



***Our Lady of Grace***  
***Guidelines for Parish Wedding***  
*(Rev. 8/29/2023)*

**GROOM'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BRIDE'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF WEDDING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME OF WEDDING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF REHEARSAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME OF REHEARSAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **STAGES OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

### **1. Scheduling and Selection of a Minister**

The first step in the marriage preparation process is for you to contact a Priest or a Deacon at Our Lady of Grace. This must be done at least nine months before the ceremony.

The Priest or Deacon will arrange a time to meet with you in person. It is at that meeting that they will discuss the sacrament and a date will be given for your celebration. No dates will be given out by telephone or email.

As soon as you have agreed a date on which the Church is available, please contact the parish office with the name of the priest or deacon who will witness your wedding and the date.

Please take note that if a priest or deacon who will witness your marriage is not a priest or deacon of Our Lady of Grace, your priest or deacon **MUST** request permission from our Pastor. They are to request Delegation from our Pastor. If they are not members of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, they must provide Canonical Proof of their Faculties.

Once you have spoken with the priest or deacon who will witness your marriage, you need to begin your preparation for marriage.

## **2. Initial Meeting with your priest or deacon of the Sacrament**

- a. they will discuss the nature of the sacrament,
- b. and give you a date for your wedding.

## **3. Marriage Preparation: Preparation for marriage takes four forms:**

### **a. Engaged Encounter**

If you are not prepared for marriage by a sponsor couple, you will need to contact the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Marriage Preparation Office (410-547-5420) (AS SOON AS POSSIBLE) to enroll or see Engaged Encounter website at [www.mdcee.org](http://www.mdcee.org).

### **c. Marriage Preparation Conference (Pre-Cana)**

If you are not prepared for marriage by a sponsor couple, you will need to contact the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Marriage Preparation Office (410-547-5420) (AS SOON AS POSSIBLE) to enroll in Pre-Cana Conferences or see their website at [www.archbalt.org](http://www.archbalt.org).

### **c. Preparation by a Parish Sponsor Couple**

Our Lady of Grace has a minister who has received special training in the preparation of engaged couples. A series of five sessions covers marriage as a journey, its trials and triumphs, its stresses, and successes. If this form

of preparation is used, the couple contacts the minister after the first meeting with the priest or deacon. This program of preparation is available only to parishioners of Our Lady of Grace.

#### **d. Remarriage Preparation**

If you are not prepared for marriage by a sponsor couple, you will need to contact the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Marriage Preparation Office (410-547-5420) to enroll in a Remarriage Preparation Program. This program is recommended for couples where one or both have been previously married.

#### **4. Meeting with the Minister of Music of Our Lady of Grace**

Your presider will give you the contact information for the Music Minister.

#### **5. Rehearsal**

Is usually scheduled for the evening before the wedding. The license must be turned in at that time.

(Also, you may view the Archdiocese of Baltimore's site at:

<http://www.archbalt.org/family-life/marriage-family/marriage-preparation/index.cfm> for additional marriage information.)

## **ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. When Can Marriage Be Scheduled?**

Marriages at Our Lady of Grace are celebrated on Friday evenings, Saturdays until 2:00pm or at 7:00 p.m. Weddings are not performed on holiday weekends (i.e., Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year). Please refer to “FLOWERS” regarding decorations for liturgical seasons.

### **2. What About Ecumenical or Interfaith Marriages?**

When one of the parties to the marriage is not Catholic, both parties need to understand and respect the importance the sacrament plays in married life. We assure you at the same time of our respect for other religious traditions. In the conversation with the priest or deacon and the Musician, Catholic belief and practice will be discussed, especially in relation to marriage. The Catholic party will be asked to make a commitment to have the children baptized in the Catholic Faith and to share his or her faith with the children. The non-Catholic partner will be asked to be trusting, open and understanding about the Catholic Faith and traditions. We welcome ministers of other faiths to participate in the wedding ceremony at Our Lady of Grace. Your witnesses may also be persons of another faith.

### **3. What About Visiting Clergy?**

If a couple wishes to invite a visiting priest or deacon to officiate at their wedding, they are welcomed to do so. The visiting Priest or Deacon must request Delegation upon which the pastor will grant, in writing, the necessary delegation for a visiting priest or deacon to officiate at Our Lady of Grace. If the visiting presider are not members of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, they must provide Canonical Proof of their Faculties. While allowing for his particular role as presider in the liturgy, we ask all visiting clergy to honor and respect the procedures and placement of sanctuary we use at Our Lady of Grace.

#### **4. What Happens When Couples are separated by Long Distance during Preparation?**

When a couple is separated by distance during the months before marriage, arrangements can be made for the preparation to take place separately. In such case, the only form of marriage preparation can be the Pre-Cana Conference, each person doing so separately. It is far more desirable, however, for the couple to arrange to be together during this important time.

#### **5. What If One of the Couple Was Previously Married?**

If one of the parties has been married previously, he or she must present the final Decree of Nullity from the tribunal or the certificate of death in the case of a widow

or widower. If an annulment is in process, no wedding date can be set until the annulment has been granted; to do so places undue stress on the couple.

## **6. What Documents Are Required?**

Baptized Catholic persons must obtain a recently issued Baptismal Certificate from the Church of their baptism. Old Catholic baptismal certificates cannot be used. Also, certificates must be dated no more than six months before the date of the wedding. A copy of a non-Catholic's Baptismal Certificate is required for the couple's wedding file.

At least two weeks before the wedding, the couple will need to obtain a marriage license from Baltimore County, at the Courthouse in Towson. The license is to be given to the priest or deacon at the rehearsal.

A marriage license can be obtained up to 6 months from the date of the wedding.

## **7. What of the Use of the Church?**

Members of the parish and visitors to Our Lady of Grace are asked to remember that our church is a house of prayer and the home of this faith community. We ask that the conduct of visitors reflect the dignity and respect you would like afforded to you in your home. We ask that you observe and respect our traditions. The presence of alcoholic beverages within the Church or on the grounds



is expressly forbidden. Members of the bridal party who have visibly consumed alcohol or drugs before the ceremony will be asked not to take part in the celebration.

## **8. Parishioner Use of the Parish Banquet Facilities?**

Currently, there are no banquet facilities available at Our Lady of Grace.

## **Outline of the Wedding Liturgy**

### **I. Entrance Rite**

Gathers the assembly for worship, celebration, and prayer.

### **II. Liturgy of the Word**

God speaks to us through the scriptures.

### **III. Rite of Marriage**

The exchange of consent, vows and rings and the assent of the people.

### **IV. Liturgy of the Eucharist (within Mass only)**

The assembly is joined together in receiving and being nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ.

### **V. Closing Rite**

Sends the newly married couple and the assembly forth to their mission of bringing God's love to everyone they meet.

## **Environment - Flowers and Decorations**

Those preparing the wedding (the wedding couple, parents of the couple, consultants) will work in conjunction with Our Lady of Grace. Please contact the Parish Office at (410) 329-6826 for questions. See the section marked “Instructions for Florists” for further instructions. Please give this section to your florist.

## **Wedding During a Special Liturgical Season**

When setting a date for your wedding, take into consideration the special nature of liturgical seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent, the 50 Days of Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time). The Church’s celebration of these seasons will affect the decoration of the Church. When a wedding takes place during such a liturgical season, the liturgical environment is to remain in place. This includes a photographer moving things for pictures (see “Instructions for Wedding Photographers” of this booklet. Please give this section to your photographer).

## **Liturgical Ministers**

**Lector(s)** should be experienced and trained in this ministry. Please select people who are at ease in reading God’s Word amid the liturgical assembly. The priest or deacon will help prepare the lectors at the rehearsal.

**Cantor:** To lead the song of the assembly one of the parish cantors is required. Our parish has cantors especially trained for this purpose. It is permissible to have a friend sing as long as he/she is accustomed to functioning as a cantor in a Catholic service. It is our experience that someone may be a fine soloist, but not a cantor. If the person you wish to sing is not a regularly functioning cantor in a Roman Catholic Church, one of the parish cantors is still to be engaged.

**Gift Bearers** to present the gifts (only when the Eucharist is celebrated) can be any family member or friends of the bride and groom.

Flower girls and ring bearers must be at least five years old to walk down the aisle. Anyone younger can be considered but cannot be in the procession.

**Eucharistic Ministers:** When the Eucharist is part of the wedding celebration, two Cup Ministers are needed. Either the bride and/or groom can function in this capacity, or family and friends of the couple who would be comfortable performing this ministry. The priest or deacon will go through this with the cup ministers at the rehearsal.

**Liturgical Musicians:** Consult with the Liturgical Music Minister if you wish additional musicians, i.e., violinist, etc.

## **Music**

Please consult your Liturgical Music Minister for advice as to the following:

### **Music to be considered:**

The music which supports the liturgy and also other music which is optional and can enhance the celebration: preludes, mother's song, postlude, solo instrumental or vocal pieces. Musical selections should express the faith of the couple and the common faith of the whole Church. Secular (popular) songs may be moving or a particular favorite of the couple, but they do not directly express our Christian faith or say enough about what God has done in your lives with and in Christ Jesus. Texts must be selected which provide an expression of prayer and the celebration of Christian faith. Such music is more appropriate as one of several preludes.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Photographers**

During the service, photographers are not to stand anywhere in the Worship Space. We ask that photographs requiring flash not be taken during the ceremony by your photographer, family, or guests. Time exposures may be taken if the photographer is not in view of the assembly, i.e., behind the doors separating the Worship Space from the Gathering Space. After the wedding, group pictures are limited to 30 minutes and can be taken in the church or on the patio. The photos after the ceremony are in no way to RECREATE the service that has taken place. It is not permitted for liturgy to be staged since it is an action of faith.

Videotaping of the ceremony may be done from the rear of the center aisle at either of the three sets of doors and one additional stationary camera in the church. We ask that there be no traveling tripods, bright spotlights, extraneous cords, empty equipment boxes, or any other distracting equipment in view. Your videographer MUST consult with Our Lady of Grace concerning placement prior to the Mass or service.

## **Fees and Offerings**

When planning your wedding budget, the following should be considered:

**Church Fee\*\*:** Parishioner: \$300.00 of which a deposit of \$100.00 is due the day your wedding date is set with

the Church. This deposit of \$100.00 reserves the Church for your Wedding Day. This fee is nonrefundable. The remaining balance is due one month prior to the ceremony. To qualify as a parishioner, you must be active both spiritually and in stewardship, and financially contributing to Our Lady of Grace, attending Mass. This kind of presence to the community needs to exist for six months prior to the time you reserve the Church for your Wedding. \*\* *(Parishioner usage and rates are offered only to parishioners).*

**Liturgical Music Fee: \$300.00:** This Liturgical fee provides for the Minister of Music serving as the organist and coordinator of your wedding music. This fee is paid directly to the Minister of Music on the day of the wedding. It includes one meeting with the couple, the rehearsal, and the liturgy itself.

**Cantor Fee: \$150.00:** This fee is paid directly to the Cantor on the day of the wedding.

**Liturgical Coordinator Fee: \$150.00:** This fee is paid directly to the Coordinator on the day of the wedding.

**All fees are payable in full no later than one month prior to the wedding date.**

*Please remember a stipend for the priest. It is customary to offer a stipend to the priest or deacon for all the time he has spent preparing you for your wedding.*

## **IMPORTANT NOTES**

During the rehearsal and prior to the wedding, the couple should remind their families and wedding party that the Church is a sacred place. Conduct and conversation should be reverent and respectful.

**We ask that there be no throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed, rose petals or other objects and no bird or balloon releases.**

**Runners of any kind are not permitted. They create a hazard, particularly for the elderly.**

Fees are to be paid IN FULL to the Parish Office, one month prior to the wedding. Please DO NOT write one check to Our Lady of Grace for your wedding fees. Separate checks to the parties involved are requested. The presider or the Minister of Music will provide you with all necessary names of the parties to whom you write checks. Please address any questions about the use of the church to Our Lady of Grace Parish Office at (410) 329-6826.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORISTS

Our Lady of Grace  
18310 Middletown Road  
Parkton, Maryland 21120  
410-329-6826

Bride \_\_\_\_\_

Groom \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

You have been chosen by this bride and groom to be the florist for their wedding. In preparing the flowers for the Church, the following considerations need to be kept in mind.

1. Call the Our Lady of Grace one week before the wedding to schedule delivery of flowers. The church may be opened one hour before the scheduled wedding. However, if it is a 7:00 pm wedding, all the flowers can be placed



between 4:00 pm and 4:30 pm, well before the regular 5:00 pm Saturday mass begins.

2. You are preparing the environment as a beautiful, sacred space. The natural beauty of our Church does not call for a great deal of decoration but lively colors which highlight the rich wood tones of the building and complement through the clear glass windows.
3. Please remember less is more.
4. Decorations are always to be in keeping with the existing liturgical season. This is especially true during Christmas and Easter. Existing Liturgical Environment, which is part of the Sunday Celebration of the Parish, **MAY NOT BE REMOVED FOR ANY REASON.**
5. Flowers should not be placed in front of the Altar of Sacrifice (the altar at which the priest says Mass) because the bridal couple will stand directly in front of the altar to pronounce their vows.
6. Generally, two arrangements are placed in stands in the rear of the sanctuary or one larger one in front of the organ pipes. While flowers on stands are permissible, they should never dwarf or obscure the sight lines to the altar area.
7. Candelabras down the center isle of the church are permitted. They must be supplied by the florist and assembled and removed by the florist.

8. **Runners of any kind are not permitted. They create a hazard, particularly for the elderly.**
9. We appreciate it if couples leave their flowers for the use of the congregation on Sundays.
10. Corsages, boutonnieres, dedication flowers are to be delivered in marked containers and left on the tables in the foyer of the Church.
11. Check with the Our Lady of Grace at (410) 329-6826 with any questions or to make arrangements to visit the church prior the wedding.
12. **We ask that there be no throwing of rice, confetti, bird seed, rose petals or other objects and no bird or balloon releases.**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER**

Our Lady of Grace  
18310 Middletown Road  
Parkton, Maryland 21120  
410-329-6826

Bride \_\_\_\_\_

Groom \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

You have been chosen by this bride and groom to photograph their wedding, thereby preserving cherished memories. We welcome you and ask that you observe the following rules and regulations governing the use of cameras at Our Lady of Grace.

### **In Preparation for the Wedding:**

1. Photographers should always work unobtrusively in the church, being respectful of the worship service. Tripods may not be set up in the rear of the main aisle, at the double doors, until the guests and wedding party are in. Flash pictures are not allowed during the ceremony.

Photographers may not go into the Worship Space at any time. The center doors are closed during the ceremony and remain closed until the recessional.

2. Videotaping of the ceremony may be done from the rear of the left, right or center aisles only at the doors to the Worship Space.
3. Check with Our Lady of Grace for procedures not covered.

### **Before the Wedding:**

- A. The groom, his family and attendants may not be photographed in the sacristy; it is too small and the center of other activity. The foyer of the chapel or the grotto may be used for this purpose.
- B. The bride, her family and attendants may be photographed in the foyer, grotto or sanctuary before guests arrive.
- C. Flash pictures may be taken before and after the wedding ceremony, but not during the ceremony.
- D. Video-spot lights are not permitted.

### **After the Wedding:**

- A. If desired, the bridal party may be brought back into the sanctuary for group photos. Also, group and family pictures can be taken on the altar steps. Wedding flowers may be moved forward for the pictures and replaced afterwards.

- B. Care should be taken not to leave any equipment behind, as the church is locked immediately after the bridal party leaves.
- C. Please be attentive to the 30-minute picture taking time slot after the wedding.
- D. Check with the Our Lady of Grace at (410) 329-6826 with any questions or the plan to visit the church prior the wedding.

**Bride/Groom TO-DO Checklist:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Secure a Presider for your Wedding**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Set-up 1<sup>st</sup> appointment with Presider**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Schedule date for Wedding and Rehearsal**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **with Church after 1<sup>st</sup> meeting with Celebrant**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Send in deposit monies for Church**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Schedule Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter,**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Sponsor Couple, or Remarriage Preparation**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Attend Marriage Preparation Classes**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Forward Re-Issued Baptismal**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Certificate for the Bride to the Church**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Forward Re-Issued Baptismal**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Certificate for the Groom to the Church**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Complete and forward to Church all other**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **forms or documents requested by Presider**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Forward copy of Marriage Preparation**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **certificate to Church**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Schedule 2<sup>nd</sup> appointment with Presider to plan**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **wedding after completion of Marriage**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Preparation**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Set a date with Music Minister to review**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **music (at least two months before wedding)**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Forward outstanding fees for the Church,**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Music**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Minister and Cantor no later than one month**

**prior to the wedding date**

**Obtain marriage license at least two weeks  
prior to wedding**

**Review Florist Instructions with florist**

**Review Photographer's Instruction with  
photographer**

**Arrange for florist to call Our Lady of Grace  
to schedule delivery of flowers**

**Attend Rehearsal at scheduled time and date.**

**Give Marriage License to Presider at the  
rehearsal**