

Our Lady of Grace Church, Noblesville

Marriage Liturgy Policies and Guidelines

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! We are pleased that you have chosen to celebrate this very special event in your lives at Our Lady of Grace. Please know that our prayers are with you and we are here to help you in any way we can.

This resource is designed to assist engaged couples as they plan for their marriage liturgy (wedding ceremony). It contains all the policies for couples to follow in planning their weddings, as well as some guidelines, suggestions, and helpful information. As the marriage liturgy is truly the central and high point of your wedding day, it is important that you give first consideration to the planning of the liturgy itself.

I. CHOICE OF SERVICE

- ❖ Wedding During Mass: During the Nuptial Mass, the fullest symbol of sharing between the bride and groom is the sharing of Holy Communion. Since this is not possible when one partner is not Catholic, and because in most such cases about half of the assembly would also be excluded from receiving Communion, the option of celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage during Mass is reserved only to Catholic couples. This is the policy of the Catholic Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana, and special permission must be given by the Bishop of the diocese for an exemption from the policy.

- ❖ Wedding Outside of Mass: For those celebrating Marriage apart from the setting of the Eucharist, the Rite of Marriage is preceded by a full Liturgy of the Word, including three Scripture readings, a homily, and intercessory prayer. Although the Liturgy of the Word alone is not the same as the Mass, Christ is present in the proclamation of God's Word as well as in the community gathered in his name. The wedding that takes place in this setting is very clearly a sacred event.

- ❖ Extra-Liturgical Rituals and Symbols: The Catholic Church's official Rite of Marriage is a simple but very rich and symbolic ritual which doesn't require any additional rituals or symbols to make it more special or sacred. Whether your wedding takes place during or outside of Mass, no additional rituals may be added, with the following exceptions: Although the "Unity Candle" is not an official part of the Rite of Marriage, it is commonly used in weddings in this part of the country. A Unity Candle may be used for Weddings Outside of Mass. Also, certain cultural rituals are an established part of the Rite of Marriage in other countries and locations (e.g. in various Hispanic cultures). These rituals may be used in appropriate situations (e.g. Spanish-language weddings).

II. SCHEDULING POLICY

Because of the large number of weddings celebrated at Our Lady of Grace, it is sometimes necessary to schedule two weddings on the same day. Since it is anticipated that this will become more and more of a reality, all weddings must be scheduled in view of this possibility. Therefore, all Saturday weddings will be scheduled at either 11:30 am or 2:30 pm. Friday evening weddings are not encouraged, but if a couple does request a Friday wedding, the time for that wedding will be 6:30 pm.

- ❖ Space availability is as follows:
 - For a 6:30 pm Friday wedding, dressing rooms will be available at 4:00 pm. The Worship Space will be available beginning at 5:00 pm, and the Worship Space and parish premises must be vacated by 8:00 pm. There will be no Friday weddings during Lent because of the Way of the Cross. (Note: If the rehearsal for a Friday wedding is on Thursday evening, it must be concluded before the beginning of choir practice at 7:30.)
 - For an 11:30 am Saturday wedding, dressing rooms will be available at 9:00 am, the Worship Space will be available beginning at 10:00 am, and the Worship Space and parish premises must be vacated by 1:00 pm.
 - For a 2:30 pm Saturday wedding, dressing rooms will be available at 12:00 pm, the Worship Space will be available beginning at 1:00 pm, and the Worship Space and parish premises must be vacated by 4:00 pm.
- ❖ When there are two weddings scheduled for the same Saturday, two different sets of dressing rooms will be made available.
- ❖ Even when only one wedding is scheduled on a given Saturday, the above schedule must be followed. The opposite (open) time slot might be needed for a baptism, funeral, etc., and cannot be promised in advance for additional wedding photos, etc.
- ❖ No wedding will be entered into the schedule until the marriage fee and the completed scheduling form have been submitted.
- ❖ No wedding booking is considered final until an email confirmation has been sent by the parish to the bride and/or groom.

III. MUSIC

Your wedding liturgy is a sacred ceremony and the music you choose should reflect the sacred character of the liturgy, which is first of all an act of communal worship.

- ❖ All musical choices must be made in consultation with Barb Leap, our Parish Music and Liturgy Director, even if other musicians/music ministers are providing music for the service. Any musicians from outside the parish must communicate with Barb at the earliest opportunity, and must participate in a mandatory rehearsal prior to the wedding. Contact Barb Leap at baleap@ologn.org or 773-4275 x230.
- ❖ The character of the wedding liturgy as sacred worship requires at least a minimum of congregational singing. This singing is to be led by a cantor, who is familiar with Catholic liturgy and possesses the skills needed for this ministry.
- ❖ See Section IX for information about financial compensation for music ministers.

IV. ART AND ENVIRONMENT

Well-chosen decorations can enhance the beauty of the wedding liturgy, drawing people into the worship experience. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that decorations enhance, not detract from, that experience.

- ❖ The altar is not a shelf or counter, and is reserved at all times for its sacred use during the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. At no time should anything be placed on the altar (such as a unity candle, cameras, notebooks, books, bouquets, etc.), even during rehearsals or other times outside of worship. The same considerations should be made for the baptismal font, the ambo (pulpit) and the tabernacle as for the altar.
- ❖ Flowers and other decorations should not be placed in any location that will impede the traffic flow or the sight lines of those attending the wedding or exercising ministries in the sanctuary. The priest/deacon may move the flowers to a different spot, or direct the florist to do so.
- ❖ Tape may not be used on the pews or on any of the sanctuary furniture. (The parish has brackets which may be used for attaching floral arrangements to the pews.)
- ❖ Rice, birdseed, etc., may not be thrown after the wedding anywhere on church grounds. If the guests are given soap for blowing bubbles, this must be done only outside the building.
- ❖ Flower petals are not to be dropped on the floor before, during, or after the wedding. Real flower petals stain the floor when stepped on; silk or other artificial petals may cause members of the wedding party to slip and fall.
- ❖ Seasonal decorations already in place in the church, e.g. during Advent, Christmas and Easter seasons, are not to be removed. (Weddings during the season of Lent are strongly discouraged due to the penitential nature of the season and the various Lenten activities added to the parish calendar during this time.)
- ❖ Because the two seasons differ in their liturgical character, Christmas decorations may not be used during Advent season.
- ❖ As mentioned above, during the Nuptial Mass, the fullest symbol of sharing between the bride and groom is the sharing of Holy Communion. The cultural symbol of a “unity candle” is often given more prominence than the sharing of Communion, even though it is of considerably less significance. For this reason, a unity candle should not be used during a Nuptial Mass. A unity candle may be used during a wedding outside of Mass.
- ❖ Candlelight weddings (in which the electric lighting is dimmed or not used) are not permitted, as there is only to be one candlelight liturgy during each year of worship, the Easter Vigil. Candles are not to be mounted on the pews or placed in stands near the ends of pews.
- ❖ No weapons, symbolic or otherwise, are to be worn, carried, or otherwise present inside the church building, even if any of the participants in the wedding are going to be dressed in military uniform.
- ❖ Photographs may be taken in the Worship Space or Gathering Space only during the times given in this document:
 - For an 11:30 wedding: Between 10:00 and 11:00 am and after the wedding until 1:00 pm.
 - For a 2:30 wedding: Between 1:00 and 2:00 pm and after the wedding until 4:00 pm.
 - For a 6:30 pm Friday Evening wedding: Between 5:00 and 6:00 pm and after the wedding until 8:00 pm.

No other locations in the building, and no other time frames, may be used for photographs, without the explicit consent of the Pastor. Pictures may be taken outdoors at any time, provided another scheduled activity is not already in progress and the wedding photography does not interfere with Mass traffic in the parking lot, etc. In case of inclement weather, when outdoor photos are not possible, the above policies regarding times for photography in the building still apply.

- ❖ Our Lady of Grace is not responsible for any property left at the church after the wedding.
- ❖ During the wedding liturgy, no photos or videos are to be taken from the sanctuary (the elevated area where the altar is located) or from the area in front of the front pews on either side. After the entrance procession, photographers and videographers must remain in the back of the church.
- ❖ The use of flash photography is not permitted during the wedding ceremony.
- ❖ Because our church has a wood laminate flooring surface, aisle runners are not permitted due to safety considerations.
- ❖ Flowers and other decorations must be removed from the Church when the wedding party leaves the building. If you wish to leave your flowers in the church as a donation to the church, please let the priest or deacon know in advance of the wedding.
- ❖ Florists, photographers, and videographers are reminded that their role in the liturgy is secondary and must be kept in perspective. They are also asked to respect the sacred character of the church's worship space, especially the baptismal font, the altar, the tabernacle, and the sanctuary as mentioned above.
- ❖ For any questions about art and environment, you may contact Barb Leap at baleap@ologn.org or 773-4275 x230.

V. ATTIRE

Obviously, you want to choose attire for yourselves and your wedding party that signal the high importance of this occasion. At the same time, your wedding is an act of worship, carried out in a house of worship, and involves physical movement and postures of prayer and reverence. So your attire should be both festive and appropriate.

Our Lady of Grace parish encourages brides and grooms to aspire to “simple elegance,” in keeping with Christian stewardship and worship, rather than lavish opulence.

Please be respectful of the dignity and sacredness of the occasion by dressing appropriately. Due to certain current trends in wedding attire for brides, it is necessary to insist on the following requirements for all women in the wedding party:

- Strapless dresses/gowns must be worn with a sweater, bolero or something that covers the shoulders.
- Absolutely no cleavage may be visible.
- Mini-skirts are not permitted.

If members of the wedding party are inappropriately dressed, the priest may require them to cover up with a sweater, jacket, alb, etc.

VI. WEDDING FACILITATOR

A parish Wedding Facilitator will be assigned for your wedding and rehearsal. The role of the Wedding Facilitator is to be present at the wedding rehearsal, either to assist the priest or deacon or to conduct the rehearsal, and to be present on the wedding day to ensure that everything flows smoothly. The Wedding Facilitator does not assist in planning the ceremony or in any other function before the rehearsal and the wedding day.

If you hire a Wedding Coordinator for your wedding, the Coordinator is a guest at Our Lady of Grace Church. The priest or deacon, and the parish Wedding Facilitator, have the responsibility of directing the rehearsal and wedding. The Wedding Coordinator hired by the couple, if involved at all during the time at Our Lady of Grace, is expected to comply with any directions given by the Priest, Deacon, or parish Wedding Facilitator.

VII. THE REHEARSAL

- ❖ In addition to the couple and the entire wedding party, it is important that the rehearsal also be attended by the following: ushers, reader(s) (of Scripture and intercessions), parents of the couple, and any children in the wedding. Those serving as altar server, Communion Minister, or crossbearer, if they are not members of Our Lady of Grace parish, should also attend. The photographer or videographer may also attend.
- ❖ If children are to be part of the wedding procession, they may not be under the age of five years. Preferably, the child should be age seven or older. Any children in the wedding party should be present at the rehearsal. If, at the time of the procession, a child is unwilling to walk down the aisle, someone should be designated beforehand to either walk the child down the aisle or remove the child from the aisle so that the procession may continue.
- ❖ Under no circumstances is anyone to ride a wagon, scooter, cart, etc. in the procession, unless it is necessary due to injury or disability.
- ❖ A copy of each reading, as well as the intercessions, will be supplied to the couple, to be passed on to the reader(s) well in advance of the wedding liturgy so that the reader may prepare. The reader(s) will be asked to practice the readings during the rehearsal. The couple is responsible to get these copies to the reader(s), in advance of the rehearsal. During the wedding liturgy, the Scripture readings will be proclaimed from the Lectionary, the book which contains the Bible readings for the liturgy.

VIII. THE WEDDING DAY

The priest or deacon with whom you are doing your marriage preparation and liturgy planning will give you the details that you need to know for the day of your wedding. Meanwhile, here are a few things to keep in mind.

- ❖ Although the wedding party has permission to arrive in the building as early as 2½ hours before the wedding begins, all members of the wedding party must be present in the building by at least thirty minutes before the wedding.
- ❖ The custom of not allowing the groom to see the bride before the wedding is a cultural custom and is not based in any Christian understanding of marriage. Therefore, if you choose to follow

this custom, it will not be the responsibility of the parish, wedding facilitator or deacon to support your choice. Hallway doors will be kept open and the priest and facilitator will expect to have access to the bride and the groom before the wedding as needed.

- ❖ Do not bring alcohol on to the premises, and do not consume alcohol at any time before the wedding. Anyone consuming or carrying alcohol will be required to leave the premises, with no exceptions.
- ❖ The wedding party is responsible for ensuring that the church is returned to its previous state before leaving the building following the wedding, at the direction of the Wedding Facilitator and/or the Priest.
- ❖ The bride and groom are asked to ensure that the priest/deacon has the marriage license and certificate at least one hour before the wedding.
- ❖ To discourage theft, you are advised to keep your valuables (cameras, camcorders, purses, wedding gifts, etc.) with you, or in the trunk of your car, or in the possession of another relative or friend. Please make this information known to your guests.
- ❖ Be sure to eat something nutritious on the big day, before the wedding! Because of the excitement, this is sometimes forgotten. If you bring food in, please confine it to the Community Room, if possible, and be sure to discard all your trash.
- ❖ The wedding party and the wedding guests are asked to respect the parking/no parking directions posted by the parish. Parking in a fire lane could result in a citation and fine imposed by the Noblesville Police Department. Please inform guests that there is plenty of parking behind the church.

IX. FEES

The following amounts are provided for your information.

Marriage Preparation Fee, Parishioners (must be paid before wedding can be scheduled):

Facilitator:	\$200
Church Use:	N/A
FOCCUS scoring:	\$15
Natural Family Planning fee	\$50
Planning manual:	<u>\$5 or \$15</u>
Total:	\$270 or \$280

Marriage Preparation Fee, Non-Parishioners* (must be paid before wedding can be scheduled):

Facilitator:	\$200
Church Use:	\$500
FOCCUS scoring:	\$15
Natural Family Planning fee	\$50
Planning manual	<u>\$5 or \$15</u>
Total:	\$870 or \$880

*Or those who have been registered in the parish for less than six months when beginning their marriage preparation.

Other fees:

Marriage Preparation Programs (payable before participating in the chosen program)

Pre-Cana workshop: \$40 (paid to Diocese of Lafayette)
Sponsor Couple: \$25 (paid to Our Lady of Grace)

Honoraria:

Accompanist: \$200 (paid to Accompanist)
Cantor/Song Leader: \$125 (paid to Cantor)
(Check should be made out to the person, not to the parish, and delivered to the parish by one week before the wedding.)
Altar Server \$10 each (usually given as cash on the wedding day)
Clergy: At your discretion

FOR THE FLORIST...

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- ❖ Our Lady of Grace is not responsible for any property left at the church after the wedding.
- ❖ Because our church has a wood laminate flooring surface, aisle runners are not permitted due to safety considerations.
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- ❖ Extra-Liturgical Rituals and Symbols: The Catholic Church's official Rite of Marriage is a simple but very rich and symbolic ritual which doesn't require any additional rituals or symbols to make it more special or sacred. Whether the wedding takes place during or outside of Mass, no additional rituals may be added, with the following exceptions: Although the "Unity Candle" is not an official part of the Rite of Marriage, it is commonly used in weddings in this part of the country. A Unity Candle may be used for Weddings Outside of Mass. Also, certain cultural rituals are an established part of the Rite of Marriage in other countries and locations (e.g. in various Hispanic cultures). These rituals may be used in appropriate situations (e.g. Spanish-language weddings).

FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER...

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No other locations in the building, and no other time frames, may be used for photographs, without the explicit consent of the Pastor. Pictures may be taken outdoors at any time, provided another scheduled activity is not already in progress and the wedding photography does not interfere with Mass traffic in the parking lot, etc. In case of inclement weather, when outdoor photos are not possible, the above policies regarding times for photography in the building still apply.

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