Welcome!

Congratulations on your engagement! Planning for your wedding is a very important time in your lives and there are many details involved. St. Joseph's is pleased to share in this happy time of preparation and guide you through the process which will not only be spiritual and personal, but practical as well. Our parish is happy to welcome both parishioners and non-parishioners to celebrate their weddings in our church. We will make every effort to consider your personal wishes but we ask you to respect our policies and guidelines outlined below.

1. Initial Arrangements

Your planning process begins by contacting the parish office at least 6 months prior to your requested wedding date. At this time the parish staff will take some information and determine if the requested date and time is available. The date will tentatively be added to the parish calendar but you are strongly advised not to make any additional arrangements for your wedding until it has been confirmed that there has been a priest or deacon assigned to your wedding.

A priest of deacon will be assigned to your wedding unless you have made a specific request for a visiting priest.

A priest or deacon who is a friend of your family is welcome to preside at your wedding. Normally it is the responsibility of the visiting presider to complete all the necessary paperwork, ensure that diocesan policies regarding marriage are fulfilled, facilitate the planning of the ceremony and preside at the rehearsal.
Again, please be aware that your date must be confirmed by your priest or deacon. Any arrangements made prior to this confirmation are really made at your own risk.
Even if a visiting priest is being used, you will still have a brief meeting with one of our priests to go over guidelines and answer any questions.

2. First Meeting with the Priest or Deacon

The priest or deacon assigned to your wedding will make contact with you to schedule the first meeting. If for some reason you have not heard from the priest or deacon within a week or two, please contact the parish office. When you come to meet the priest or deacon for the first time, he will want to get to know you a little better, assess your readiness for marriage, and confirm the date and time of your wedding and rehearsal. He will also discuss other considerations such as marriage preparation and the policies and guidelines stated herein.

3. Documentation Needed

Proof of Baptism – A baptismal certificate is required of all Catholics. This certificate from the Church of baptism must be issued within six months of the date of your marriage. We cannot accept the original certificate which was issued at the time of your baptism or any photocopies of that certificate. All baptized Christians are asked to provide some evidence of baptism.

Letter of Permission – If neither the bride nor the groom are registered parishioners of St. Joseph's, then each must secure a letter of permission to be married at St. Joseph's from the pastor of the parish where each is registered.

Civil Marriage License – You are responsible for securing a marriage license from the Clerk of the Circuit Court here in Frederick at 100 W. Patrick Street. There is a waiting period of 48 hours after the application is made. The application fee is approximately $75. The license is valid for six (6) months. Please make sure the priest or deacon has the marriage license prior to the wedding rehearsal. The wedding cannot legally take place without the marriage license in hand. The license and Clerk of Court return envelope must be left at St. Joseph's after the ceremony for further processing.

Other Documentation Required – The priest or deacon presiding at your wedding can help you with any other documentation that may be required such as annulments, dispensations, etc.

4. Marriage Preparation

All marriages in the Catholic Church require that a preparation program be completed by the engaged couple prior to the wedding. In the Archdiocese of Baltimore this requirement can be met by participating in one of three programs described below. All three programs cover the same material, but are conducted in different forums. If personal circumstances necessitate, marriage preparation can take place in another diocese, but please consult with the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding.

Please let us know as soon as possible which option below you will be pursuing. Marriage preparation should be completed at least 3 months prior to the wedding date.

- **Three to Get Married** - A weekend course (not overnight) offered at *Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center* to help you start and carry forward the critical conversations needed to build a solid foundation for your marriage. The weekend includes a mixture of talks, questionnaires and time for conversation with your fiancé. Sunday Mass is included along with an opportunity for confession. Cost for the weekend is $375 per couple. Register at **www.ourladyofbethesda.org.**
- **Pre-Cana** - A large group forum led by 3-5 married couples and up to 10 engaged couples. Cost varies depending on the host parish and it is held at various parishes throughout the Archdiocese. Locations and dates can be found on the AOB website www.archbalt.org. Once on the site click on "Vocations", and then "Marriage Preparation". Should you choose Pre-Cana you again will need to make your own arrangements by registering with the AOB or one of the parishes that offer Pre-Cana The AOB website contains a wealth of information on the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony and may provide answers to many of your questions.
- **Sponsor Couple** - This is the only program offered at St. Joseph's. We have five trained sponsor couples. Should you choose this program, you will be assigned a sponsor couple based on their availability. Cost is $100, which covers the materials used in the program and administration of the Prepare-Enrich Inventory (Inventory intended to identify relationship strengths and growth areas to help tailor your marriage preparation to your specific situation.) Typically you will take the online Enrich-Prepare inventory online that identifies areas which may require emphasis prior to your marriage before your first session. Then 6 sessions are held at the sponsor couples home. Times and dates for these sessions are mutually agreed upon by both the engaged couple and the sponsor couple.

5. Church Guidelines

- ◊ **The church is available for two and a half hours, including the ceremony and possible pictures or receiving line.** Please contact the Parish Office for available dates and times.
- ◊ Rehearsals are typically scheduled the evening before the wedding date, depending on availability, and last for approximately 1 hour. Please schedule the rehearsal once you have had your first meeting with the priest or deacon who will be celebrating your wedding.
- ◊ St. Joseph's does not provide unity candle sets. You may purchase your own unity candle and keep it as a memento of your wedding day. These can be purchased through your florist or from a card store.
- ◊ The official witnesses of your wedding are the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor; they do not need to be Catholic.
- ◊ Photographs and/or video may be taken during the marriage ceremony but always inconspicuously and from outside the sanctuary area. Only the official photographer may take pictures at the ceremony. The use of auxiliary floodlights or flash is prohibited in the church. **Pictures are limited to 1/2 hour after the ceremony.** If you have any questions regarding photography/video during the ceremony, please contact us. As always, we request that the sacredness of the worship space be respected.
- ◊ Any flowers and decorations that are hung must not damage the church furnishings (i.e., no adhesives, etc.). The use of rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals (including artificial), etc., is not allowed inside or outside the church. The re-arrangement of sanctuary and church furnishings is not permitted. You may take your flowers with you at the conclusion of your wedding, or you may choose to donate them to the Church for weekend Masses. If you are going to donate your flowers, please notify us in the parish office at least one week prior to your wedding so that we do not order other flowers for the weekend.
- ◊ The Church will be decorated for the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and the harvest season. You may not at any time remove any seasonal decoration, flower arrangement, or banner from the Church. If your wedding is taking place during the Christmas or Easter seasons, you may choose not to order flowers for the sanctuary area since it will already be decorated. During the months of October and November, the sanctuary may be decorated with various fruits and vegetables and other seasonal decorations celebrating the harvest season. During the Lenten season (February, March, and the early part of April) there will be no flowers in keeping with the simplicity of the Lenten season. If you order flowers during these months, they must be simple and should be removed after your wedding.
- ◊ We ask that you designate someone to remove any keepsakes, packaging, or worship aides from the Church immediately following the celebration.

6. Liturgy Preparation

The officiating priest or deacon will work with you to prepare the wedding liturgy. Copies of the marriage-planning workbook, *Together for Life*, are available from the officiating priest or deacon and contain the readings as well as commentaries to assist you with your selections.

Couples may invite members of the family, the bridal party, or other close friends to proclaim the first and second readings from scripture and to announce the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful. The nature of the Word of God requires that anyone proclaiming be persons of faith and effective public speakers. They should be given copies of the readings in advance and must be present at the rehearsal.

If you are having a simple wedding ceremony, altar servers are not usually needed. If you have a family member or friend who is an altar server, you are most welcome to ask him or her to assist at your wedding.

Couples will be contacted by our Music Director to begin to plan the music for the wedding liturgy whether or not they will use our musical services. Couples meet with the director to discuss options and finalize plans several months prior to the wedding date. Keeping in mind the sacred nature of the liturgy, some musical selections are not appropriate for use in a church. All music selections must be approved by the Music Director, Jenn Irons, **music@sjcmmd.org**.

You are welcome to use worship aides for the ceremony/Mass but they are not provided by the parish office.

7. Wedding Fees

The fee for a wedding at St. Joseph's is $500 for parishioners and $1000 for non-parishioners. At St. Joseph's, a person is considered to be a parishioner if he/she or a parent has been registered here for at least one year prior to the initial inquiry about a wedding or marriage preparation. This amount pays for use of the church and a wedding coordinator at the rehearsal and the wedding. The church fees should be paid at least **one month** prior to the wedding date and is to be made payable to St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor or SJCM.

Fees for musicians are in addition to the fee for the church. Fees range from $200 to $300 and are determined upon consultation with the music ministry. Payments to musicians should be made payable directly to them.

A gift to the priest or deacon in appreciation for his service or kindness to you, may be done separately from the Church offering and would normally be presented to him the day of the wedding.

8. Helpful Information

St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor Catholic Church
5843 Manor Woods Road
Frederick, MD 21703
301-663-0907 | office@sjcmmd.org

Seating Capacity: 540
Number of rows: 16
Number of windows: 10
Organ: Allen (hybrid pipe) Piano: Yamaha Avant Grand Is handicapped accessible

We sincerely hope these guidelines and regulations have been helpful to you as you prepare to plan your Wedding Mass or Ceremony. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us in the parish office and we will put you in touch with the person who can best assist you. It is our hope that you will enjoy the planning and preparation for your wedding. Oftentimes, wedding details and preparations can seem overwhelming, so please know of our prayers for you as we rejoice in your desire to express your love before God and the Church.

9. Wedding Agreement

Please sign below as acknowledgement that you have read and agreed to our policies and procedures and return this page to the parish office as soon as possible.

We have read the policies and procedures for celebrating marriage at St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor. We understand the contents and agree to abide by them. All questions and concerns have been answered prior to our signatures on this form.

Groom's Name:_____

Signature of the Groom: _____

Bride's Name:_____

Signature of the Bride: _____

Date: _____20____