailto:mniernberger@bscva.org)

## **FLOWERS.**

Flowers may be placed in many areas of the worship space (main worship space, daily chapel, gathering space or reservation chapel). In fact, many times it makes a more festive occasion to place flowers in many places within the worship space. Flowers in the **sanctuary area** - on the "marble" - are ALWAYS live flowers and plants. No arrangements of artificial flowers are ever used here.

1. **Blessed Sacrament requires that you use OUR florist to provide the ALTAR FLOWER ARRANGEMENT for your wedding.** This will be **ONE** large, full-front arrangement placed on the floor in front of the altar. We are happy to coordinate with your colors and personal flowers. **The fee is \$150**, payable to Blessed Sacrament Church.

You are free to make arrangements for your personal wedding flowers and accessories with a florist of your choice.

2. Flowers used in the sanctuary (altar flowers) are left in the sanctuary following your wedding. These are a donation to the church in celebration of your marriage. The one exception would be for live plants that you wish to have for yourself. These can be taken with you right away or may be left through Sunday and retrieved the following week.

3. If there is more than one wedding on the same day, we often put the couples in touch with one another so that they may plan for just one set of church flowers to be used by all, and thus share the cost.

## **PEW BOWS**

You are free to use pew bows if you wish and they may be constructed of fresh or silk flowers or ribbon only, etc. Please use plastic pew clips or wire/chenille loops – no tape. The main aisle has 8 pews and 1 frontal panel on each side.



## **CHURCH PREPARATION.**

Members of our staff and our contractors do Church preparation. The church will be clean and all vestments and vessels will be taken care of for you. You are responsible for setting up the things you bring in and in removing them after the ceremony. We ask that you leave the spaces as clean as you found them and remove all programs, florist boxes, etc. You do not have to change the arrangement of the church. If another wedding follows yours, they will be responsible for their own arrangements. The Arts and Liturgical Environment Team will prepare the space after the last wedding for the parish Sunday liturgies.

## **ALTAR LINENS.**

We use the regular cloths used for the Sunday liturgies.

## **CANDLES.**

We will supply candles for the altar. They are not to be moved from the arrangement they are found in before the ceremony. The celebrant for your wedding must first approve the use of a "Unity" candle since it is not a part of the Rite of Marriage.

## **SPECIAL LITURGICAL SEASONS.**

The Arts and Liturgical Environment Team will have special decorations in and around the worship areas during certain liturgical seasons. These are NOT to be moved or rearranged. You may, however, add to them. These times are as follows:

- **ADVENT/CHRISTMAS** – late November through early January;
- **LENT/EASTER** – mid February through June;
- **SPECIAL FEASTS AND CELEBRATIONS** – for example: The Saturdays before **Palm Sunday, Pentecost and Corpus Christi** will have **red** flowers and decorations).

## **PROHIBITIONS**

In order to maintain the structures, cleanliness and safety of the church, we do have a short list of things that are NOT permitted.

- **Nothing** is EVER to be placed **ON** the altar.
- No candelabras are permitted.
- No aisle runners are permitted.
- No *fresh* flower petals may be dropped in the aisles by flower girls.
- No rice or birdseed may be thrown inside or outside of the church.

*Thank you for your attention to these guidelines.*

*They are designed to maintain the sacredness and the  
beauty of the Liturgies of the Church.*

*Following these guidelines will ensure that this will  
be a beautiful day for you, your family  
and for the whole Church.*