



BASILICA
OF ST. MICHAEL
— THE ARCHANGEL —

WEDDING POLICIES & GUIDELINES

2027-2028

A guide for couples preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Welcome to the Basilica

Congratulations on your engagement! All of us at the Basilica are glad that you are considering celebrating your wedding in this sacred place. The Basilica is not a wedding “venue” in the ordinary sense; it is a house of worship and a community of faith. These policies and requirements are intended to preserve the sacred character of the church and to help your wedding be celebrated with dignity, reverence, and joy.

PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE CAREFULLY

The bride and groom are responsible for understanding these policies, communicating them to the wedding party and vendors, and returning the required acknowledgment forms.

At a Glance

Requirement	Basilica Policy
Marriage preparation	Completed through the clergy of your home parish and according to the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.
Marriage file	Must reach the Diocesan Tribunal no later than 45 days before the wedding.
Planning meeting	Approximately two months before the wedding with the wedding coordinator and Director of Music Ministry.
Florida marriage license	Hand-delivered to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal.
Rehearsal	Normally Friday afternoon/evening for a Saturday wedding; one hour is allotted.
Church access	Begins 90 minutes before the ceremony.
Photographer form	Signed and returned at least 10 days before the wedding.
Final balance	Due no less than 45 days before the wedding.

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 completed in accordance with the requirements of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.

The clergy of the Basilica Parish are available to facilitate preparation only for couples who are actively registered at the Basilica. Couples should not register at the Basilica solely for the purpose of marriage preparation or a wedding.

Regardless of where preparation takes place, all requirements of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee for marriage preparation must be observed. Full information and diocesan forms are available through the diocesan Marriage Preparation resources.

45-DAY DEADLINE

All marriage paperwork and supporting documents must be submitted to the Diocesan Tribunal no later than 45 days before the wedding. Failure to meet this deadline may result in delay or cancellation.

NOTE: If preparation takes place outside the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, the clergy responsible for your preparation should submit the completed marriage file to their local tribunal in sufficient time for review and forwarding to the Tribunal of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.

The Wedding Liturgy

The Catholic Church celebrates weddings according to either the Rite of Marriage within Mass, or the Rite of Marriage within the Liturgy of the Word. Both are sacred liturgical celebrations, and all Catholic liturgical requirements pertinent to weddings are observed at the Basilica.

Sacred Scripture is essential to every wedding. Readers selected from among family or friends should be chosen for clarity of speech, confidence, and the ability to proclaim the Word of God well.

Approximately two months before the wedding, the couple will meet with the clergy preparing them and the Basilica's Director of Music Ministry to select Scripture readings, music, and the approved form of the vows.

- **Personal vows may not replace or be added to the Church's approved formula of consent.**
- **A unity candle is not permitted.**

Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is normally held on Friday afternoon or evening for a Saturday wedding. The clergy conducts the rehearsal and provides an overview of the ceremony so that all involved understand its prayerful and liturgical character. The wedding coordinator will be available to assist.

Only those directly involved in the ceremony should participate in the rehearsal inside the Basilica. Those who should be present include the bride and groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, ring bearers if used, and family members who have a unique role or will be formally escorted to their seats.

- A responsible adult must accompany children in the wedding party at all times.
- All members of the wedding party should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time.
- One hour is allotted for the rehearsal. A late start reduces the available rehearsal time.
- Decisions about the procession, readers, ring bearers, and similar matters should be made before the rehearsal and discussed with the wedding coordinator at the planning meeting.
- Modest attire is required at the rehearsal as well as at the wedding.

Because downtown Pensacola parking can be challenging, all participants should allow sufficient time for parking. Most downtown parking requires payment. A vehicle with a valid disabled parking tag may park in any downtown city parking space without charge. A few spots will be available behind the church.

Florida Marriage License

It is the couple's responsibility to obtain a valid Florida marriage license. The license must be issued no more than 60 days before the ceremony and no fewer than 72 hours before the ceremony.

BRING THE LICENSE TO THE REHEARSAL

The Florida marriage license must be hand-delivered to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal. The rehearsal will not begin until the license is presented, and **no wedding can take place without a valid Florida license.**

Punctuality

Access to the Basilica begins 90 minutes before the ceremony. Because other parish events may be scheduled before or after the wedding, the celebration must begin on time.

LATE NUPTIAL MASSES

A wedding scheduled as a Nuptial Mass that begins more than 20 minutes late will be restricted to a Liturgy of the Word and Exchange of Vows.

Sacred Music

Every aspect of the wedding celebration has as its primary purpose the active prayer and worship of those assembled. For this reason, only sacred music appropriate to the liturgy may be used. All music selections and their placement within the liturgy must be approved by the Basilica's Director of Music Ministry.

If music of any kind is included in the wedding liturgy, the Basilica requires the participation of the Director of Music Ministry.

Couples do not contact outside musicians before consulting the Director of Music Ministry.

- Outside cantors and musicians are guests of the Basilica and follow the direction of the Director of Music Ministry.
- Additional musicians will be discussed during the meeting with the Director of Music Ministry
- Outside musicians and cantors are independent contractors; their fees are not included in the parish wedding offering.

Flowers & Decorations

Because of the historic and religious significance of the Basilica and the sacred character of the wedding liturgy, all church furnishings must be respected. No furnishings may be moved or altered except by Basilica staff, and parish decorations already in place must remain.

The Basilica florist is required for church flowers. Couples who choose to purchase flowers will be placed in contact with the Basilica flower manager. Flowers purchased for the church remain in the Basilica after the wedding. Otherwise, the parish's existing floral arrangements will be used.

- Seasonal liturgical flowers and decorations remain in place.
- No additional flowers may be brought into the Basilica except those carried by the wedding party and/or a bouquet presented to the Blessed Mother.
- Rice, confetti, bubbles, seeds, petals, and similar materials are prohibited inside and outside the church.
- Aisle runners are not permitted under any circumstances.

The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring that their guests understand these restrictions. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the security deposit.

Reverence, Decorum & Conduct

The Basilica is a church and sacred space. Everyone present, regardless of religious background, is expected to respect the house of God by refraining from loud conversation, unnecessary noise, and inappropriate phone use. Proper reverence is expected at all times.

- Eating, drinking, and smoking are not permitted in or around the Basilica or the parish office.
- **Alcohol is not permitted on Basilica property.**
- **Individuals under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are not permitted on Basilica property.**

A person who refuses to comply with these guidelines may be required to leave the premises. Failure to leave when requested may delay or cancel the rehearsal or wedding. Basilica staff may involve law enforcement when necessary. Anyone required to leave during the rehearsal will not be admitted to the wedding.

THE RECESSIONAL REMAINS PART OF A SACRED CELEBRATION

Decorum is expected during the wedding and recessional. Dips, twirls, hooting, hollering, and similar behavior are not appropriate inside the Basilica.

Children

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

Appropriate Attire

A Catholic wedding is a sacred liturgical celebration. Attire for the bride, bridesmaids, and all participants must reflect modesty and respect for the church.

- Bare backs or shoulders are not appropriate.
- Visible cleavage is not appropriate.
- High slits or decidedly tight dresses are not appropriate.

Couples are responsible for communicating these expectations to the wedding party well in advance of the rehearsal and wedding. Please refer to the Basilica's Wedding Attire policy and visual aid found on our website.

Wedding Coordinators

Pre-wedding communication with the Basilica wedding coordinators is ordinarily conducted directly with the bride and groom. Coordinator phone numbers and email addresses should not be distributed to others unless the coordinator expressly invites such communication.

If an outside wedding planner or coordinator is engaged, **they have no authority when it comes to the wedding rehearsal or the wedding liturgy.** The couple must make clear to their outside coordinator that the Basilica wedding coordinators and clergy direct the rehearsal and all aspects of the wedding that take place in the church.

Photography & Videography

Photography and videography are welcome insofar as they respect the sacred nature of the marriage celebration and do not distract from the liturgy. Couples are responsible for providing their photographer and/or videographer with the Basilica's guidelines and ensuring that the required form is signed and returned.

- Professionals must follow the wedding coordinator's directions concerning where they may stand or move and where equipment may be placed.
- Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary.
- No equipment is permitted in the sanctuary or aisles.
- Video cameras may be stationed near the side doors and/or choir loft, provided they remain immobile during the ceremony.
- After the vows are completed, no distracting movement or flash photography is permitted until the final blessing.

Historic Nature of the Basilica

The Basilica is a historic building. From time to time, unforeseen maintenance or repairs may be necessary and, in extreme circumstances, may involve scaffolding or other materials that cannot be removed for a wedding.

Wedding Offering & Deposit

To help cover costs associated with the use of the Basilica church, an offering is requested based on the couple's relationship with the Basilica. Specific amounts are discussed with the engaged couple before the agreement for use of the Basilica is signed.

- A non-refundable deposit is required to secure the wedding date.
- The remaining balance is due no less than 45 days before the wedding.

Refunds

If the Basilica of St. Michael must cancel a wedding because of circumstances beyond its control, such as a hurricane or unforeseeable major church repair, payments made to the church will be refunded.

Wedding Preparation Timeline & Checklist

This checklist reorganizes the deadlines contained in the Basilica policies so that couples can see the preparation process at a glance.

As soon as possible

- Begin marriage preparation with the clergy of your home parish.
- Confirm the express permission of your Catholic pastor when applicable.
- Review these Basilica policies and communicate key expectations to the wedding party.

Approximately 2 months before

- Meet with the Basilica's Rector and Director of Music Ministry.
- Finalize Scripture readings, music selections, vow format, procession, readers, and ring bearers.
- Confirm plans for flowers, and photography/videography.

At least 45 days before

- Ensure the complete marriage file and supporting documents have been submitted to the Diocesan Tribunal.
- Pay any outstanding balance of the wedding offering.
- Receive the final sign off from the Basilica's Rector.

At least 10 days before

- Return the signed photographer/videographer guidelines.

Before the rehearsal

- Obtain a valid Florida marriage license within the state's required time frame.
- Remind all rehearsal participants to arrive 15 minutes early and to dress modestly.

At the rehearsal

- Hand-deliver the Florida marriage license to the wedding coordinator.
- Follow the Basilica coordinator's direction; one hour is allotted.

Wedding day

- Remember that access to the Basilica begins 90 minutes before the ceremony.
- Begin on time and maintain reverence throughout the celebration and recessional.

Wedding Policies Acknowledgment

After reading the complete policies, please review the following significant points carefully. By signing below, the bride and groom acknowledge their responsibility to cooperate with these requirements.

1. The attire of the bride and attendants must be modest, with no visible cleavage, bare backs or shoulders, high slits, or decidedly tight dresses. We will comply with the Wedding Attire policy.
2. Pre-wedding communication with the Basilica parish office is with the bride and groom only unless otherwise invited.
3. Outside wedding planners must understand that the Basilica wedding coordinators, and clergy direct the rehearsal and the church wedding.
4. Church flowers are either the parish's existing flowers or flowers purchased through the Basilica florist/flower manager; outside church floral arrangements are not permitted except flowers carried by the wedding party or a bouquet for the Blessed Mother.
5. Decorum is expected during the wedding and recessional; dips, twirls, hooting, hollering, and similar behavior are not appropriate.
6. The marriage file must be received by the Tribunal of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee at least 45 days before the wedding, together with any outstanding portion of the wedding offering.
7. **The valid Florida marriage license** must be presented to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal.
The rehearsal and wedding cannot proceed without it.
8. The photography/videography guidelines must be given to the contracted professional, signed, and returned to the wedding coordinator.

I/We have read these Wedding Policies and Guidelines and agree to cooperate with them.

I/We understand that failure to comply may result in forfeiture of the deposit and/or cancellation of the wedding at the Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel.

Bride Name (PRINT)	Groom Name (PRINT)
Bride Signature	Groom Signature
Date	Date

Guidelines for Photographers & Videographers

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

1. Follow the directions of the Wedding Coordinator at all times concerning where you may stand or move.
2. Do not obstruct the proceedings. At no time may you 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 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 photographs immediately after the wedding. All photography must be completed within 45 minutes; this may not be possible if the ceremony begins or ends late.
6. Pictures with the Bride & Groom and the clergy will be first due to clergy's tight schedule.
7. Photographers and videographers must be considerate of one another and must not obstruct each other's views.

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

Bride/Groom Name	Wedding Date
Photographer/Videographer Name	Company Name
Signature	Date
Phone	Email
Received By	Date Received