

*Guidelines for the Sacrament  
of Holy Matrimony*

**Precious Blood Catholic Church  
114 E Edmondson St.  
Culpeper, VA 22701  
540-825-8945**

*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 below.*

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

A wedding coordinator is required to assist you in all our preparations and to ensure the smooth flow of your rehearsal and wedding ceremony. Our wedding coordinators are:

Mrs. Rachel Glascock (540)905-0893 [rach3L.glascock@hotmail.com](mailto:rach3L.glascock@hotmail.com) or [sorachlsaid@gmail.com](mailto:sorachlsaid@gmail.com)

Mrs. Sandy Hall (540)547-2969 [sandybellhall@gmail.com](mailto:sandybellhall@gmail.com)

Mrs. Laura Power (703) 409-0353 [lprice98@aol.com](mailto:lprice98@aol.com)

Mrs. Kim Shrader (703)725-0444 [ythokie02@comcast.net](mailto:ythokie02@comcast.net)

Mrs. Peggy Young (540)727-9458 [gavnpeg@comcast.net](mailto:gavnpeg@comcast.net)

## 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) given to the priest before the wedding date.

**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 Catholic party's 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 else outside of the Catholic Church without its permission, 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:** Each couple must pay a \$150.00 security/cleaning fee to the parish. If all of 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 suggested stipend for the use of the Church is \$150.00 and may be brought to the church office along with the marriage license, at least one week before the ceremony.

## 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. No secular or pop music is permitted. 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.

Couples to be married are urged not to have friends or relatives provide music for any part of the service unless they are professional musicians or can demonstrate the ability to perform competently in front of a congregation. If friends or relatives are used, and they require rehearsal time with the organist other than on the day of the wedding, a fee will be charged. If you wish to have a band or musicians from another parish, or outside source, you must obtain authorization from the Pastor. Music fees are \$150 for the organist and \$100 for the cantor and should be made payable to the organist and/or cantor. Please contact Hannah Masson at least a month in advance at 540-825-9650 to coordinate the music for your wedding.

#### **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, or any matter, may be thrown inside or outside of the church.

#### **5. Rehearsals**

Rehearsals are mandatory and are scheduled on the Friday night before the wedding. The wedding coordinator will run the rehearsal.

#### **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**

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.

## **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. 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 phone number is 540-825-8945. 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. They are not to form a kind of “human tunnel” that extends down the aisle during the entrance procession or the recessional. 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. Tardiness**

Unnecessary tardiness is not only disrespectful to your guests and the officiating priest, but 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.

***Precious Blood Catholic Church***

114 E Edmondson St.  
Culpeper, VA 22701  
540-925-8945

**Contractual Agreement for Use of Church for Holy Matrimony**

**Name of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date and Time Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FEES:**     **Church Fees** - checks made payable to Precious Blood Catholic Church  
              \$150.00 Security Deposit (Separate Check)  
              \$150.00 Parish Stipend

**Music Fees**

\$150 - Organist

\$100 - Cantor

Made payable to the organist and/or cantor.

**\*Voluntary donation to the priest or deacon may be made directly to him.**

**All fees are due 1 week prior to wedding ceremony.**

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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/Parochial Vicar/Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date