

Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel Wedding Policies

Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement! All of us at the Basilica are glad that you are considering celebrating your wedding in this sacred place. Of course, the Basilica is not a “venue” as are reception halls or restaurants; it is not rented; it is a house of worship and a community of faith. Consequently, what follows are specific policies and requirements that ensure the appropriate conduct of weddings and associated events on the Basilica campus.

Sacramental Preparation

You are responsible for completing marriage preparation with the clergy of your home parish and with the express permission of your Catholic pastor. Preparation must be done in accordance with the requirements of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee and using the forms of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee. The clergy of the Basilica Parish are available to facilitate preparation and officiate at weddings held in the Basilica only for couples who are actively registered at the Basilica. You should not register at the Basilica for this purpose.

Regardless of where the preparation takes place, the requirements of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee for marriage preparation must be observed. All paperwork should be submitted on the forms of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee. Full information and the forms can be found at the Marriage Preparation page of the diocesan website, www.ptdiocese.org/marriageprep.

All paperwork with supporting documents must be submitted to the Diocesan Tribunal no later than 45 days prior to your celebration. **Failure to comply with this may result in delay or even cancellation of your wedding.** If you are being prepared outside the territory of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, the proper protocol is for the clergy responsible for your preparation to submit the completed file to the local tribunal or chancery in time for that office to review and send the file to the Tribunal of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.

Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is normally held on Friday afternoon or evening for Saturday weddings and is an important part of the preparation for the ceremony. The parish wedding coordinator will conduct the wedding rehearsal and will give a brief overview of the ceremony to help all concerned understand the prayerful nature of the celebration. Only those directly involved in the ceremony should be included in the actual rehearsal in the Basilica—others should be directed to meet you at the rehearsal dinner site.

Those who should be present at your rehearsal in the Basilica include the bride and groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, and ring bearers (if being used), as well as any family members who will have a unique role in the ceremony or will be escorted formally to their seats (parents and/or grandparents). A responsible adult must accompany any children who are in the wedding party at all times. We ask that you require all members of your wedding party to

be present for the rehearsal and kindly remind them that they must arrive on time. **Modesty with regard to dress is required not only at the wedding but at the rehearsal as well.**

We suggest that you ask everyone to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled time. Rehearsals are allocated a total of one hour, and we strictly adhere to the schedule. Rehearsals that begin late risk losing adequate rehearsal time. The rehearsal itself is not the time for discussion and decision-making. All decisions on the form of the procession, the choice of readers/ring bearers, etc., are to be made beforehand and discussed with the wedding coordinator at the meeting two months prior to the wedding.

As indicated below, the rehearsal does not begin until the wedding coordinator has received the marriage license. Participants should be made aware of the inevitable parking challenges in downtown Pensacola during the afternoon and evening. Most downtown parking now requires payment. A car with a valid disabled tag may park in any downtown city parking space without charge at any time.

Wedding Liturgy

The Catholic Church celebrates weddings in keeping with either the “Rite of Marriage within the Mass” (for weddings in which both bride and groom are Catholic) or the “Rite of Marriage within the Liturgy of the Word.” **Both are Sacred Celebrations.** All Catholic Liturgical requirements pertinent to weddings will be observed in full at the Basilica for every wedding.

Both rites listed above include the proclamation of Sacred Scripture. Sacred Scripture is essential to every wedding. Readers chosen by the couple from among family or friends ought to be selected for the clarity of their speech and their ability to project their voice clearly and confidently. Often, there are family members or friends who are readers at their parishes. The proclamation of Sacred Scripture is an important dimension of the Liturgy, and the best possible proclaimers are to be chosen for this role.

Approximately two months prior to your wedding, you will meet with your coordinator and the Basilica’s Director of Sacred Music in order to select Scripture readings, music selections, and vow formats. Normally the person preparing you for marriage will provide you with materials to facilitate your selection of options for the celebration of your wedding. Personal vows are not permitted to take the place of the Church’s vow formula, nor can they be added to the vow formula. The unity candle is not permitted.

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain from the State of Florida a valid marriage license, issued no more than 60 days before the ceremony and no fewer than 72 hours before the ceremony. The license is to be hand-delivered to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal. Failure to do so will postpone the rehearsal until the license is presented. No wedding can take place without a license. Only valid Florida licenses are permitted.

Music

Every aspect of your wedding celebration has as its primary purpose the engagement of those assembled in active prayer and worship. For this reason, only sacred music is appropriate to the occasion. Furthermore, all sacred music used within a wedding celebration must also be liturgical, that is, it must contribute to the active participation and prayer of the assembly. As a result, not all sacred music is appropriate to the celebration, and not every song is appropriate to every moment. To ensure the best possible liturgical experience, therefore, all selection and placement of music must be approved by our Director of Sacred Music.

If there is to be music of any kind included in the wedding liturgy, the Basilica requires the participation of the Director of Sacred Music at all weddings, including those at which a Nuptial Mass is not celebrated. **The Basilica organist is the only person to play the organ and keyboard.** His services are included in the offering requested for music to be included at the wedding. At a minimum, the responsorial psalm and the Gospel Alleluia will be sung by the cantor. If desired, the cantor will also lead the assembly in other appropriate singing, as well as offer solo meditation pieces. During the ceremony, cantors are located in the choir loft next to the organist.

Subject to the review and approval of the Director of Sacred Music, you are free to engage outside soloists for non-congregational singing, as well as additional musicians, to supplement the services of the Basilica organist. However, please do not contact any outside soloists or musicians without first consulting with the Director of Sacred Music. Outside cantors and musicians are guests of the Basilica and, as such, are to follow the directions of the Basilica Director of Sacred Music. Additional musicians are responsible for providing, as necessary, appropriate music to the Basilica organist. Also, if the musicians have not worked before with the Basilica organist, it may be necessary for there to be a music rehearsal.

All musicians and cantors, other than the Basilica organist provided by the church, are to be considered independent contractors. Their fees are NOT included in the offering you make to the parish. Although the Basilica Director of Sacred Music may be able to assist you with referrals, all arrangements and payments concerning outside musicians will be your responsibility.

In order to encourage participation at their ceremony, couples will often choose to create a worship aid (program) for their celebration. The couple will submit their selections for Scripture readings and music to be included in the worship aid. You may choose to use the pre-formatted worship aid created by the Basilica office, which is included in your wedding offering, or one of the upgrade options, which you can select when reserving your date. Failure to provide accurate information at least 10 days prior to the wedding may result in programs being printed without certain elements. Your coordinator will provide you with samples at your meeting, or you can view them on the parish website. **If the Basilica's template is not used, the language regarding reception of Holy Communion must be a part of programs created by the couple for use at any wedding that includes a Nuptial Mass.**

Decorations

Because of the historic and religious significance of the Basilica of St. Michael and the wedding liturgy, it is important that all church furnishings be respected. No furnishings are to be moved or altered by anyone other than the Basilica staff. All decorations and furnishings placed by the Basilica of St. Michael must be left in place. Your officiant is welcome to bring vestments or to use the vestments provided by the Basilica. If he chooses to use the Basilica vestments, they will be provided to him by the wedding coordinator.

We require the use of the Basilica florist for the church flowers. If you choose to purchase the flowers for your wedding, you will be put in contact with the Basilica flower manager. The flowers will remain in the Basilica following the wedding. Otherwise, the flowers that have been chosen by the parish will be used. The Basilica is an active parish. Due to liturgical seasons, at various times throughout the year the flowers and decorations of the parish will remain. No additional flowers may be brought into the Basilica except those carried by the wedding party and/or a bouquet to be presented to the Blessed Mother. If the Bride and Groom wish to purchase flowers for the venue, those should be taken away at the end of the wedding.

Rice, confetti, bubbles, seeds, petals, etc. are not allowed inside or outside the church. Aisle runners are not allowed under any circumstances at any time. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the forfeiture of your security deposit. The bride and groom are responsible for their guests while in the Basilica, so be sure to make them aware of this restriction and its consequences.

Punctuality

Your access to the Basilica begins 90 minutes before the start of your ceremony. There are often events scheduled before and after your reservation; therefore, it is imperative that the wedding begin on time. Weddings with a Nuptial Mass beginning more than 20 minutes late will be restricted to a Liturgy of the Word and Exchange of Vows.

Children

Any children must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times. Children should not be permitted to run or play in the church but should be expected to respect the sacred nature of the Basilica as a house of prayer.

Behavior & Decorum

Please make certain that the members of your wedding party are aware that, while in the Basilica, they are in a church—a sacred space. When in God’s house, all, regardless of their faith belief, must show their respect by refraining from loud talking, phone use, or any unnecessary or excessive noise. Proper reverence should be observed at all times while in the Basilica. Proper respect and decorum are required at all times on parish premises. At no time is eating, drinking, or smoking allowed in or around the Basilica or rectory (parish office). Alcohol and individuals under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are not allowed on Basilica property.

Failure to abide by these guidelines will result in the offending individual(s) being required to leave the Basilica premises. Failure to leave upon request will delay or cancel the rehearsal and/or wedding. Basilica staff will not hesitate to involve the intervention of law enforcement as needed. **Anyone required to leave the premises at the rehearsal will not be admitted to the wedding.**

Appropriate Attire

A wedding in the Catholic Church is a sacred ceremony, and, as such, attire for the bride and bridesmaids must be modest: Bare shoulders and backs, visible cleavage, high slits in dresses, or decidedly tight dresses are not appropriate for the sacredness of a Church Liturgy wedding. Attire for all participants must be modest.

Photography/Videography

Given the sacred nature of the marriage celebration, photographers and videographers must be careful not to disrupt or distract those in attendance. Couples are responsible for communicating these policies to their photographer and/or videographer and for providing them with the attached sheet for the photographer to sign and return. Failure to abide by these guidelines will lead to restrictions on the photographer and/or videographer for Basilica events.

Professionals are to follow the directives of the Wedding Coordinator at all times concerning where they may stand or move, as well as for the placement of equipment. Professionals must not be conspicuous nor obstruct any of the proceedings. At no time should they stand in the center aisle or enter the sanctuary. No equipment is allowed in the sanctuary or in the aisles.

Video cameras may be stationed near the side doors and/or the choir loft, provided they remain immobile for the entire ceremony. Once the vows are completed, no further movement or flash photography is allowed until the final blessing. The Basilica's streaming services may be utilized, and a recording of the ceremony provided, in accordance with the selections made at the time of reserving the Basilica for a wedding.

For an additional \$1,000, you may choose the Basilica's wedding video package that includes additional camera angles. (**The same access to these exclusive camera positions is not allowed by third-party videographers or photographers.*) This add-on video service includes "behind the scenes" video of the bride and groom, captured prior to the ceremony. (*A sample of our wedding productions can be found on the website.*)

Time permitting, the Basilica may allow pictures to be taken immediately after the conclusion of the wedding. This presumes that the ceremony has begun and concluded on time. Out of respect for the church staff, photographers must complete their work within 30 minutes. This may not be possible if the ceremony does not begin on time and end on time.

Historic Nature of the Basilica

The Basilica is a historic building. There may be times when unforeseen circumstances force us to attend to maintenance and other repairs, which in extreme cases may involve the possibility of scaffolding or other materials that cannot be removed.

Offering

In order to cover the costs associated with the use of our Basilica church, we request an offering based on your relationship with the Basilica. The specific amounts will be discussed with the engaged couple in anticipation of signing the agreement for use of the Basilica's facilities. For all couples, a non-refundable deposit is required in order to secure your wedding date. The balance is due no less than 45 days prior to the celebration.

Refunds

If it is deemed necessary for the Basilica of St. Michael to cancel a wedding due to circumstances beyond its control (e.g., hurricane, unforeseeable major church repair), we will refund payments made to the church.

WEDDING POLICIES ACKNOWLEDGMENT

After you have read all of the policies for weddings at the basilica, there are some significant points to emphasize. Please read carefully and sign.

1. Keeping in mind the sacred nature of every wedding, dresses of the bride and attendants must be of modest cut with no visible cleavage, bare backs or shoulders, high slits, or decidedly tight dresses that may cause difficulty in being seated.
2. Pre-wedding communication with the coordinators is with the bride and groom only. Phone numbers and email addresses of the wedding coordinators are not to be given to others unless expressly invited to do so.
3. Outside wedding coordinators/planners must be informed by the couple, well before the rehearsal, that the direction of the rehearsal and the wedding are the duty of the Basilica Wedding Coordinators.
4. There are two options for flowers in the church:
 1. The couple may choose to use the flowers that have been selected by the parish for the church for that weekend.
 2. The couple may choose to purchase their own selection from the church florist, through the church flower manager, which will remain in the church after the wedding. No other flowers, other than those carried by the wedding party or a bouquet for the Bride to present to the Blessed Mother, may be brought into the Basilica.
5. Again, keeping in mind that your wedding is a sacred celebration, decorum is expected during the wedding and recessional. No dips, twirls, hooting, hollering, etc.
6. The marriage file must be received by the Tribunal of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee at least 45 days prior to the wedding along with any outstanding portion of your offering for the wedding.
7. The Florida marriage license **MUST** be provided to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal. The rehearsal cannot begin, and the wedding cannot take place without the license.
8. We are to read the photography guidelines and present them to the photographer/videographer to be read, signed, and returned to the wedding coordinator.

I have read and fully agree to cooperate with the above-listed rules. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines may result in withholding of the deposit and/or cancellation of this wedding at the Basilica.

Bride Name (PRINT)

Groom Name (PRINT)

Bride Signature

Groom Signature

Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel
Guidelines for Photographers/Videographers

This form must be signed by the contracted photographer/videographer and returned to the wedding coordinator at least 10 days prior to the wedding.

1. Photographers and videographers are to follow the directions of the Wedding Coordinator at all times concerning where they may stand or move.
2. Photographers and videographers must not be conspicuous nor obstruct any of the proceedings. At no time should they stand in the center aisle or enter the sanctuary. No equipment is allowed in the sanctuary or in the aisles.
3. Video cameras may be stationed near the side doors and/or the choir loft, provided they remain immobile for the entire ceremony.
4. Once the vows are completed, no distracting movement or flash photography is allowed until the final blessing.
5. Time permitting, the Wedding Coordinator may allow pictures to be taken immediately after the conclusion of the wedding. Out of respect for the church staff, photographers must complete their work within 30 minutes. This may not be possible if the ceremony does not begin on time and end on time.
6. Photographers and videographers need to be considerate of each other when positioning themselves for picture taking. They are not to obstruct each other's views.

I have read the above guidelines and agree that my staff and I will comply with them.

Photographer/Videographer Signature

Photographer/Videographer Company Name (PRINT)