



MARRIAGE PREPARATION and PLANNING

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OUTLINE OF THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROCESS

I. INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH PRIEST OR DEACON; TAKE THE FOCUS INVENTORY

II. MEET WITH THE MARRIED COUPLE;
DISCUSS FOCUS INVENTORY

III. AFTER DATE IS SET BEGIN MUSIC AND LITURGY PLANNING BY CONTACTING THE ORGANIST

IV. ATTEND AN ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKEND OR CONFERENCES FOR ENGAGED

V. SECOND MEETING WITH PRIEST OR DEACON; COMPLETE ALL PAPERWORK

VI. NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING CLASS

VII. FINAL MEETING WITH PRIEST OR DEACON

VIII. WEDDING REHEARSAL

IX. WEDDING LITURGY

Introduction

Dear Engaged Couple:

Marriage is a profound step. It is a response to God's call to holiness and love. In addition to being a time of great joy, preparing to respond to God's call to married life is a time for reflection, study, and above all, prayer. The clergy, staff, and members of Nativity Parish are ready to help you in this time of preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage and for living out God's call.

This pamphlet contains an overview of information concerning the process of preparing for marriage. In addition, guidelines are offered regarding the marriage liturgy itself. You need to review this information carefully. Since marriage is a response to God's call and your wedding ceremony takes place with the Christian community, the values that you express through your wedding should be those shared by that community in which you have chosen to be married. We offer these guidelines and all we can do to help to make this day joyful for all. We share your joy as you plan your Christian wedding, and we pray that your marriage may be a holy and happy one.

---The Clergy and Parish Office Staff

General Information

After your first meeting with the priest or deacon who is preparing you, a date for the marriage will be confirmed by the priest/deacon. Staff members cannot set dates with you without a priest or deacon's approval.

Required Documents

- ◆ Baptismal Certificates – Catholic Christians must have a Baptismal certificate from their parish of Baptism issued within the past six months. Non-Catholic Christians must have a certificate or letter proving baptism in their church.
- ◆ Affidavits of Freedom to Marry – two for each person. Your priest or deacon will provide the forms.
- ◆ Marriage License – available at Virginia circuit courthouses.

A Couple may invite a visiting priest to celebrate their wedding at Nativity. They should ask the priest to celebrate their wedding, and if he agrees, then let us know, and as pastor would give that priest permission and delegation. The priest must be in good standing in their diocese or religious community. It will then be determined if that priest or a Nativity parish priest will do their marriage preparation.

Liturgical Guidelines

Music – The music for your celebration should be carefully chosen, keeping in mind the solemnity of the occasion. The following are guidelines for wedding music at Nativity Catholic Church. The music must be suitable for use in the Catholic Church. Music is the assembly's sung prayer. Therefore, no secular music may be used. The sung liturgical music must invite the participation of all present and not merely entertain. It is your responsibility to contact the Director of Music to arrange a music planning session. Nativity Catholic Church will provide a pianist/organist for your wedding. The stipend the music director receives helps to support her livelihood. It is strongly encouraged to have a cantor from the parish to sing for your wedding since they are familiar with the appropriate music selections and with protocol. All outside singers must have the approval of the Director of Music, and the singer must have proper vocal training and some familiarity with Catholic liturgy. While the

piano/organist will be the primary instrument at your wedding, instrumentalists such as harp, strings, flute, or trumpet can make a nice addition to your wedding liturgy. Instrumentalists can be contracted through the Director of Music or arranged by you privately. All instrumentalists are subject to final approval. Many couples choose to make programs and worship aids for their guests, especially for those with non-Catholic guests. We encourage you to make a program for your wedding which will list the order of ceremony and the wedding party. Sample programs are available upon request, and programs can be done through a professional printing company or on your own. Contact our Director of Music, Carole Fischl, for further details about music.

Photography – The church building and the sanctuary (the area surrounding the altar) are the most sacred spaces for the community, and a spirit of respect and quiet will always be maintained. Photographers and videographers are not permitted at any time to be in the Sanctuary, including the steps. They also should remain behind the congregation so as not to cause distraction during the Mass or ceremony. Video cameras are to be stationary, remaining on a tripod. Flashes or special lighting for video may not be used during the Mass. After the Mass, if the couple has chosen to take pictures instead of a receiving line, flashes may be used. Please limit photo taking to 30 minutes after the wedding.

Unity Candle –If you wish to have one, we suggest having it at your reception. A unity candle is not an official part of the wedding liturgy.

Aisle Runner – Because the central aisle is marble, runners are dangerous and, therefore, not permitted. A cloth one can snag heels, and a plastic one is very slippery on the marble.

Flowers – Are permitted respecting the liturgical season of the wedding date.

Church Stipends and Music Fees – It is suggested that a \$250 monetary free will offering be made for the use of the Church. If altar servers from the parish are used, it is customary to provide each a stipend of \$10.00. The basic fees for our Director of Music are \$200.00, Cantors are \$150.00/each, and a harpist is \$175. A stipend for the wedding coordinator at the parish is \$50. Please bring the payment for each person in a separate envelope to the wedding rehearsal.

Stipend for your Priest or Deacon – It is customary to provide a stipend for the priest or deacon celebrating your wedding. The stipend is usually \$200, the same as the church donation. Your priest or deacon spends many hours preparing for your wedding. This stipend is optional and is your free-will gift.

Visiting Clergy – Visiting priests or deacons are welcome. Anyone who presides at a wedding is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia to be registered to perform weddings. Please call your county courthouse for details. Non-Catholic clergy are welcome to participate in the ceremony as fully as possible. Please speak to the priest or deacon who will preside at your ceremony to discuss their involvement.

Rice/Bird Seed/Confetti/Flower Petals/Leaves – Because of the safety hazard to people and the difficulty of cleanup, these and similar items are not permitted. Bubbles outside are permitted.

Other Questions – We are glad to help with any questions you might have. On the reverse is a list of useful phone numbers.



Important Telephone Numbers

Nativity Catholic Church (main number) 703-455-2400
6400 Nativity Lane
Burke, Virginia, 22015

Priests (main number + extension)
Rev. Robert C. Cilinski, Pastor x123
Rev. Tony Bennett, Parochial Vicar x112
Rev. Ed Bresnahan, Parochial Vicar x158
Rev. Cedric P. Wilson x124

Permanent Deacon
Deacon Richard Kelly x128
deaconrfk@aol.com

Wedding Coordinator
Tina Ward 703-969-9947
wedding@nativityburke.org

Organist/Co-Director of Music
Carole Fischl 703-644-1275
capfischl@aol.com

Marriage Licenses 703-691-7320

Office of the Clerk
Attn: Marriage License Copies
Circuit Court of Fairfax County
4110 Chain Bridge Road
Fairfax, VA 22030
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/circuit/marriage/marriage-license-information>