

Guidelines for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony



**Precious Blood Catholic Church
114 E Edmondson St.
Culpeper, VA 22701
540-827-4400**

Your marriage is one of the most important steps in your life. It is our intent as the priests of your parish to help make your important day a most memorable one. We are here to help you in the months and days prior to your wedding. We hope that the following guidelines will be of help to you. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the wedding coordinators listed in the planning guide.

God bless you both in the happy months ahead in planning your wedding.

*Rev. Kevin B. Walsh, Pastor
Deacon Ramon Tirado
Deacon Michael Watts*



1. Preparation

The Diocese of Arlington requires notice six months in advance of the wedding date. (Although you may contact the priest before the six-month notice to reserve the church and the priest.) During this time the priest will meet with you several times to complete paperwork, counsel if necessary, and to help with the planning of the ceremony. This includes diocesan marriage preparation courses. The following will need to be obtained by the bride and groom:

Baptismal Certificate: For a Catholic: issued within the last six months. For a non-Catholic: a letter indicating baptism is sufficient.

Marriage Education Program Certificate: Certificate of having attended the diocesan Engaged Encounter weekend retreat or Conference for the Engaged.

Free Status to Marry Affidavit: Two affidavits by someone who has known you since you were 18 years old, for both bride and groom regarding free status to marry; these are to be filled out and signed in front of a Catholic priest, deacon, minister, rabbi or notary public.

Civil marriage license from the state of Virginia: (issued 60 days or less before the wedding date) **must be given to the priest at least one week** prior to the ceremony. You can bring it to the office to give to him as well.

Wedding to take place outside of the Arlington Diocese: If the wedding is taking place outside of the diocese, all preparations, including paperwork, must be completed at least one month prior to the wedding date. The priest has to send your wedding file by mail to our diocesan headquarters, which, after reviewing everything, sends it by mail to the diocese in which the wedding is to take place. That diocese, in turn, after having reviewed the file, forwards it by mail to the parish in which the wedding will occur. If the wedding is to take place outside to the United States, all preparations, including paperwork, must be completed at least two months prior to the wedding date.

Inter-Faith Marriages: If the bride or the groom is not Catholic, an application for permission for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic must be sent to the diocese no later than one month prior to the wedding date. This involves the practicing Catholic promising to do all in his/her power to share the faith with all children born to the couple by having them baptized and reared as Catholics.

Absence of Canonical Form: If a Catholic has gone through a marriage ceremony previously with someone not according to the norms of the Catholic Church, this is not recognized as a Catholic marriage. For that person to then get married in the Catholic Church, a petition must be sent requesting recognition of the fact that an essential element was missing for a Catholic in the earlier ceremony. The Catholic's baptismal certificate, marriage certificate and decree of divorce from this previous ceremony need to be sent with this petition. This must be done no later than one month before the date of the wedding.

Annulment: If a Catholic person has been married previously in the church, a certificate of annulment must be obtained before wedding preparation can begin. Likewise, if a non-Catholic party has been married previously in any ceremony, an annulment must be obtained first. An annulment is a declaration by the Church, after having examined the facts as best as possible, that in certain cases a true marriage did not take place because an essential element was missing. If the Church finds no reason to annul the previous marriage, no subsequent wedding in the Catholic Church can take place.

2. Fees

Sacrament of Marriage: Couples often ask how much the wedding cost. Marriage is a sacrament, and we believe that it is wrong to charge for any sacrament, since they are gifts given freely by Jesus Christ. If anyone would like to give a donation to the priest for the marriage preparation and/or the wedding rehearsal, it would be gratefully received, but that is entirely up to your free choice.

Security Deposit (must be submitted to confirm date as soon as possible): Each couple must pay a \$150.00 security/cleaning fee to the parish. If all these guidelines are observed, this fee will be returned. If all these guidelines are not strictly observed, all or a portion of this fee will be kept.

Parish Stipend: The stipend for the use of the Church is \$150.00 and may be given to the wedding coordinator on or before the rehearsal.

Stipend for Celebrant (priest or deacon): Voluntary stipend/donation – suggested amount is \$150 paid in cash or check made out to the celebrant's name.

3. Music

The joining of two people in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is nothing less than a sacred event and the music used during your ceremony or nuptial liturgy should reflect this fact. Therefore, only music of a sacred or liturgical nature may be used within a wedding ceremony or nuptial liturgy. In some cases, a secular song may be used as a

prelude to be performed before any liturgical service begins. Since many portions of a wedding service can be sung, you are welcome to have a cantor at your ceremony or nuptial Mass.

If a couple preparing for marriage has friends or relatives who are professional musicians or can demonstrate the ability to perform competently in front of a congregation a rehearsal time with the organist ***other than on the day of the wedding will be required*** with a corresponding bench fee. If you wish to have a band or musicians from another parish, or outside source, you must obtain authorization from the Pastor. The usual music fees are \$150 for the organist and \$100 for the cantor and should be given to the wedding coordinator on or before the rehearsal date. Please contact Hannah Masson at least **THREE** months in advance to coordinate the music for your wedding. Two months (or less) notice requires a \$175 fee, and one month notice (or less) will be \$200.

Hannah Masson, Directora de Música de la Parroquia
(540) 827-4400 o hmasson@pbconline.com

4. Concerning the Church

- It is expected that the Church will be left in a neat and clean condition. In order to ensure this, we ask that you designate someone who will be responsible for checking to see that any decorations are removed. Also designate someone to make sure that no personal belongings are left in any of the rooms used prior to the ceremony.
- No rice, confetti, flower petals, birdseed, bubbles or any matter, may be thrown inside or outside of the church.

5. Planning, Rehearsals, and Ceremony

A wedding coordinator is required to assist you in all our preparations and to ensure the smooth flow of your rehearsal and wedding ceremony. Their fee is \$100 to be paid directly to them. Rehearsals are mandatory and are scheduled on the Friday night before the wedding. The wedding coordinator will run the rehearsal; our wedding coordinator is:

Mrs. Peggy Young (703)217-9049 pyoung@pbconline.com
Mrs. Kelly Redington (717) 580-4779 kfischer2148@gmail.com

6. Marriage Celebration

It is the intent of the priests that your input, selection of readings, readers, and music make your Marriage celebration most meaningful and personal. The priests will answer

any questions you may have concerning the Marriage rite itself during your scheduled meetings with him.

7. Photography/Video Recording

Flash photography is permitted during the entrance procession, at the time of the recession, and after the wedding is over. **No flash photos are permitted during the ceremony.** The photographer and/or videographer may move about discreetly but may not pass in front of the altar. **It is the responsibility of the couple to inform the photographer/videographer of these norms.** Failure to observe this may result in the interruption of the ceremony. Please inform your wedding party of these norms. A contract is attached for the photographer/ videographer. Please have them sign and date the contract and return it to the parish office before the wedding. Leave a copy (attached) with them so they know what is expected of them.

8. Dressing

Unfortunately, we do not have space to offer the bridal party to dress. All members of the wedding party must come already dressed for the wedding. The wedding party should be dressed modestly and appropriately for church.

9. Flowers and Decorations

You are free to use the florist of your choice. Fresh flowers only, please. If you wish, the wedding flowers may remain in front of the altar after the ceremony. If you plan on having more than two floral arrangements, please contact the Parish office to have it approved by the Pastor. Additional questions concerning flower placement and decorations may be directed to the secretaries at the Parish Office. The flowers should be real, not artificial. The phone number is 540-827-4400. Aisle runners are not permitted.

10. As Guests Arrive at the Church

The ushers may escort guests to the pews. Grandparents and other family members should be seated five minutes in advance of the wedding. Please have all those attending discard any chewing gum, soda cans, or food items in their possession before entering the church.

11. Procession

The bridal party (best man, maid of honor, groomsmen, bridesmaids, ushers, ring bearer, flower girl, etc.) is to walk in at a normal pace and go directly to their seats. Usually,

bridesmaids are on the left and Groomsmen are on the right. If you choose to have a ring bearer or flower girl in your procession, it is good to realize that they should possess the necessary maturity to be in a wedding party and to sit for the whole ceremony. Usually this would mean that they should be at least five years old, although some four-year olds might be mature enough.

12. Crying children

Please mention to your family/guests that there is a cry room in the back where they can see and hear the celebration. Please, if a child starts crying or being disruptive during the ceremony, have the child be taken there until the child calms down.

13. Tardiness

Unnecessary tardiness is not only disrespectful to your guests and the officiating priest, but it is also inconsiderate of other wedding or church functions that may be scheduled after yours. **The bridal party should arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled wedding.** While it is understandable that certain occurrences will be beyond the control of the parties involved, the following policy will be followed strictly. If a wedding Mass begins late, \$25 of the security deposit will be retained for every five minutes of tardiness. For example, if a wedding begins 15 minutes late, half of the security deposit (\$75) will be forfeited. If a wedding Mass begins more than 15 minutes late, it will automatically become a wedding ceremony (Liturgy of the Word) without Mass. If a wedding Mass begins 30 minutes late, the entire security deposit will be retained.

SUMMARY OF FEES FOR YOUR RECORDS:

Church Fees -checks made payable to: *Precious Blood Catholic Church*

- **\$150.00 Security Deposit: please submit in a separate check as soon as possible to confirm your date (refundable)**
- \$150.00 Parish Stipend*for use of the Church
- \$100.00 Wedding Coordinator* (make check payable to the coordinator)
- \$150 (\$50 room/\$125 non-refundable insurance fee) Reception in Parish Hall (made to Precious Blood Catholic Church)

Music Fees - checks made payable to the organist and/or cantor

- \$150* (three months' notice); \$175 (2 months' notice); \$200 (1 month or less notice)
- \$100* - Cantor

Voluntary donation/stipend - (check make payable to the Priest or Deacon)

- **\$150* (suggested amount)**

(Please note that all payments (other than the deposit) should be made at latest 9 days prior to the event.)

Precious Blood Catholic Church

114 E Edmondson St.
Culpeper, VA 22701
540-825-8945

Contractual Agreement for Use of Church for Holy Matrimony

Name of Applicant: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **email:** _____

Date and Time Requested: _____

FEES:

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- \$150.00 Parish Stipend*for use of the Church
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Music Fees - checks made payable to the organist and/or cantor

- \$150* (three months' notice); \$175 (2 months' notice); \$200 (1 month or less notice)
- \$100* - Cantor

Voluntary donation - (check make payable to the Priest or Deacon)

- **\$150* (suggested amount)**

***Fees (other than the security deposit)/donations can be delivered to the wedding coordinator on or before the rehearsal date**

Applicants are responsible for the good order of the church (i.e., church must be left in the condition in which it was found (clean and uncluttered). Full security deposit or parts thereof will be withheld to compensate a cleaning crew for their services or for arriving late. If applicants leave the church in good condition and arrive on time the security deposit will be returned within one week of the wedding ceremony.

We understand we will be personally responsible for leaving the church in good order and arriving on time and failure to do so will result in loss of full or parts of our security deposit.

Signature of Applicant Date

Signature of Applicant Date

Signature of Pastor/Deacon Date

**ONCE SIGNED BY THE COUPLE AND CELEBRANT, PLEASE RETURN TO THE RECTORY OFFICE STAFF!
A COPY WILL BE MADE AND DISTRIBUTED TO YOU. THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU!**

PHOTOGRAPHER'S CONTRACT WITH PRECIOUS BLOOD PARISH

I, _____, assigned photographer/videographer for the wedding of:

_____ and _____,

To be held at Precious Blood Catholic Church on _____ (date) commit to the following:

- *I will stay filming and/or taking pictures near the choir area (right side of the church if one faces the altar), or on the left side.*
- *Should I need to move from this area during the ceremony, I will go behind the congregation so as to not cause a distraction.*
- *I will not cross in front of the altar to get different angles when taking pictures.*
- *My camera(s) will be in silence mode. It/they will not make any sounds when I take pictures.*
- *I will not use flash during the ceremony.*

Signature of Photographer

Date

(Leave this signed copy with the parish office)

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_____ and _____,

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- *I will not use flash during the ceremony.*

Signature of Photographer

Date

(Photographer's Copy)