

## Preparing for Marriage

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Q. Who can have their wedding celebrated at St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill?

A. Catholics who live within the parish territorial boundaries. The boundaries are: 11<sup>th</sup> St NE to East Capitol St to 1<sup>st</sup> St NE; 1<sup>st</sup> St NE to Independence Ave SE; Independence Ave SE to 1<sup>st</sup> St SW; 1<sup>st</sup> St SW to G St NW; G St NW to 11<sup>th</sup> St NE. A map of our parish boundaries can be found in the "About" section of this website.

#### Q. Can a Catholic married in a civil ceremony be remarried in the church?

A. A Catholic can have their civil marriage validated by the Church; this would be done in consultation with the parish priest or deacon.

#### Q. What is required for a Catholic to marry someone of another religious tradition?

A. The Catholic must obtain a canonical dispensation issued by the Archdiocese of Washington. This can be arranged through the parish priest or deacon at the time of sacramental preparation.

#### Q. What is the proper liturgy for an interfaith marriage?

A. The Church respects the sensitivity of an interfaith situation and provides for the wedding to be celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word, and not a Mass.

#### Q. Can we have a priest or deacon from outside St. Joseph's officiate at the celebration?

A. Normally, this is not encouraged, as preference should be given to the parish priest or deacon at St. Joseph's as representative of the parish community. But, if visiting clergy is requested and the pastor approves, any clergy from outside the city of Washington, DC must have a DC license to officiate, and if outside the Archdiocese of Washington, the proper canonical credentials and delegation of the pastor.

#### Q. Can clergy other than Catholic clergy, such as a minister or rabbi, officiate at the celebration?

A. The minister who officiates must be a Catholic priest or deacon; but ministers from other religious traditions may participate with the approval of the pastor.

#### Q. What details are involved in planning the liturgical celebration?

A. The specific details will be covered in discussions with the priest or deacon and the parish musician. A special planning booklet and checklist will be provided to the bridal couple for this purpose.

#### Q. Can I use musicians other than those at St. Joseph's?

A. Priority is given to our parish musicians, but other arrangements might be made after consultation with our parish Director of Music. If other musicians are used, our parish musicians must still be paid the normal stipend.

**Q. What is the policy on decorating the church?**

A. Our parish has its own flower committee which works with the bridal couple to arrange for flowers. Customarily the floral arrangements remain in the church after the celebration to make a visible connection between the wedding and the parish community. In so doing, the cost of the flowers is considered a tax-deductible donation.

**Q. Are there any restrictions on when the wedding can be celebrated at St. Joseph's?**

A. Weddings are usually celebrated at 3:00 pm on Saturdays. For other times, please consult with the pastor. Weddings are normally discouraged during the seasons of Advent and Lent (especially Holy Week) as inconsistent with their liturgical nature.

**Q. What is required to prepare for the wedding?**

A. Attending two or three meetings with the parish priest or deacon, participating in a special sacramental preparation program, completing the prenuptial questionnaire and complying with the civil license requirement.

**Q. Can the wedding be celebrated somewhere other than at St. Joseph's Church?**

A. For two Catholics, Church norms require the celebration to be in a Catholic church as the focus of our sacramental life. If you wish to have your wedding at a Catholic church other than St. Joseph's, then you will need a letter of good standing to be given to the other church's pastor. When a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic, they may receive permission to celebrate the wedding in a non-Catholic church. Please consult with the pastor about special circumstances.

**Q. What costs are usually involved in weddings at St. Joseph's?**

A. The donation for use of the parish church is \$1500 and is tax-deductible. For couples completing their preparation work at St. Joseph's Church for a wedding that is scheduled to be celebrated at another church, a donation of \$250 is customary to compensate for the pastor's time and use of parish facilities. If flowers are done through our parish and remain in the church, the cost is also considered a donation and therefore tax-deductible. The cost is based on the type and amount of flowers that you request. The fees for our musicians are considered payment for personal services and not tax-deductible. The fees for the organist and for the cantor are required whether or not you use our musicians. Please check with the music director for more information on music selections. Giving a stipend to the priest or deacon who celebrates the wedding is up to the couple.