

Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage



St. Gabriel

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“Married Christians, in virtue of the sacrament of Matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church; they help each other to attain holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children; and they have their own special gift among the people of God.” —Introduction to the Rite of Marriage, #1

I. INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your desire to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage. May the Lord bless your lives together with much happiness and joy. St Gabriel Parish community welcomes this opportunity to assist you as you prepare to enter into this sacrament of your vocation - your marriage in the Lord. In our Catholic spiritual tradition, we recognize that the marriage celebration takes place not only in a church, but also in The Church - the community of Christian faith that includes not only you, your family and your friends, but also the whole Church - your brothers and sisters in Christ. We offer the following information and guidelines to help your preparations for this most important commitment of life and faith.

There are three basic areas of preparation that will need your attention. These three areas are: Documentation, Marriage Preparation Process, and Liturgical Planning.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Scheduling your Wedding:

Couples are to contact the Parish Office at least six months before any wedding plans may be made. It is most important that arrangements are made first with the priest/deacon **before any other arrangements** are finalized (i.e. **reception facilities, caterers, etc.**).

Due to the great number of events held at St Gabriel throughout the year, weddings may be held at St Gabriel **only on Saturdays at 10 AM, 12 NOON, or 2 PM.**

Wedding rehearsals are typically scheduled Friday evening at 6:30 PM. Other times may be requested or required depending upon St Gabriel schedule.

Because of the large number of weddings at St Gabriel, the clergy staff are able to witness only the weddings of parishioners of St Gabriel. For purposes here, a person is considered to be a parishioner if he/she lives within the parish boundaries, or if he/she has been registered in St Gabriel Parish for at least six (6) months prior to the initial inquiry about a wedding or marriage preparation. Non-parishioners must contact a priest or deacon to be responsible for their wedding and be present for the rehearsal.

Couples whose wedding is to be witnessed by a priest or deacon who is not on staff at St Gabriel must request permission from one of the St Gabriel parish clergy and have all required documents from the Archdiocese of Baltimore to celebrate sacraments in this Archdiocese:

1. No reservation for a wedding will be considered final until the officiating priest or deacon has confirmed with St Gabriel Parish priest/deacon handling the wedding, in writing, that he will officiate at the wedding.
2. After the date and time for the wedding and rehearsal has been finalized, the couple must schedule a meeting with a St Gabriel parish priest/deacon in order to review the St Gabriel wedding procedures.
3. After the above has been completed, all remaining paperwork and other requirements are the responsibility of the priest or deacon who will witness the marriage, unless other arrangements have been made.

Fees The fee for use of St Gabriel Church for a wedding is \$400 for parishioners of the St Gabriel and \$800 for non-parishioners. The date and time of the Wedding Liturgy **is confirmed when a deposit of one-third of the total wedding fee has been received.** The remaining two-thirds of the total wedding fee is to be received no later than **two months prior** to the wedding.

In light of the large amount of time and effort that planning a wedding requires on the part of the presiding priest or deacon, it is suggested that the couple make a personal offering of \$150 to the celebrant.

Fees for musicians are in addition to the fee for use of the church. Basic fees are \$100 for the organist and \$100 for the cantor/soloist. Additional charges may apply. See the section on liturgical music for more details. These fees should be paid to St Gabriel no later than two months prior to the wedding.

III. DOCUMENTATION

The priest/deacon who will officiate at your wedding is responsible for coordinating the preparation of the following items with you: - Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire: a brief series of information questions that your priest or deacon will complete with you.

- Baptismal Certificates: for each Catholic person, a **recently issued certificate** (i.e. within six months of the wedding) should be obtained by contacting the parish church where the baptism took place. For non-Catholic baptized Christians, simply a duplicate copy of an original certificate (or a letter indicating place, date, and other information) will suffice.

- Permissions/Dispensations: a simple form the priest/deacon will complete in order for a Catholic person to marry a non-Catholic person.

- The Catholic Church requires that any previous marriages be annulled before a couple may enter into a new marriage. This process may be lengthy and if necessary should be completed before scheduling a wedding at St Gabriel.

- If the Celebrant will be a visiting priest, delegation will not be granted until all paperwork has been completed.

- Certificate of Marriage Preparation (details below)

- Civil Marriage License: A civil marriage license must be obtained from Baltimore County from the Towson Courthouse. One of the parties must appear in person to apply for the license. The license is good from 2 days after the application is made until six months from the date of issue.

IV. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Participation in an Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Process is required for all couples wishing to be married in the Church. The goal of this preparation activity is to help couples better understand themselves, each other, and the responsibilities of entering into marriage in the Lord. You may choose to participate in any one of the following programs:

- Engaged Encounter Weekend - Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Sessions - Sponsor Couple Programs – On Line Program

The Engaged Encounter retreat weekend and the Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Sessions are both sponsored by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Information about these programs is available at: www.archbalt.org. The Sponsor Couple Program is at St Mark in Catonsville and matches engaged couples with specially trained married couples for one-on-one marriage preparation. For further information, please discuss your preference with the celebrant. For couples in a re-marriage situation, the Archdiocese sponsors a separate Re-Marriage Preparation program. Information is available from a priest or deacon. **Marriage preparation should be complete at least three months prior** to the wedding date. A certificate will be issued upon completion of the process that will become part of your required documentation.

V. LITURGICAL PLANNING

The priest/deacon will provide you with the booklet “Together for Life” which provides the optional prayers and Scripture readings (along with commentaries and a planning guide) for preparing the wedding liturgy.

When both parties are Catholic, the celebration of the marriage should take place within a Mass. If one of the parties is not Catholic, the celebration usually takes place at a ceremony outside Mass. The normal order of worship for a wedding is as follows:

- Introductory Rites – Entrance Procession – Sign of the Cross and Greeting – Opening Prayer
- Liturgy of the Word – Old Testament Reading – Responsorial Psalm (usually sung) – New Testament Reading – Gospel Acclamation (usually sung) – Gospel Reading – Homily
- Rite of Marriage: – Introductory Address and Statement of Intentions – Exchange of Consent (vows) – Blessing and Exchange of Rings If the wedding is celebrated at a Nuptial Mass, then it continues as follows: – Prayer of the Faithful •Liturgy of the Eucharist: – Presentation of the Gifts (musical selection) – Eucharistic Prayer (with sung acclamations) – Nuptial Blessing – Communion (musical selection) – Prayer After Communion – Final Blessing – Recessional (Organ /Instrumental) If the wedding is celebrated outside Mass, then it continues as follows: – Prayer of the Faithful – Nuptial Blessing – The Lord’s Prayer – Final Blessing – Recessional (Organ /Instrumental)

Other events in the Liturgy exchange of coins, or other cultural symbols in their wedding celebration. These additional exchanges would take place after the Exchange of Rings. If a couple chooses to include any of these, they will need to provide the appropriate cultural symbols. All necessary items should be brought to the wedding rehearsal.

Music for the Wedding Music plays an integral part of the Liturgy of the Church.

Music selections for your wedding must be made in consultation with St Gabriel Director of Music, Marie Pango. The required services of St Gabriel Director of Music and a St Gabriel Cantor will ensure that your wedding music is prepared with the utmost attention to detail and the sacred nature of the Liturgy.

Should you wish to have a musician/organist other than St Gabriel Director of Music, the organist must be approved by the St Gabriel Director of Music, and the couple is obligated to pay the standard \$250.00 fee to the Director of Music for consultation time and supervision of the other musician/organist’s practice time

Couples should contact St Gabriel 410-944-2106, to set up an appointment to plan the music for the wedding liturgy. Couples usually meet with the Director of Music to discuss options and finalize plans three to four months prior to the wedding date. Keeping in mind the sacred nature of the liturgy, some

musical selections are not appropriate for use in the church. All musical selections and musicians must be approved by the Director of Music Ministry.

Programs:

Any program for the celebration would be the responsibility of the couple. If a program will be used, it should be brought to St Gabriel at the rehearsal.

VI. LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Lectors It is proper for a lay person to proclaim the First and Second Readings from scripture and to announce the petitions of the Prayer of the Faithful. Couples should invite members of the family or other close friends to serve in this capacity. **The nature of the Word of God requires that such persons be persons of faith and effective public speakers.** They should be given copies of the readings in advance and be present at the rehearsal.

Altar Servers Altar servers are only scheduled to serve at weddings if requested by the couple or by the officiating priest or deacon. If so, an offering of \$25 should be given to each altar server the day of the ceremony. If the couple wishes to have family members or friends participate as altar servers, they should discuss this with the officiating priest or deacon and the servers must be present at the rehearsal.

Gift Bearers If the marriage is being celebrated in the context of Mass, family members or friends may be invited to present the gifts of bread and wine as the altar is being prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion If the marriage is being celebrated in the context of Mass, family members or friends who are trained and active Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in their home parish may be invited to serve. This should be discussed well in advance with the officiating priest.

Official Witnesses The official witnesses (Best Man and Maid or Matron of Honor) may be of any faith. Their names must be given to the officiating priest or deacon for inclusion in the marriage records.

Ring Bearers and Flower Girls In order for the marriage ceremony to retain its dignity and sense of the sacred, only children five (5) years and older are permitted to serve as ring bearers or flower girls. Ring bearers and flower girls are required to be at the rehearsal.

Wedding Coordinators:

All activities within St Gabriel are run by St Gabriel staff. The services of a wedding coordinator are not needed at the rehearsal or the wedding.

VII. USE OF ST GABRIEL ENVIRONMENT:

The use of rice, confetti, birdseed, balloons, flower petals, etc., is absolutely prohibited inside and outside St Gabriel. The re-arrangement of sanctuary and church furnishings is not permitted. Runners are not permitted because they pose a safety hazard. Food and drink may not be brought into St Gabriel.

Flowers All floral arrangements should be delivered to St Gabriel at least two hours prior to the start of the ceremony. Flowers should be given as memorials on the occasion of a wedding, and remain in place in the sanctuary for the entire weekend of your wedding.

Pew decorations are welcome. **Tape is not to be used on the pews for ribbon bows or other decorations as it destroys the wood finish.** Bows may be slipped on with a ribbon loop if desired. **Candle stands that clamp on the back of pews may not be used for the same reason. No decorations are permitted on the candlesticks, or doors.**

Photography/Videography Photographs and/or video may be taken during the marriage ceremony, but **always inconspicuously and from outside the sanctuary area.** Only the official photographer and/or videographer may take pictures at the ceremony. **Please note that the use of auxiliary floodlights and strobe lights is prohibited in St Gabriel. Twenty minutes for photography immediately after the recessional is permitted inside the St Gabriel if the wedding started on time.**

Arrival on Wedding Date:

Men of the bridal party should arrive no later than **one hour** prior to the scheduled start time to serve as ushers for wedding guests. **Women of the bridal party should arrive no later than one-half hour prior to the scheduled start time. We regret that there are no dressing facilities at St Gabriel.**

Weddings are expected to start on time at St Gabriel. Any wedding that starts late may be shortened to fit within the allotted time.

Receiving Lines Because of the limited amount of time between weddings and other parish functions, receiving lines are not permitted following the wedding.

OUR BLESSING PRAYER FOR YOU

May almighty God, with his Word of blessing, unite your hearts in the never-ending bond of pure love. May your children bring you happiness, and may your generous love for them be returned to you many times over.

May the peace of Christ live always in your hearts and in your home.

May you have true friends to stand by you, both in joy and in sorrow. May you be ready and willing to help and comfort all who come to you in need. And may the blessings promised to the compassionate be yours in abundance.

May you find happiness and satisfaction in your work.

May daily problems never cause undue anxiety, nor the desire for earthly possessions dominate your lives. But may your hearts' first desire be always the good things waiting for you in the life of heaven.

May the Lord bless you with many happy years together, so that you may enjoy the rewards of a good life. And after you have served him loyally in his kingdom on earth, may he welcome you to his eternal kingdom in heaven.